



## “Crying and Comfort” - October 13, 2019

### OPEN

Blessings for a very Happy Thanksgiving! As followers of Jesus, we should never come to see thankfulness as merely an annual event. Every day is an opportunity to appreciate the blessings God has brought into our lives.

Imagine what it was like to sit on the on the hillside in Galilee and hear Jesus speak of God’s blessings – the Beatitudes – in His “Sermon on the Mount”?

It is ironic that on a day set aside for giving thanks we are contemplating those who *mourn*. But this is another critical component of becoming “kingdomized”.

A dentist had a wall hanging in his office that read, “Blessed are they who engage in conversation with the helplessly mute, for they shall be called dentists.” Interesting! And so also is our blessing for today – comfort for those who mourn. But just how can mourning be a state of blessing!?

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#### I. Blessing Number Two

In Matthew 5:4 we read, “God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (NLT) What does it mean to mourn? Now we’re not talking about whining or a pitiful pining! Mourning here is a term which is deep and gut wrenching – to mourn is to grieve and lament. And for this, God pledges comfort and care!

One of the indications that we are being *kingdomized* is that our mourning is *meaningful*. Instead of being self-focused, we lament the incongruence between this world and God’s Kingdom. This Beatitude tells us it is actually a blessing to mourn over the disharmony between the world as it now is and the way in which God intended it to be.

##### a. An example of mourning

Jesus gave us the greatest example of this Beatitude. We know His life was marked by God’s blessing and approval. When and why did He weep and lament? Consider three examples.

- **As prophetic fulfillment** (see *Isaiah 61*) *Jesus came to comfort to the oppressed – Luke 4:16-21*

- **In authentic humanity** *Jesus grieved He wept for the loss of a friend – John 11:35*
- **With divine compassion** *Jesus wept for the lost people of Jerusalem – Matthew 23:37*

##### b. An examination of mourning

Have you ever seen the subway or train warning: “Mind The Gap”? I get the sense that in England there is a growing cynicism about British rail service. A comedian put it, “Mind the gap...between the schedule and reality!” Are you “minding the gap” between God’s design/desires for this world and the pain/brokenness that we can see around us...and in ourselves? Blessed are we, when we mourn for the brokenness of this world and not just wallow in our own self-pity. Blessed are we, when we grieve for lost state of people, not just have regret over our own pain or lost opportunities.

But how can this be a blessed condition!? We find the answer in Romans 8. The mourner is promised comfort! In fact, as R. T. France writes, “The use of the passive *they shall be comforted* is a Semitic idiom for what God will do.” (*Matthew: Tyndale New Testament Commentary*, Vol I, IVP, 1985, 110)

So this blessedness is not as a result of human effort but God’s grace and goodness. Those who mourn are blessed with...

- **confidence leading to glory** - vv. 18-21
- **hope leading to redemption** - vv. 22-25
- **the Spirit leading to intercession** - vv. 26-27
- **purpose leading to transformation** - vv. 28-30
- **assurance leading to victory** - vv. 31-39

#### II. The Weeping Prophet

Do you know someone who is particularly weepy? We generally have a fairly low tolerance in our society for tears. Yet tears come at joyful times because of feelings of extreme helplessness in the face of joy. Tears come at painful times and researchers believe tears of sorrow rid our bodies of hormones related to stress. There are certainly times when tears come to us, but we don’t have a “mourning-friendly” culture...like other cultures. In some religious traditions, tears are of a sacramental significance.

- **The prophecy of Jeremiah** - 1:4-19

Was Jeremiah just a weepy person? We cannot know the intimate details of his personality. In chapter one we have the story of his calling. Though he

claimed weakness God promised divine strength. Why? Jeremiah was called to foretell the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC to Nebuchadnezzar, among many messages of judgement for the wickedness of Judah (the southern kingdom). Jeremiah came to deeply grieve for the injustice and sin of his nation.

- ***The lamentations of Jeremiah - 3:19-26***

This book is an elegy or a poem of lament. Jeremiah wrote a profound dirge for the loss of God's glory and presence in Israel. Perhaps the best expression of this is found in chapter three. Notice carefully how it expresses the blessing that is upon the one who is right in the very context of pain and sorrow – because of God's loyal love!

<b>REFLECT</b>
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What is the take away for you today? Henry David Thoreau wrote in his book ***Walden***, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Do you think that is a fair assessment? It doesn't have to be that way.

Followers of Jesus who are kingdomized know an honesty and authenticity about present pain. But they also live with great blessing and joy both now and forever. I would encourage you to consider two facts very carefully.

- ***God is connected to our story - John 1:14***

*"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

- ***God will turn our mourning into dancing – Psalm 30:11-12***

*"You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever."*