

# Blessed!

## A Study on the *Beatitudes* of Jesus

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As of 11/10/19

### Part 3, The Exposition of Matthew 5:4, continued

#### Matthew 5:1-12

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

2 He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

#### The Blessing of Sadness

#### Matthew 5:4

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

This world is broken. Today, as we sit comfortably in Church, enjoying the Presence of God, there are no less than fifty wars going on throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> Since the Fall of Adam, there is great tension and conflict between Men and Women, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Old and Young, Rich and Poor, the Educated and the Uneducated, the Sophisticated and the Uncultured, and Citizens and their own Governments. One Race is pitted against another, and there is great hostility, injustice, brutality, evil, and strife in almost every area. The result is that there is a collective Sigh that rises up to Heaven as hundreds of millions of people *routinely* live in Mourning.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this Study, the term "War" includes "Major Wars", "Wars", "Minor Conflicts", and "Regional Skirmishes and Clashes". These categories are divided by numbers of casualties and length of time. Source: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ongoing\\_armed\\_conflicts](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ongoing_armed_conflicts)

Many books have been written about "The Problem of Evil" as people have wrestled with a Good and Sovereign God allowing (or, as some teach, causing) Evil in the world. But in our Studies, we have found out that the Source of Evil is surprisingly simple and one that we are all very familiar with, ourselves. Jesus said:

**Matthew 15:17-20**

**17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?"**

**18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man."**

**19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."**

**20 "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."**

Here Jesus was elaborating about the Source of all Evil in the world, the fallen, sinful, human heart that loves Sin and Self, and that does not love God or one another. About 500 years before Jesus was born, God the Holy Spirit "moved along" the Prophet Jeremiah to say:

**Jeremiah 17:9**

**The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?**

So, Mourning is the default position of the Human Race. It seems that more people mourn than rejoice at any given moment of time. Now the English word "Mourn" comes from a Greek word (*pentheoo* Strong's #3996), that means: *to lament*. So, something "bad" happens, an Injustice occurs, a tragedy strikes, and people mourn, they lament, they weep and grieve, and pray and cry out to God for Help and Hope as they struggle to understand.

So, in our minds, "Mourning" is bad, it is terrible, and it indicates that something awful has happened. And that means that Mourning is something to *avoid*, certainly *not* something for which we would (or should) seek. Nobody in their right mind would ever pray to God asking Him to allow us to Mourn. And yet, here, Jesus teaches that those who mourn are "blessed" by God, those who lament are in a favored status by God. Jesus says here that Mourning is a good thing, a decidedly *better* position than, say, laughing.

**Luke 6:25b**

**... Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.**

When we face great sorrow, disappointment, tragedy, or failure, we wish that we could *escape* the trouble like we escape a thunderstorm by running inside. But comfort from the troubles of life is much harder to find than shelter from rain. The

deeper the sorrow, the harder the pressure, the worse the despair, the more Comfort seems to hide from us.

So, why would Jesus talk like this? As we have discovered, the Beatitudes are "Paradoxical" because the wondrous things they promise to us seem completely "out of sync" with the Demands they require. And nothing illustrates this Paradox better than the Second Beatitude. What could be more contradictory than the notion that being Sad leads to Happiness? What could possibly be stranger than the concept that the path to everlasting Joy is through Mourning? And yet, that is exactly what Jesus says.

But to understand this Paradox properly, we have to clarify a few things. Jesus is NOT teaching here that generic Mourning makes us "blessed". Jesus is NOT advocating normal, every day Grieving as the pathway to this Divine Blessedness. And one of the ways we know that is true is because in Heaven there will be NO Mourning at all, yet Heaven is the most "blessed" place of all. Also, some people on earth, who have mourned the most and the longest, will scream in everlasting torment through all Eternity because they never trusted in Jesus for Salvation. Some, who have suffered the most endured the most injustice and unfairness in this life, will burn forever in a devil's hell because, while suffering unjustly in this life is terrible, it is NOT what washes away Sin and makes us Righteous. Only Jesus can do that.

Suffering and Mourning are NOT "human Works" that *earn* the individual a "blessed" Position with God, or that somehow qualify an individual with Paradise. No, the Bible is crystal clear about this: Sinners are saved "by" the Grace of God, and we are saved "through" the Gift of "Saving Faith", absent any and all humanly engineered works. And God set up Salvation like this so that no human being can "boast" about anything we did to save ourselves (even noble and religious works), and so that God alone will receive all the Glory.

