

Matthew 5:4

The Longing of Every Heart

Is there anyone here that has ever looked at the world and wondered, "What on earth is wrong?" Where did we get the idea that things should be better? Where did we get the idea to pursue things like love, justice, happiness? If not for God we would have no idea of better; would have nothing to hope for. CS Lewis, rather candidly in *Mere Christianity* said, "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."

Today in our broken world, we have a word from the Only God in Matthew. His word to us is a good word. His word to us is a word of comfort, telling us that those that mourn are the blessed ones.

READ TEXT

I was exposed to mourning as a young boy; our family has been one that has been laced with tragedy. I won't go into the details of my family, but I will share a mournful story that I cannot forget. One summer, while in high school, I took a job working at our local funeral home. Out of all the funerals that I served, there was one that is burned into my memory. One day we receive a call that a young boy in our community between the ages of 2 and 3 had tragically died. We received his body and were responsible for his funeral. The line of mourners was unimaginable and seeing the mother and father standing beside a casket not much bigger than a bassinet was almost too much for me, a bystander, to bear. After visitation one night I was doing my duties to prepare the building for the funeral the next day when I came upon the funeral director alone in the room with the body of this little child. It was just he and I and the body in the room, the lights were low and he was very carefully straightening the child's clothes and putting each hair back into place. He never took his eyes off of the child but noticed my approach and said to me, I have been doing this job for over 25 years, I have seen much heartache and sadness, even seen many children like this one pass through our doors, but this moment, the death of a child, never gets any easier."

What kind of world do we live in where children die? This story of mine can be repeated 10,000 other times with 10,000 different circumstances of sadness, and it's this world that receives a word from God saying the way to blessedness is through mourning. Jesus has come into our darkness without any shielding from darkness to overcome darkness once and for all.

Is there an answer for every longing heart in the Bible? The Bible tells us the way to blessedness but does it give a reason for our experience of grief? According to Scripture, all the problems that this world faces, from sickness to tsunamis, from diseases to death, are all summed up in one word: Sin. In the midst of the diagnosis there is a remedy for sin, and the remedy is the person of our One Lord Jesus Christ who became sin so that we could become the righteousness of God.

Jesus has come into our sadness, into our brokenness, saying "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He has taught us that the longings of our heart are to be turned so that we can pray "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done, On Earth Just As it is in Heaven." We long for the day that He will

wipe away every tear from our eyes. The day when death shall be no more the day when there will be no more mourning or crying or pain. The day when finally he who sits on the throne says, *Behold, I am making all things new.* (Revelation 21:4)

Until then we have this sure word from our Lord to carry us through, *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Look at this statement. It is a strange statement if you think about it; the way to blessedness is through mourning? What does Jesus mean? Today I want to give you three truths about Matthew 5:4 as we learn the answer to every Longing Heart.

1. **Mourning is the Way to Blessedness**

Every hearer that mourns is a heart that is longing for more. There must be more and you know it, otherwise you wouldn't mourn. We mourn over what is because of what could have been. In the midst of a world filled with mourning Jesus comes, the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us, showing us his own glory and declaring that he is the more that our hearts desire. To say it simply: Jesus is the satisfaction of every desire of your heart.

This Jesus who is our satisfaction tells us that the way to blessedness is through mourning. What kind of mourning is Jesus talking about? Let's listen to the text so that we will know. We have said that the Beatitudes are a golden chain. Each saying a link in this golden chain of blessedness. Last week we looked at the first link in the chain, *blessed are the poor in spirit*, and said that this link was the key to the rest of the Beatitudes. We learned that *poor in spirit* meant that a person is brought to the realization that without God they are hopeless. The poor in spirit know that there is nothing that they can do to achieve the righteousness of God. They have come to the end of themselves and seen what is true - God is beautifully holy, we are broken and in need of rescue.

After the *poor in spirit*. Jesus talks about those who mourn. If the root of all grief in the world is sin then the mourners that are blessed of God are those who are mourning over sin. A newspaper article in London was seeking opinions on the question, "What is wrong with the world?" The English writer GK Chesterton replied, "Dear Sirs, I am." What's wrong with the world? I am, you are.

When is the last time that you truly had grief over your own sinfulness? When is the last time that you were so overwhelmed by the majestic holiness of God that you spent time before him with deep contrition, deeply moved to be nearer to God? Now there is a word that we don't hear often enough - contrition. Do you know what it means? If we were to look it up it would find it to mean feeling remorseful or penitent. It comes from a Latin word that means literally to ground down. When is the last time that you felt the weight of your sins crushing you?

