

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MORN

MATTHEW 5:4

Text: Matthew 5:4

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⁴Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Introduction:

Illustration:

The immediate after effect of the Twin Towers attack was one of "mourning."

The tragic events at the campus of Virginia Tech was "mourning."

The effect of the tragic shooting in Arizona just last week was "mourning."

Even in the moments of wanting to hate those who were responsible, we were drawn back to a state of mourning for the dead, the injured and their families.

The truth is today we have too much moaning and too little mourning.

Mourning doesn't speak of Moaning or Complaining

Solomon said there is a time to mourn.

Eccles. 3:4

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

The Lord tells us that there is a mourning that is good.

This mourning is the results of one seeing himself compared to God as we looked at last week.

This mourning is caused by the sorrow of sin.

This mourning brings comfort.

Illustrations:

Abraham:

In dealing with the Lord about Sodom and Gomorrah he said,

Genesis 18:27

²⁷ And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes:

Jacob:

When Jacob returned to the promised land after spending 20 years in exile, he wrestled with God in prayer and said,

Genesis 32:10

¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Moses:

When God came to him with a mission to lead his people out of Israel, he said,

Exodus 3:11

¹¹ And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Exodus 4:10

¹⁰ And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

The reason God got angry at Moses is not because of his humble assessment of his own abilities, but of his lack of faith in God's ability.

God responded and said to Moses:

Exodus 4:11-12

¹¹ And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

What is the Biblical solution when a person is paralyzed by a sense of guilt or unworthiness or uselessness?

I believe with all my heart that the solution is not self-esteem.

God did not say to Moses, "Stop putting yourself down. You are somebody. You are eloquent."

That is not the Biblical way. What God said was, "Stop looking at your own unworthiness and uselessness and look at me. I made the mouth. I will be with you. I will help you. I will teach you what to say. Look to me and live!"

The Biblical answer to the paralysis of low self-esteem is not high self-esteem; it is the grace of God.

Isaiah 41:13

¹³ For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

William Carey did not have high self esteem. He castigated himself again and again for his sin.

When the fire of 1812 destroyed dozens of his precious manuscripts he didn't blame the devil. He said, "How unsearchable are the ways of God!"

And then he accused himself of too much self-congratulation in his labors, and said, "The Lord has smitten us, he had a right to do so, and we deserve his corrections."

When he had outlived four of his comrades in missions he wrote back to Andrew Fuller, "I know not why so fruitless a tree is preserved; but the Lord is too wise to err."

When he died in 1834 in Serampore a simple tablet was put on his grave with the words he requested.

And when you hear these I want you to ask, What was William Carey's secret? How could he persevere for 40 years over all obstacles -- as a homely man, suffering from recurrent fever, limping for years from an injury in 1817, and yet putting the entire Bible into six languages and parts of it into 29 other languages -- what was the secret of this man's usefulness and productivity for the kingdom? The tablet on his grave reads,

WILLIAM CAREY

Born August 17th, 1761

Died June 9th, 1834

A wretched, poor, and helpless worm,

On Thy kind arms I fall.

The secret for William Carey was not self esteem. He was poor in spirit to the very end. "A wretched, poor, and helpless worm," he calls himself, knowing very well his sin and failures.

His secret was in the last line of his epitaph: "On Thy kind arms I fall." This was his secret in dying and this was his secret in living. He cast himself, poor, helpless, despicable on the kind arms of God. For he knew the promise of Jesus: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for to them belong the merciful and mighty arms of the King of kings.

My prayer is that all of us at Temple Baptist will find the secret of productivity and usefulness and happiness NOT in the pleasures of self esteem, but in the power of God's grace. "Fear not you worm Jacob... I will help you, says the Lord."

David:

Psalms 51:17

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

1 Chronicles 29:14

¹⁴ But who *am* I, and what *is* my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

In other words, even when David and his people were performing an act of virtue, David did not yield to the impulses of self-esteem. Instead he was carried away by the impulses of grace: "Who are we that we should be able thus to offer willingly!

Solomon:

1 Kings 3:7

⁷ And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in.

Job 42:5-6

⁵ I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. ⁶ Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.

Isaiah:

Isaiah 6:5

⁵ Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

So we learn from Job and Isaiah that one source of lowliness is to see God in his power and holiness.

