

Pursuing God's Blessings Through the Beatitudes

"I Take Ownership – The Power of Spiritual Mourning"

Matthew 5:4 "Bless are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted."

Mourning can be miserable! Jesus speaks of a kind of mourning that is **blessed**.

- We may wonder how the words "mourning" and "blessed" can belong in the same sentence? Sounds like an oxymoron!

What is this mourning that Jesus says is blessed?

There are three types of mourning to help us distinguish between them:

1. Natural mourning – the grief that comes through the loss of a loved one.
 - The Grief Share Support group has taught us that people experience and process grief differently.
 - In the natural type of mourning, it is proper to grieve and mourn the loss of one you loved.
 - Jesus, Himself, experienced this type in John 11:35 "Jesus wept" at the loss of His friend Lazarus.
 - The Lord knows how to comfort us in this type of mourning because He Himself experienced it.
 - No one who goes through the sorrow of bereavement signs up for it or really welcomes it – "I want as much grief in my life as I can possibly get."
2. Sinful mourning – this mourning is a longing/lusting after something that God did not give to you.
 - Natural mourning is grieving over something given by God and then lost.
 - Sinful mourning is grieving over something that God never intended you to have.

1 Kings 21 Story of evil king Ahab [wife – Jezebel] who had everything.

- Coveted after the vineyard of Naboth, offered him money, but Naboth didn't want to sell it. Land was family inheritance.
- Ahab was vexed & sullen - mourned/pouted because he couldn't have what he wanted and didn't belong to him. v.4
- Queen Jezebel saw this and concocted a plot to bring Naboth to court on false charges. She did and Naboth was killed and the vineyard became King Ahab's.

- He pouted around the palace because he coveted a gift that God had given to someone else.
- Grieving over something God never intended for you to have is a sinful kind of mourning. It is always a killer and not what the Lord wants us to have in our lives or He would have given it to us.
- But this still is not what Jesus had in mind when HE said “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

The Proper – Spiritual Mourning

3. Mourning over our sins against God

- 2 Corinthians 7:10 “For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”
- Godly sorrow for our sins against God leads us to repentance which leads us to life!
- Spiritual mourning is the key to overcoming “habitual sin”
- Sin that a person falls into repeatedly over a long period of time.
- If you are addicted or under the control of a form of behavior that is sinful, you need to hear this word – it’s the answer for your freedom from habitual sins.
- God’s purpose for your life is not that you remain stuck in a cycle of sinning – repenting – sinning – repenting; always saying you’re sorry to God and others; then repeating the same behavior.
- Spiritual mourning will break the cycle by bringing you to a place where you grieve over your sin, see its cost and make a decisive break from it into victory.

The church/Body of Christ is surrounded today by a form of faith that bears no resemblance to Biblical Christianity:

1. For the last 50 yrs. a true faith that unites a person to Jesus Christ has been replaced by an assent to, or agreement with certain beliefs.
 - Many say they believe in Jesus and make statements of faith; yet never pursue the changed life to which a Christian is called.
 - Even non-Christians despise this “fake faith” and they are correct to do so.
 - A form of faith that leaves a person essentially unchanged is not worthy to bear the name the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls His followers to forsake sin and return to God:

2. Another deviation from Biblical Christianity is on repentance.
 - The Bible says repentance involves a change of mind which leads to a change of action, but has been reduced to “admitting that I’m a sinner,” and asking for forgiveness.

Isaiah 55:6-7

“Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

Seeking the Lord involves leaving and forsaking ways and thoughts that dishonor Him, returning to Him.

2 Timothy 2:19

“God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: The Lord knows those who are his, and **let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.**”

- Faith and Repentance are two sides of the same coin:
 “God’s people repent as they believe, and they believe as they repent”
- This is a continual process of being a follower of Jesus Christ.
- If a generation grows up believing that Christianity boils down to just agreeing with certain beliefs, admitting that you are a sinner, and asking to be forgiven – it should not be surprising that they think they are genuine Christians and confident of going to heaven without ever experiencing the true change of repentance.
- They don’t know what it is to be “poor in spirit” or “mourn over their sins” and never submit themselves meekly to God.
- Without these roots, they will not have a deep hunger and thirsting for righteousness.