So, this is a special Mourning, a unique Mourning, a Gift from God of Mourning. Yet, in the routine of ordinary, day-by-day living, this notion seems absurd. The whole structure of most human living, whether by the primitive or sophisticated, the wealthy or the poor, the educated or the uneducated, is based on the seemingly incontrovertible Principle that the way to Happiness is having things go our own way. So, in normal thinking, it is Pleasure that brings Happiness, Money brings Happiness, Entertainment brings Happiness, Fame and Praise brings Happiness, Self-expression brings Happiness. And on the negative side, *avoiding*, minimizing, or eliminating Pain, and Trouble, and Disappointment, and Frustration, and Hardships, and other Problems is what brings Happiness. So, sidestepping those things is *necessary* before the other things can bring full Happiness.

Throughout history a basic axiom of the world has been that "favorable things" bring Happiness and "unfavorable things" bring Unhappiness. And that Principle seems so self-evident that most people would not bother to debate it.

Yet the incarnate God said, "*Happy are the Sad! Blessed are those who lament*". And, if that wasn't enough, He went on to say, "**Woe to you who laugh now,**

**for you shall mourn and weep!" (Luke 6:25).** So, Jesus turned the world's unarguable Principles upside down. He reversed the Path to Happiness. And the Purpose of this Study is to find out why. And to discover what Jesus actually meant by saying this, we have to look at several things:

1. The Meaning of the word "Mourning" as Jesus used it here
2. The Result of us Mourning
3. The Way we are to Mourn, as Jesus taught it
4. The Way to know if we are truly Mourning

### **The Meaning of the Word "Mourning"**

Certain kinds of Sorrow are common to all Mankind, and they are experienced by believers and unbelievers alike. Some of these Sorrows are "normal" and "legitimate" in the sense that they are Sorrows which concern our Lord and for which He helps us to cope. We are told to cast all our "Cares" on Jesus and tell Him about our Troubles. And that includes these kinds of Sorrows. But other kinds of Sorrows are "abnormal" and "illegitimate", brought about solely because of sinful passions and objectives. So, right of the bat, we have at least two different kinds of Sorrows, which produce two different kinds of Mournings:

1. Legitimate Mourning
2. Illegitimate Mourning

### ***Illegitimate Mourning***

"Illegitimate Mourning" comes from the Sorrows of those who are frustrated in fulfilling evil and sinful Plans and Lusts, or who have misguided Loyalties and Affections. But these Sorrows produce a real and tangible grieving and lament in those who, for various reasons, can't fulfill their wicked Plans. But the Lord of all the earth provides no Help, no Comfort, and no Relief for those who *legitimately* mourn over those things.

For example, in **2 Samuel 13:2**, David's son, Amnon, was so frustrated because of his sister Tamar that he actually made himself sick...

**... for she was a virgin, and it seemed hard to Amnon to do anything to her**

Amnon's grief/sorrow/mourning was real. He was truly mourning. But the *reason* he was mourning was because of his evil, incestuous, unfulfilled lust. Others carry "Legitimate Sorrow" to an *illegitimate* extreme. For example, when a person grieves so hard and so long over the loss of a loved one that he cannot function normally, his Grief actually becomes sinful and a reproach to the Power and Beauty of Salvation. Scripture tells all believers that...

**1 Thessalonians 4:13b**

**... that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.**

... so, yes, genuine believers grieve. But, precisely because we are saved, because we have the Promise of Eternal Life, because we know that God is not merely All-powerful, but that He is also Good, our grief is *moderated* by the Glory of unfading Promises and an invincible God Who is absolutely Sovereign over everything, all the time.

Such depressing, unrelenting, crippling, and destructive Sorrow almost always stems from one of two Issues:

1. Some form of Guilt (which is, by definition, Selfish).
2. A gross misunderstanding of what Forgiveness is and what Jesus actually accomplished on the Cross, acting as a "Propitiation", and not merely as a Sacrifice (**Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1John 2:2; and 1John 4:10**).