John the Baptist:

John 1:27

²⁷ He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

John 3:30

³⁰ He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

Could this be why Jesus said, "Among those born of women, none is greater than John"

Mark 9:35

³⁵ And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Peter:

When he saw the power of Jesus on the Lake of Gennesaret, "Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'" (Luke 5:8)

Paul:

Romans 7:18

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

2 Corinthians 4:7

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

1 Timothy 1:15-16

¹⁵ This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. ¹⁶ Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Most people don't like to admit to sin, let alone sorrow over it.

However the person who admits to sin and sorrows over it biblically is one who is going to experience the comfort of God's forgiveness.

I want us to consider mourning in three Ways.

1. MOURNING OVER SELF

Mourning is often involved in the salvation experience. Illustration: The story of "David and Bathsheba".

When David was convicted over the sin, he mourned. Psalm 51:1-4

Psalms 51:1-4

¹ Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. ⁴ Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

A. David was totally honest with God about his sin.

1. He gave no excuse.
2. He blamed nobody else.
3. He took full responsibility.

B. When we mourn over sin, we will do the same.

1. We will be totally honest.
2. We will name the specific sin or sins.
3. We will blame nobody else.
4. We will take full responsibility.
5. We will be sorry for the sin, not just for being caught.
6. We will strive to forsake that sin.

C. With confession comes the comfort of forgiveness.

1 John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalms 32:1-2

¹ Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, *whose sin is* covered. ² Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.

Psalms 32:5

⁵ I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

How should we handle mourning over sin as Christians?

- First we should confess any known sin to God that we have not dealt with before.
- Second, we should have a set time each day to examine our lives for sin, perhaps, first thing in the morning, or the last thing at night.
- Thirdly, if we need help knowing what God considers sin, we can refer to the Scripture. Two excellent lists are found in Colossians 3:5-10 and Proverbs 6:16-19

Colossians 3:5-10

⁵ Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: ⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of

disobedience: ⁷ In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. ⁸ But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. ⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Proverbs 6:16-19

¹⁶ These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: ¹⁷ A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, ¹⁹ A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Finally, we need to beware of delaying the mourning process. Sometimes we are just too comfortable in our sins and enjoying sins too much to actually mourn over them.

As Christians, let's look to the cross and remind ourselves how Jesus has suffered for us. That should be motivation for us to quit what we are doing for His sake. Isaiah 53:3-6

2. MOURNING OVER SAINTS

- There is a difference between being critical of the saints, and mourning over the sins of the saints.

- When a person is critical, he or she, is not concerned about the spiritual well-being of the person involved.
- When a person is critical, he is not sorrowed over the sin.
- When a person is critical, he is making himself feel good by pointing out what's wrong in another person.
- When a person is critical, he thinks of himself as better than the other person.
- How is mourning over the sins of the saints different from criticism of the saints?

1. You are seriously concerned about the holiness of God, and don't want to see anyone, especially yourself, sin against Him.

2. You are concerned about the spiritual well being of the person.

3. You want to see the person restored to God.

4. You talk to God in concerned prayer about the person.

5. You ask God to deliver the person from their sin.

6. You talk to the person involved about their sin instead of talking to others.

Illustration:

There was once gross sin in the church at Corinth.

The Corinthians instead of grieving over sin and seeking to restore the brother to righteousness, instead congratulated themselves on their open-mindedness. They were "tolerating" the man's sin.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

¹It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. ²And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

There is another sense in which we can mourn over the sins of the saints. It is when we acknowledge for ourselves and for other Christians that we have all sinned against God.

We should mourn over the laxness and outright sin we see in the church and in ourselves. I believe America is in moral trouble today because Christians have failed to live righteously and to take a stand for what is right.

But there is hope. 2 Chronicles 7:1-14

2 Chronicles 7:14

¹⁴ If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

3. MOURNING OVER SINNERS

We are all sinners.

The sinners I refer to now are the sinners without the Savior.

I am referring to those who have not trusted Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin and everlasting life.

We should mourn for those we know without Christ.

The Apostle Paul did. Romans 10:1, 9:1-3

Romans 10:1

¹ Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Romans 9:1-3

¹ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, ² That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. ³ For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

When we sorrow before God over the people we know without Christ and pray for them in mourning.

When we then go to that person, bringing the precious message of salvation, we can expect there will be times when we will see those we pray for and witness to coming to Christ as Savior.

Psalms 126:5-6

⁵They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. ⁶He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

And if we need motivation to mourn for those without Christ consider just one more verse of Scripture.

Revelation 20:15

Revelation 20:5

⁵But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

Close:

If the only time we mourn or actually "moan" is when we don't get our way, we've not only missed out on God's forgiveness, but also His blessing. "When you have nothing left but God then for the first time you become aware that God is enough."