Six Elements of Spiritual Mourning

What is the definition of spiritual mourning and how does it help us make progress in our Christian life?

“Spiritual mourning is a heartfelt sorrow over particular sins; arising from humility and giving hope, that leads you to forsake these sins at the cross.”

1. Spiritual mourning names particular sins

- Spiritual mourning has a clear focus- mourning over named sins.
- Stop calling your sin: **“A mistake – A slip up – It’s just my family heritage.”**
- Call it what it is: **Lust – Jealousy – Greed – Pride – Adultery – Fornication – Pornography – Lying – Stealing.**
- You can’t really be FREE until you accept your responsibility and own up to your failure to be able to do what the Lord wants you to do which is being “Poor in spirit.”

- 1 John 1:9 “If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature & promises] and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1. Spiritual mourning starts with an open Bible

- Psalm 119:130 “The entrance of Your Word gives light.”
- The entrance of the Light of God's Word brings light to the dark places of our hearts.

2. Other Christians can also help us see our blind spots

- James 5:16 “Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”
 - Ask your spouse, a friend to become accountable to:
Questions such as:
 1. What would help me grow as a Christian?
 2. What hinders me from being more useful to God than I am now?

2. Spiritual mourning involves heartfelt sorrow

*“Spiritual mourning is a **heartfelt sorrow** over particular sins; arising from humility and giving hope, that leads you to forsake these sins at the cross.”*

There must be a focus on the difference between admitting to a sin and being truly repentant from the heart.

The story of King Saul in 1 Samuel 15:18-19, 24 after a major victory, he disobeyed a direct command from God by taking plunder for himself and his men.

- When Samuel the Prophet pointed this out, Saul admitted to his sin.
- It appeared he was genuinely repentant, but then he appealed to Samuel to go with him and honor him as he bowed before the Lord as if all was well –V. 30.
- His true intention was on damage control and to save his reputation, not sorrow that led to repentance.
- Saul's life shows the path of someone who admits they are wrong does not have the heartfelt sorrow of spiritual mourning that leads to true repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:10.

How to cultivate heartfelt Godly sorrow leading to repentance and victory over our sins:

You have to see what it costs **you, others** and **Jesus** Himself:

1. What does it cost **yourself**?

- The cost of where you would be now if this sin had not held you back.
- The cost of how this sin has hindered you from being used more effectively by the Lord.
- This sin has dulled your worship, your testimony and kept you at a distance from the Lord.
- It has led you into other sins of deception and pretense.
- Have you taken the time or thought to total up what that sin[s] is/are costing you and what freedom you have forfeited if you left it behind?

2. What does it cost **others**? No one sins to him/herself alone.

- The sin you are unwilling to mourn over has made you hard to live with, difficult to work with, tougher to love. By your spouse, family, friends, work associates.
- Even if they never find out; your sin still robs others of what they might have received through you.
- You are not only short-changing yourself of God's purpose but others also.

3. What is it costing **Jesus**?

- Jesus did not hang on the cross and die for sins in general, but for specific sins with names, dates, faces on them.
- Jesus suffered for the sin you are mourning and the punishment for sin that belongs to you.
- God in His amazing grace has allowed your sins to culminate and be collectively transferred to Jesus' account so you could be justified.
- He personally took your sins to Calvary and suffered for them.

1. Naming and recognizing the cost of your sins will lead you into spiritual mourning.
2. Naming particular and specific sins will focus your attention on what needs to change in your life.
3. Counting the cost of these sins presses the urgency of the need for change in our hearts.
4. Naming the sin will show you where you need to repent and come into godly sorrow of repentance that leads to life.

Godly sorrow does lead to repentance and repentance does lead to **life!**

When you see the connections, it becomes clear that spiritual mourning is crucial to making progress in your Christian life.