In the Old Testament (underneath the inferior Old Covenant), David grieved *illegitimately*, in part to try to atone for his own Guilt. And when the rebellious Absalom, another of David's sons, was killed, his father went into *inconsolable* Mourning:

**2 Samuel 18:33-19:4**

**33 The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"**

**19:1 Then it was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourns for Absalom."**

**2 The victory that day was turned to mourning for all the people, for the people heard *it* said that day, "The king is grieved for his son."**

**3 So the people went by stealth into the city that day, as people who are humiliated steal away when they flee in battle.**

**4 The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"**

... and even though many today would side with David over this, and even try to emulate him in this illegitimate Mourning, look at the result of David's Sin:

**2 Samuel 19:5&6**

**5 Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines,**

**6 by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased.**

The wickedly ambitious Absalom had raised a rebel army, driven the King (who was his own Father) out of Jerusalem, and had taken over the Palace. Now, David's love for his son was completely understandable, but the reality is that his judgment had been warped. But there is no doubt that part of David's great feeling of Guilt stemmed from his having been such a poor Father<sup>2</sup>, and because David knew full well that Absalom's tragedy was part of the Judgment God sent because of David's adulterous and murderous affair with Bathsheba. This Truth makes the King's Mourning over Absalom abnormal. The Divine Judgment that came on Absalom was entirely deserved.

### *Legitimate Mourning*

There are also other kinds of Sorrows, "Legitimate Sorrows", that are common to all Mankind and for which reasonable Mourning is perfectly appropriate. To express these Sorrows and to cry over them opens an escape valve that keeps our feelings from festering and poisoning our emotions and our whole life. It provides the way for Healing, just as washing out a wound helps prevent infection. An ancient, secular Proverb says:

"All sunshine eventually creates a desert."

The "trouble-free life" almost always produces a very shallow life that is typified with callousness and self-righteousness. No human on earth desires, or prays for, or enjoys hardships or troubles. But the reality is that God uses these difficult and hard experiences to soften our hearts and cause us to become people of Mercy.

### **2 Corinthians 1:3-7**

**<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,**

**<sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.**

**<sup>5</sup> For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.**

**<sup>6</sup> But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;**

**<sup>7</sup> and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our comfort.**

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<sup>2</sup> The Bible reveals that many of our "heroes" were actually horrible Fathers and failed their own children and wives- horribly.

Most of the time we often learn more and we mature more from times of Sorrow than we do from times when everything is going well. A familiar poem by Robert Browning Hamilton expresses this Truth:

I walked a mile with Pleasure,  
 She chattered all the way,  
 But left me none the wiser  
 For all she had to say.  
 I walked a mile with Sorrow,  
 And ne'er a word said she,  
 But, oh, the things I learned from her  
 When Sorrow walked with me.<sup>3</sup>

Sarah's death caused Abraham to mourn (**Genesis 23:2**). But the "father of the faithful" did not weep from lack of Faith, but for the loss his beloved wife, which he had every right to do.

Loneliness for the one, true, and living God, from whom he felt separated for a time, caused the Psalmist to declare:

**Psalm 42:1&2**

**1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.**

**2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?**

... but what caused David to talk like this? Sorrow.

**Psalm 42:3-5**

**3 My tears have been my food day and night, While *they* say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"**

**4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng *and* lead them in procession to the house of God, With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.**

**5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And *why* have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him *For* the help of His presence.**

Defeat and discouragement caused Timothy to mourn. This caused Paul, his spiritual Father, to write:

**2 Timothy 1:3-12**

**3 I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,**

**4 longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.**

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<sup>3</sup> (Cited in William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* [rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975], 1:94)

**5** For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well.

**6** For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

**7** For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

**8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

**9** who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

**10** but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

**11** for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

**12** For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

Anguished concern about the Sins of Israel and God's coming Judgment on His people caused Jeremiah to mourn.

#### **Jeremiah 9:1**

**Oh that my head were waters And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!**

Concern for the spiritual welfare of the Ephesian believers had caused the Apostle Paul to mourn.

