

Refine Women's Ministry

**The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:1-12**

**Beatitude #2: Happy Are the Sad**

September 20, 2017 by Kim Peelen

*I walked a mile with Pleasure, she chattered all the way;  
But left me none the wiser for all she had to say.*

*I walked a mile with Sorrow; and ne'er a word said she;  
But oh, the things I learned from her when Sorrow walked with me.*

Last week began our study of The Beatitudes, twelve verses in the gospel of Matthew that act as a preamble to Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. These short sentences outline the life-giving gospel of salvation and declare that true believers enjoy true happiness. This blessedness Jesus promises is not based on circumstances, but on the indwelling character of God in His redeemed saint. It begins with a destitute, cowering spirit of a beggar with no resources or hope of contribution that pleads for God for rescue and ends with God's welcome into His heavenly kingdom: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! The only way for God to fill His follower with blessedness, is if he is free from feeding his sinful flesh and instead focuses on God with studying His word, praying for God's help, thanking and praising Him, and accepting Christ on His terms. If I acknowledge my spiritual poverty, I will possess the kingdom of heaven now – not just after my physical death. The happiness begins even as we struggle here in our sin-filled world. Happy are those who are sad.

**The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12 [NASB]**

- 1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.
- 2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,
- 3 "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 "Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted.
- 5 "Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 "Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied.
- 7 "Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive mercy.
- 8 "Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God.
- 9 "Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God.
- 10 "Blessed are those who have been **persecuted for the sake of righteousness**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
- 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Look at the sequence of these pronouncements in the Beatitudes. We see first the poor in spirit, which is the right attitude toward sin and which leads to mourning in verse 4. After you've seen your sinfulness and mourned, you're meek with a sense of humility. Then you seek and hunger and thirst for righteousness. That manifests itself in mercy, in purity of

heart, and in a peacemaking spirit. The result of being merciful and pure in heart and peacemaking is that you are reviled and persecuted and falsely accused. Why? Because by the time you have been poor in spirit and mourned over it, have become humble, sought righteousness, and lived a merciful, pure, and peacemaking life, you have sufficiently irritated the world. The Beatitudes, The Only Way to Happiness, p. 56.

### **Those Who Mourn. . .**

There are nine different Greek verbs in the New Testament for grief. In English we have many terms as well: sad, sorrowful, down, grief, anguish, agony, mournful. Jesus uses the strongest, most intense term of all the Greek terms in verse 4 - *pentheo* - it is reserved for mourning the dead. For those who have walked this painful journey, likely just hearing that phrase evokes a gut-wrenching ache and pain. Death is a strong foe, an enemy that strikes with savage results that leave the survivors stripped and beaten by emotional and physical hurt that ebbs and flows in heaps and valleys. Jesus selected His words expertly, knowing that His audience identifies with the desperate need for comfort when death surrounds them. Our sin should evoke the same intense response.

Just as there are many words for grief, there are many causes for sorrow. Two categories:

#### **Human Sorrow: Mourn Over Hurt**

- Conditions of Life: Walking through life means facing pain and sorrow. Shedding tears in such moments is a gift of God to release the stresses (this has been physiologically proven, crying relieve stress). Ecclesiastes 3:4 says, “a time to weep, a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.” Living means facing times of loss, and it is proper to mourn and weep.
- Results of Sin: We are fallen creatures so when we have unfulfilled evil desires, an unwillingness to let go, or guilt that results in excessive sorrow, we cry and weep and even have a tantrum. This is illegitimate mourning. Shedding tears may relieve some sorrow, but it does not offer the true comfort that Jesus is speaking about in Matthew 5:4.

#### **Godly Sorrow: Mourn Over Sin**

- Is Sorrow over Sin: “Godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” 2 Cor. 7:10. Crying and lamenting because of discouragement, loneliness, or unfulfilled lusts will NOT bring eternal life. However, Jesus declares that the only kind of mourning that results in salvation is godly sorrow over sin **because it leads to repentance**. Matthew 5:4 does not say the lonely or disheartened are blessed, but those who are mournful over their sin will be blessed.
- Starts with Poverty of Spirit: Beatitude #1, being poor in spirit means one recognizes he has no capacity to help themselves; he is a beggar pleading for help

and rescue. He is spiritually impoverished, totally reliant upon God. This perspective should never diminish.

- **Involves Deep Internal Agony:** The Greek word Jesus uses for mourn conveys not just external grief, but profound, inner agony. In Psalm 32:10 - 12, David is devastated by the consequences his sin has on his relationship with God: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me, the joy of my salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit."
- **Confession of Sin Results in Forgiveness:** The promise of Beatitude #2 is NOT from my sorrow itself, but from God's gracious response to my agony over my sin. When my heart is broken over how my sin separates me from God, I **confess my sin**, and God gives me freedom and joy in His forgiveness.

### **Examples of Godly Sorrow that Leads to Forgiveness**

In your groups read and discuss: Luke 7:36 - 50: Example 1

*Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.*

*Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."*

*"A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?"*

*Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."*

*Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."*

*Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"*

*And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

1. What attitude does the woman have toward her sin? How can you tell? Which debtor from the example does the woman resemble?

2. What attitude does Simon the Pharisee have toward the woman and her sin? What attitude do you think Simon has towards his own sin (this is a guess, not stated)? Which debtor does Simon resemble?

3. Explain how this passage illustrates “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” – what is the mourning; what is the comfort?

James 4: 6-10: Example 2

*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the LORD, and He will exalt you.*

4. Discuss what type of sorrow James is describing: human or godly? Why? What are the clues that help you determine which kind?

