



# TRUTH IN LOVE

*Shedding Light on the Word of God*

## Good Mourning\*

Matthew 5:4

**Blessed *are* those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.**

Have you had a good cry lately? According to Matthew 5:4, it might do you some good—if you're crying for the right reasons. There are many reasons for tears. They may come when we are slighted, insulted, overlooked, hurt or frustrated. If these things happen as a result of following Christ, then His words apply in such situations. Otherwise, all we have is selfish sorrow.

Then there are the tears of tragedy when we lose a job, a home, or—most tragic of all—a loved one. Christ's words certainly apply in these situations for He is always concerned about the destitute and lonely, the forsaken and forgotten. When mourning over a terrible tragedy, remember not only Christ's words here, but also John 14:16-18 where He promises to send the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, and Revelation 21:4 where we learn that eventually, all our tears will be wiped away. Be encouraged in your mourning, for you will be comforted, both now through the Holy Spirit, and in eternity.

Yet as important as these two truths are, I do not think they are the primary focus of this Beatitude. The word Christ uses is the strongest possible word for mourning in the Greek language. It is the agonizing loss one feels for a departed loved one. It is the kind of grief which takes such a hold on a man that it cannot be hidden. It goes far beyond heartache; it brings unrestrainable tears to the eyes, wailing and gnashing of teeth, and sometimes a desire for personal death.<sup>1</sup>

Scripturally, this is the kind of mourning Christians are to feel for sin (2 Cor 12:21; Jas 4:9)—especially for our own sin. Yet most of us do not mourn this way over sin, because we do not realize what a horrific affront sin is to a perfect and holy God. So Jesus says at the beginning of His Discipleship Manual, that if we are ever able to come to this kind of agonizing sorrow for our sin, we will be blessed and comforted.

Jesus is saying "Blessed are those who are intensely sorry for their sin, who are broken hearted for what their sin has done to God and to Jesus Christ, ... [and who are] appalled by the havoc wrought by sin... The way to the joy of forgiveness is through the desperate sorrow of the broken heart."<sup>2</sup> Compare David's response to his own sin in Psalm 32 and 51 (cf. also Ps 126:5-6).

This is the second step on the path of genuine discipleship. The first, in 5:3, was to come to a point of desperation for the things of God and for fellowship with Jesus Christ. We need to be so desperate for intimacy with Him, that we are willing to forsake all and give up everything just to be near Him. Now in v 4, we step beyond desperation for God to deep sorrow for our sin. We weep and wail over our sinfulness. We have gone from "I need you, Jesus!" to "I am a sinner. Woe is me!"

Only when we see our sin as it truly is do we begin to understand the depths and riches of God's infinite and undying love for us in Jesus Christ. He loves us no matter what we do, and will go to whatever lengths He must to show us that love. In the face of depravity wrought depression, this is wonderfully comforting. Pray to see your sin as God sees it, and when you do, enter into a time of good mourning.

\*This, and other studies, can be found at Jeremy's teaching website: [www.tillhecomes.org](http://www.tillhecomes.org)

<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible: Matthew-Vol 1* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1975), 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 95.