

“Kingdom Come”

Sermon on the Mount Series: Second Lesson

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4 NIV11)

Introduction

- This beatitude follows naturally from previous.
- The beatitude’s promise is counter-cultural – our world likes to laugh at a superficial level and turn a blind eye to the realities of our world.
- Christians are not called to a kind of perpetual smile. Jesus shed tears and so should we.
- How often do we cry over the state of the world, or friends, or our own sin?
- We are called to joy, but that must be real and not fake. “It is natural for us to seek the society of the cheerful and joyous.”
- Could translate this as, “Happy are the unhappy”! Brings home the paradox.
- Close quote of **Is 61.2**. Same word in LXX (Septuagint) and here. Points to eschatological expectation of the ‘poor’.

1. What it means to mourn

A. Defining the word

- It is not specifically the mourning of the bereaved (it’s about how to live in the Kingdom)
 - Not about grovelling self-pity.
 - Not about an appearance of religiousness that moans about the state of the world.
 - The verb “mourn” is in the present, not the past
- It is the mourning of the sober
 - Our own wretchedness
 - On a personal level we should mourn our sin - **Isaiah 6:5, Rom 7:24, Ezra 10:1, Acts 2:36, 1 Cor 5:2, 2 Cor 7:10, 12:21.**
 - “Thousands acknowledge that they are sinners, who have never mourned over the fact.”
 - “It is not the sorrow of bereavement to which Christ refers, but the sorrow of repentance.” This is spiritual mourning.
 - Confession in the previous beatitude is followed here by contrition.
 - Recognition of spiritual state is followed by repentance.
 - The wretchedness of the world
 - Weep for state of world. Christians are realists. “...he mourns because he has some understanding of what sin means to God, of God’s utter abhorrence and hatred of it, this terrible thing that would stab, as it were, into the heart of God ...”
 - For those far from God - the lost
 - For those in considerable pain
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Spiritual

B. Biblical examples

- OT: **Psalm 119:136, Ezek 9:4**
- NT: **Phil 3:18 & Romans 7**
 - Lloyd-Jones says of Paul, "Here is a man who was so grief-stricken about himself that he cries out in that agony. All Christians are meant to be like that."
- Jesus weeping over Jerusalem (**Lk 19.41**); weeping over the death of Lazarus (**John 11.35**) - not that he was dead, perhaps, since he knew he would raise him, but over the pain that death brings to others.
 - "Jesus wept over the sins of others, over their bitter consequences in judgement and death, and over the impenitent city which would not receive him."
 - We are disciples of Jesus. He was the Messiah that Isaiah prophesied would be a 'man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' (KJV) We must follow this example when appropriate.
- "Those who mourn do so because of the seeming slowness of God's justice. But they are now to rejoice, even in their troubled circumstances, because their salvation has found its beginning. The time draws near when they shall be comforted (cf **Rev. 7:17; 21:4**), but they are already to be happy in the knowledge that the kingdom has arrived. Their salvation is at hand." Hagner, Donald A

2. What it means to be comforted

A. Defining the word

- It is not a superficial pat on the shoulder that all we be OK in the end.
- It is"
 - "The verb is a so-called divine passive, which assumes God as the acting subject (so too in the fourth, fifth, and seventh beatitudes)." Hagner, Donald A. WBC
 - We experience joy now (**Mk 10:45, Matt 1:21**) and joy later (**Rev 21**).
 - If we understand sin properly and understand grace properly we will mourn deeply and rejoice greatly.
 - Only when we truly mourn our sin can we be truly comforted by God's forgiveness.
 - Mourning leads to and is a sign of repentance which leads to rejoicing (**Acts 3:19**).
 - One part of our comforting is to do with repentance, but the other is to do with the fact that we are looking forward to a time when wrongs will be righted.
 - Contemplating the reality of the next life will give us strength to endure the gap that exists between present mourning and future consolation (**Rom 8:24, 8:18**).

B. Biblical examples

- NT: the prodigal - **Lk 15.22-24**
- Jesus: "for the joy set before him", **Heb 12.1-2**;
 - One of the Messiah's jobs was to be 'the Comforter' who would 'bind up the brokenhearted' – **Is 61:1, 40:1**. Simeon was looking 'for the consolation of Israel' – **Luke 2:25**.

C. The difference it makes knowing we are and will be comforted

- Some comfort comes now: we are comforted by answered prayers which have, in turn been stimulated by mourning.
- Some comes later, **Rev. 7:17; 21:4**