5. What attitudes are necessary for God to exalt you?

6. Does this mean God forbids laughter in his Saints?

**Summary:** As one comes face-to-face with personal sin, several responses are possible.

- Denial – Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’s day put on a phony exterior to conceal their sin, act like they are perfect. **Moral Fakery**
- Admit It – But try to change myself. **Moral Rearmament**
- Despair – Admit sin but are without hope, even killing themselves like Judas.

**Moral Hopelessness**

- Conviction of Sin – Mourn sin, repent, and confess to God. **True Salvation, True Happiness**

The weeping woman agonizes over her sins, which are many. She turns to Jesus in her helpless situation, begging Him to help her helplessness. Jesus, who knows her heart, grants her what she is seeking, even though she cannot articulate her need. What is the need Jesus meets? Forgiveness of her sins – ALL OF THEM! That is offering true happiness. James says the same thing in the converse. Proud sinners who approach God with a list of how He can help them are not humble, are not mourning, and not weeping over sin and God will oppose them.

Laughter is not forbidden in God's people, however, laughter and frivolity should not distract me from reality in my life and heart. A believer has a lifelong sorrow over sin which impels him to confess his sins regularly: 1 John 1:9.

### **. . . For They Shall Be Comforted**

Isaiah 61:1-3 - This passage describes "The Servant of the LORD (42:1), the ultimate Preacher and Redeemer of Israel:

*1 The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners;*  
*2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn,*  
*3 To grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD that He may be glorified.*

*Luke 4:14 - 22* - In Luke's account, this event follows Jesus's temptation in the desert. The synoptic Gospels (Matt, Mark, Luke) have little detail about His first year of ministry (in John 1-4 there are some), but clearly Jesus has made a reputation in Galilee by this time.

*And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit; and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."  
*22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"**

Jesus is not vague about His claim to be The Messiah of Israel - He declares plainly that He is the long-expected one of whom Isaiah prophesied so long ago, and His mission is unchanged:

*preach the gospel to the poor;*  
*proclaim release to the captives and sight to blind;*  
*to set free oppressed;*  
*to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.*

### **Some Thoughts:**

- Jesus's First Coming as Suffering Servant includes mocking, suffering and the Cross.
- His Second Coming as Conquering King involves God's Vengeance and His Crown [notice that Jesus stops in Isaiah's prophecy- scholars believe the later pertains to Christ's Second Coming, and therefore He did not include it as He was fulfilling the First Coming].

- Jesus's Posture: standing as He read the Scriptures; sitting as He taught and interpreted God's Word as one with authority to teach.

- Jesus's Mission restated to John The Baptizer when his messengers ask, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" as "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT* [Is. 35:5,6], *the lame walk*, *the lepers are cleansed*, and *the deaf hear*, *the dead are raised up*, *the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM* [Is. 61:1]. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over me." Luke 7:22,23

- Jesus's Target Audience: the 'down-and-outers', the rejects of society, the hurting

- Jesus's Comfort to The Hurting Ones: God's Forgiveness For Sin. Through The Messiah's suffering and sacrifice on the cross that satisfies the rigid, perfect standard of the Almighty God of Judgment, I will enjoy no condemnation for my wretched, sin-filled soul when I repent and believe on Jesus Christ. His Life and Righteousness pay the debt I owe God for my sins and I enjoy His forgiveness. That is True Comfort!

Are you one of God's Redeemed ones? Are you mourning over sin? Remove hindrances that mask sin: love of sin; despair that obscures God's mercy in my life; conceit that I am comparatively good; presumption that I can continue to do whatever I want rather than Christ transforming my life; procrastination to address my sin and do away with them through Christ; frivolity and merriment that prevents being realistic about life. Rather, study Scripture to understand sin and Christ's work of redemption on the Cross necessary to pay for its damages. Those who mourn are sensitive to their own sin and in the lives of others, weeping over its wretched consequences, yet knowing real peace, happiness, and comfort that comes through a purified, cleansed, and forgiven life. Do you have godly sorrow? Then enjoy His comfort!

### **RESOURCES:**

Precept Upon Precept: Sermon On The Mount, How Can I Be Blessed?, 2014  
*The Beatitudes: The Only Way to Happiness*, by John MacArthur, 1998.  
*The Beatitudes: John MacArthur's Bible Studies* by John F. MacArthur, Jr. 1990

### **HOMEWORK**

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. As a child of God, I must develop the same attitude towards sin as God Himself, learning to mourn over the awful effects that sin has upon mankind (not just mourning over my personal sinfulness). In this passage Paul writes to his congregation in Corinth to correct their wrong attitude towards vagrant, outright sin in their local body.

1. What is Paul's main concern - the man's sin or the church's response? How do you know?

2. What does this reveal about the church of Corinth?

3. Why was Paul concerned? What would happen if this sin went unchecked?

4. What would be your response if you had been in that church body - in thought and action?

5. What area in your life do you need to mourn more over sin's effects, rather than a casual acceptance (or something else) and equip your mind with God's perspective rather than the world's?

Read Ezekiel 9. Ezekiel preached during the Babylonian captivity of Israel (Daniel taken in the first, Ezekiel in the second siege) but Jerusalem had not been totally destroyed . . . YET. The prophet rebukes those experiencing the horrific things in their country.

6. Who summoned the executioners and why?

7. What do the executioners have and why?

8. What is the man clothed in linen with the writing case told to do and why?

9. Who is exempt from the judgment of either the man with the writing case or the executioners?

10. If God sent a man with a writing case today, how would he mark you? Why?