Mourning over sinfulness is the way to blessedness. Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian church. This church was filled with saints who had forgotten to grieve over their sinfulness. These saints were tolerating sin in their own hearts and in the hearts of others and so he wrote to them to help them see

the seriousness of sin and the glory of the gospel which had delivered and is delivering us for sin. Then Paul wrote another letter to them interacting with the first letter. Listen to 2 Corinthians 7:8-10

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

I want us to understand that when we are mournful over sin we are worshipping. We often associate worship with singing but what about worship while weeping? I agree with John Stott who said, "There are such things as Christian tears, and too few of us ever weep them." (*Message of the Sermon On The Mount*) The tears of the saints are the tears that wash the world. The tears of the saints over their own sinfulness teach the world that all the problems of the world are summed up in one word - sin. When we weep over our own sin we teach the world to own the tragedy and not seek some scapegoat. Christians teach the world to call sin what it is and then invite the world to take our griefs and sorrows to one who has made our sins and sorrows his very own. As the Man of Sorrows, Jesus has come to teach us to weep and as our Savior he takes our tears stores them in a bottle and promised us that weeping is for the night but unspeakable and undeniable joy is coming in the morning. The hope that we offer to the world, even through tears, is a better day that Jesus has brought to us through his coming to us. The hope that we offer the world, even through tears, is a better day that Jesus will bring to us. In other words, Jesus gives a broken world hope of a better day that is coming!

But until then we are between these two realities of a King who has come and a King who is coming. So we look to the world through our tear filled eyes of hope and

2. Mourners Weep With Those Who Weep

We who know salvation have a ministry that we have to offer the world, a compassionate ministry of reconciliation. I am afraid that far too often we forget that the world's problem is sin and Jesus has come to save the world from sin. Too often our attitude towards the world is complete disregard. I don't think we mean this when we sing it but the song that we all love, *I'll Fly Away* and a dozen others like it that suggest that we should be seeking escape from the world leave us ready to disregard those who are lost and unsaved. I am glad that this was not the attitude of Jesus. I am glad that he came seeking and saving the lost. And I am glad that he left us in the world to be salt and light because the headache that we have here is preparing us for glory and what we experience here is nothing compared to what we will experience when he comes bringing his kingdom!

Does the sin of the world bring you to tears? Do we have the attitude of the Psalmist when he said, "My eyes shed streams of tears because men do not keep thy

Law.” (Psalm 119:136) We often talk about loving the sinner and hating the sin, it is hard to hate someone that you are shedding tears for. It was a motivation of love that sent Jesus to the world to die on the cross and it is a motivation of love that sends us to go after the whosoever of the world. (See 2 Corinthians 5)

I remember reading about a young medical student who was listening to Robert Moffat, the African Pioneer speak. Moffat said, “Many a morning have I stood on the porch of my house, and looking northward, have seen the smoke arise from villages that have never heard of Jesus Christ. I have seen, at different times, the smoke of a thousand villages—villages whose people are without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world ... The smoke of a thousand villages ... The smoke of a thousand villages.” The young medical student left the meeting and all through the night the words of Moffat kept him awake. “The smoke of a thousand villages... The smoke of a thousand villages...” He felt the call to Africa and spent the rest of his life serving the people of Africa as a pioneer of medical missions. The Doctor would be laid to rest in Westminster Abby, heralded as a national hero for his labor in the world for Christ. Here are the words on the Doctors grave:

Brought by faithful hands over land and sea here rests David
Livingstone, Missionary, Traveler, Philanthropist, Born March 19, 1813, at
Blantyre Lanarkshire. Died May 1, 1873 at Chitambo’s Village,
Ulala. For 30 years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native
races to explore the undiscovered secrets to abolish the desolating slave trade of Central
Africa where with his last words he wrote, “All I can add in my solitude is may heaven’s
rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk who will help heal this open
sore of the world.”

Very quickly. Let me tell you why we mourn with those who mourn. We mourn with those who mourn because we know that joy is coming in the morning. Look at the last half of verse 4.

3. Mourners Rejoice With Those Who Rejoice

There is no comforts like the comfort of Jesus. Jesus has dealt with sin and one day sin will be no more. He is our comfort. Our message to the world is this message - blessedness. Yes, even blessedness though your eyes may now be filled with tears.

Christ is our comfort because he is the one who *Was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted, But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.* (Isaiah 53:3-5)

We who know him know true comfort. We sing about it, *For me it was in the garden he prayed, "Not my will but thine."* He had no tears for his own griefs, but sweat drops of blood for mine. How marvelous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be; How marvelous! How wonderful! Is my Savior's love for me!

We are not overcome by mourning, we are overcome by love. Only Jesus can offer peace to a world that is broken. Only Jesus can say *blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*