

Matthew 5:4: Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

People mourn for many reasons – the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, or over a personal failure. These experiences are common to all men but not what Jesus is referring to.

In Matthew 5:3 we learned that the “poor in spirit” is the one who makes a conscious confession of his own unworthiness before God. “It is a sense of powerlessness in ourselves. It is a sense of spiritual bankruptcy and helplessness before God. It is a sense of moral uncleanness before God. It is a sense of personal unworthiness before God. It is a sense that if there is to be any life or joy or usefulness, it will have to be all of God and all of grace. The reason I say it is a SENSE of powerlessness and a SENSE of bankruptcy and a SENSE of uncleanness and a SENSE of unworthiness, is that, objectively speaking, everybody is poor in spirit. Everybody, whether they sense it or not, is powerless without God and bankrupt and helpless and unclean and unworthy before God. But not everybody is blessed.” (Piper).

When Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," he does not mean everybody. He means those who feel it. That is why it is so appropriate to take the first and second beatitudes together. "Blessed are those who mourn," gives the emotional side of being poor in spirit. Blessed are the people who feel the weight of their sin and their guilt and their unworthiness and their emptiness and are grieved and driven to the grace of God (Ja.4:8-10; II Cor. 7:10).

The more people grow as Christians, the more they see the stark contrast of their lives to God's holiness. The faithful believer will be constantly aware of his sin and grieve over it (Job -Job 42:5, 6; David - Ps. 51:1; Isaiah - Isa. 6:1-5; Paul -Ro.7:18-24; I Tim. 1:15; Peter - Lk. 5:8); but he will also grieve over the sin in the world around him (Matt. 23:37; Isa. 53:3).

- David in Psalm 119:136 said, “My eyes shed streams of tears, because men do not keep thy law.”
- Ezekiel heard the faithful “who sighed and groaned over all the abominations that are committed in Jerusalem.” (Ezek. 9:4).
- Paul knew of “the many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” (Phil 3:18)

Those who claim to experience the joy of the kingdom without experiencing its tears mistake the nature of the kingdom (Carson, 133).

It's unfortunate that some Christians laugh when they should mourn. They laugh at the world's crude and immoral jokes though they don't dare repeat them. They watch brutality, violence, and sexual immorality on T.V. as entertainment, though they say that they don't approve of these things. They rejoice when they should be mourning. They laugh when they should be crying (Carson, 133).