#### **The Acts 20:31-35**

**31** "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

**32** "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you up* and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

**33** "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.

**34** "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me.

**35** "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'"

... these words by Paul caused the saints at Ephesus to legitimately mourn and grieve:

#### **The Acts 20:36-38**

**36 When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.**

**37 And they *began* to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him,**

**38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.**

The earnest Love of a father caused him to be grief-stricken over his demon-possessed son, even as he brought him to Jesus for healing. No doubt tears ran down the man's face as He implored Jesus to help, confessing:

**Mark 9:24**

**"I do believe; help my unbelief"**

Repentant, worshipful Devotion caused a woman to mourn over her sins as she went into the Pharisees' house and washed Jesus' Feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. To the proud, lost, religious host, who *resented* her "contaminating" his house and interrupting his dinner party, Jesus said:

**Luke 7:47**

**"I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little"**

Immeasurable, Divine Love caused our Lord Jesus to weep and mourn over the sinning people of Jerusalem whom He wanted to gather into His Care as a mother hen gathers her chicks:

**Matthew 23:37-39**

**37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.**

**38 "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!**

**39 "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, '*BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!*'"**

## **Godly Mourning**

The Mourning about which Jesus is talking in the second Beatitude has nothing to do with the types just discussed, "Legitimate" or "Illegitimate". Our wonderful Lord is concerned about all of the Legitimate Sorrows of His children, and He promises to Console, Comfort, and Strengthen us when we turn to Him for Help. But those are not the kind of Sorrow at Issue here. Jesus is speaking of "Godly Sorrow", "Godly Mourning", which is Mourning that only those who have been given the Desire to belong to Jesus have, or who already belong to Him can experience.

The Apostle Paul speaks of this Sorrow in his second Letter to Corinth.

**2Corinthians 7:4-11:**

**4** Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

**5** For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.

**6** But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

**7** and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

**8** For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it — *for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while* —

**9** I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of repentance*; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of God*, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

**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.

**11** For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

The only Sorrow that brings “Spiritual Life and Growth” is “Godly Sorrow”; Sorrow over Sin that leads to Repentance. In the Bible, Godly Sorrow is always linked to genuine, heart-felt Repentance, and that kind of real Repentance is always linked to our own Sin.

So, as the first Beatitude makes clear, the Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven begins with being “Poor in Spirit,” with recognition of total “Spiritual Bankruptcy”. The only Way any person can come to Jesus Christ is empty-handed, totally destitute, and pleading for God's Mercy and Grace. Without a sense of this “Spiritual Poverty”, no one can enter the Kingdom. But even after we have entered the Kingdom through Salvation, we should never lose that sense:

### **Romans 7:18a**

**For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh ...**

“Spiritual Poverty” always leads to “Godly Sorrow”. The “Poor in Spirit” always become “**those who mourn**”. After his great Sin involving Bathsheba and Uriah, David repented and expressed his Godly Sorrow in **Psalm 51**:

**1** Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

**2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.

**3** For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

- 4** Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.
- 5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.
- 6** Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
- 7** Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8** Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.
- 9** Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities.
- 10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11** Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12** Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.
- 13** *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.
- 14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; *Then* my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.
- 15** O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.
- 16** For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.
- 17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
- 18** By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.
- 19** Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

Job was a model believer:

#### **Job 1:1**

**There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.**

... yet he still had something to learn about God's Greatness and his own unworthiness; about God's infinite Wisdom and his own, very imperfect, understanding. Only after God allowed everything dear to Job to be taken away, and then lectured His servant on His Sovereignty and His Majesty, did Job finally come to the place of "Godly Sorrow", of repenting of and mourning over his Sin. He then confessed:

#### **Job 42:5&6**

- 5** "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You;
- 6** Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

God loves and honors a morally righteous life. But that is no substitute for a "humble and contrite Heart", which God loves and honors even more.

**Isaiah 66:2b**

**... But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.**

As seen in the discussion of the first Beatitude, the Greek word *makarios* (**blessed**) means: *to be happy; blissful*. And that Happiness is a Divine Pronouncement, the assured Benefit of those who meet the Conditions that God requires.

The Condition of the second Beatitude is Mourning: “**blessed are those who mourn**”. And there are no less than nine different Greek words used in the New Testament to speak of Sorrow, reflecting its commonness in Man's life. This Sorrow is woven into the cloth of the Human Condition. The Story of History is the Story of tears. Until the Lord returns, History is destined to go from one Tragedy to another, from one Sorrow to yet another one.

Now of the nine different terms used for Sorrow, the one used by Jesus here is *pentheoe*. And it is the strongest one, and the most severe. It represents the deepest, most heart-felt Grief, and was generally reserved for grieving over the death of a loved one. It was used in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) for Jacob's Grief when he thought his son Joseph was killed by a wild animal.

**Genesis 37:34**

**So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned [pentheoe] for his son many days.**

... it was used of the Disciples' Mourning for Jesus before they knew He was raised from the dead.

**Mark 16:10**

**She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning [pentheoe] and weeping.**

... and it was used of the Mourning of world business leaders over the death of its commerce because of the destruction of the world system during the Tribulation:

**The Revelation 18:11-15**

**11 "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn [pentheoe] over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more —**

**12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every *kind of* citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble,**

**13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and *cargoes* of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.**

**14 "The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and**

splendid have passed away from you and *men* will no longer find them.

**15 "The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, [pentheoe]**

This word carries the idea of: *deep inner Agony, which may or may not be expressed by outward weeping, wailing, or lament.* When David stopped hiding his Sin and began mourning over it and confessing it (**Psalm 32:3-5**), he was able to declare:

**Psalm 32:1&2**

**1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!**

**2 How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!**

But we need to understand that Happiness, or Blessedness, does not come in the Mourning itself. Happiness comes with what God does *through* the Mourning, as God moves *in* it, by granting us, first, the Humility to confess our Sin, and then the wondrous Forgiveness that God grants as we "turn away from" that Sin, and learn to "hate" that Sin, and "order our lives" so that we won't engage in that Sin (Repentance).

So, godly Conviction brings forth godly Mourning, which brings forth godly Confession. And what follows our Confession is godly Repentance, which allows for Forgiveness, which, ultimately, brings God's Happiness. And that means that true, godly, biblical Mourning is *not* a psychological or emotional Experience that simply makes people feel better (like a good cry). It is a real Communion with the living, loving God, Who blesses the genuine Mourner with an Objective Reality, Divine Forgiveness!

David experienced and expressed many kinds of common Human Sorrows that were both Legitimate and Illegitimate. He mourned over being lonely, over being rejected, over being discouraged and disappointed, and over losing an infant child. He also mourned inordinately over the death of Absalom, whom God had removed to protect Israel and the Messianic Throne of David. But nothing broke the heart of David like his own Sin. No Anguish was as deep as the Anguish he experienced when he finally saw the awfulness of his Offenses against the Lord. And that is when David became truly Happy, when he, first, became truly Sad over his Transgressions.

The world says things like, "*Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile, smile, smile*" So, from a child, we are taught to hide our Problems and pretend to be Happy. Sadly, this carnal, worldly Philosophy has worked its way into the Church. And some of the most popular Teachings of our day involve us supposedly learning how to defy the Truth by simply speaking certain words, praying certain prayers, or confessing certain phrases, as though us speaking those words will create a different Reality.

But the Truth is that this "new Revelation", that millions of those in the modern church have adopted, isn't "new" at all. It is an ancient Heresy, that was

thoroughly analyzed, thoroughly defeated, and condemned by the Christian Church as Heresy many centuries ago. But, like all false Teachings, this one never died. It morphed through the centuries and finally became the Foundational Teaching of what is now called "Christian Science" (which is neither Christian nor Science).

Through the labor of one man, Kenneth Hagin, the Foundational Heresy of the cult of Christian Science has been "sanctified" and "normalized" and repackaged as a "new Revelation from God", and is now practiced by people, who lay claim to be saved, all around the world. It is summarized with Slogans like "*Name it and Claim it*", and "*Speak the Creative Word*", or "*Positive Confession*".

And that is bad. But what is even worse, is that this very same Man-made Philosophy is applied to our Sin. Because, while many in the modern church either minimize or outright ignore Sin, the infallible Scriptures command, "*Confess your sins, and mourn, mourn, mourn.*"

### **1 John 1:8-10**

**8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.**

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

**10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.**

... and when we do that, our smiles can be genuine, because our Happiness will be genuine. Godly Mourning always brings godly Happiness, which no amount of "human effort" or "optimistic pretense", no amount of "positive thinking" or "possibility speaking" can produce.

### **2 Corinthians 7:8-11**

**8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it — for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while —**

**9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of repentance*; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of God*, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.**

**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.**

**11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.**

Only true mourners over Sin are Happy, because only mourners over Sin have their Sins forgiven. Sin and Happiness are totally incompatible. Where one exists, the other cannot, unless we harden our own hearts. Because until Sin is forgiven and removed, Happiness is locked out. Mourning over Sin brings Forgiveness of Sin, and Forgiveness of Sin brings a Freedom and a Joy that simply *cannot* be experienced in any other way.

What is needed today, in the modern church, is a cry instead of the laughter. The frivolity, silliness, and foolishness that go on "in the name of" Christianity should themselves make us mourn. God's Counsel to the frivolously happy, the Self-satisfied happy, and the indulgent happy is:

**James 4:7-10**

**7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

**8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.**

**10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.**

... truly, the only place in all the world where the concept of "Celebration" comes before "Mourning" and "Repentance" is in the Dictionary. The Bible certainly doesn't teach that we should celebrate before we mourn and repent.

The Reality is that the faithful child of God is *constantly* broken over his own Sinfulness, and the longer he lives and the more mature he becomes in the Lord, the *harder* it is for him to be frivolous. He sees more of God's Love, Mercy, and Grace, but he also sees more of his own and the world's pervasive Sinfulness. So, to "grow in Grace" is also to grow in a deep and profound "awareness of Sin". Speaking to Israel, the Prophet Isaiah said:

**Isaiah 22:11b-13**

**11 ...you made a reservoir between the two walls For the waters of the old pool. But you did not depend on Him who made it, Nor did you take into consideration Him who planned it long ago.**

**12 Therefore in that day the Lord God of hosts called *you* to weeping, to wailing, To shaving the head and to wearing sackcloth.**

**13 Instead, there is gaiety and gladness, Killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, Eating of meat and drinking of wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die."**

We follow that philosophy vicariously, if not actually, when we laugh at the world's crude and immoral jokes, even though we do not retell them, or when we are entertained by a Sin, even though we do not personally indulge in it, or when we smile at ungodly talk, even though we do not repeat the words. For example, for a genuine believer to joke about Divorce, or to make light of Brutality, or to be intrigued by Sexual Immorality, is to rejoice when we should be mourning, it is the epitome of laughing when we should be crying.

**Proverbs 2:11-22**

**11 Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you,**

**12 To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things;**

- 13** From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness;  
**14** Who delight in doing evil And rejoice in the perversity of evil;  
**15** Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways;  
**16** To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words;  
**17** That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God;  
**18** For her house sinks down to death And her tracks *lead* to the dead;  
**19** None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life.  
**20** So you will walk in the way of good men And keep to the paths of the righteous.  
**21** For the upright will live in the land And the blameless will remain in it;  
**22** But the wicked will be cut off from the land And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.

### 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

- 11** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,  
**12** in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Far too many in the modern church have a defective sense of Sin, which is reflected in them laughing, enjoying, or "taking pleasure" in what God despises. When even the members make the Church the butt of jokes, make light of its core Beliefs and Ordinances, caricature its Leaders as inept and clownish, and mock its high Standards of Purity and Righteousness, the Church has great need to turn its Laughter into Mourning.

The Bible recognizes a proper Sense of Humor, Humor that is not at the expense of God's Name, or God's Word, or Christ's Church, or any person, except, perhaps ourselves. God knows that ...

### Proverbs 17:22a

**A joyful heart is good medicine ...**

... but a heart that rejoices in Sin is taking Poison, not Medicine. The way to Happiness is not by *ignoring* Sin, nor in making light of it, certainly not by engaging in it, but rather, through deep sorrow over it, crying out to God for Forgiveness and Deliverance from it.

We can react to our Spiritual Bankruptcy in one of several ways:

1. Like the Pharisees we can *deny* our Spiritual Destitution and *pretend* we are spiritually Rich.
2. Like the Monastics and advocates of "Moral Rearmament", we can admit our condition, but try to change it in our *own* power and by our *own* efforts.

3. We can admit our Condition and then despair over it to such a degree that we try to drown it in drink, escape it by drugs or by activities or give up completely and commit suicide, as Judas did.
4. Like the Prodigal Son, we can admit our Condition, mourn over it, and turn to the heavenly Father to remedy our Poverty.

What the Bible teaches about "Mourning over Sin" *never* brings forth Hopeless Despair. Even the person who has been severely disciplined by the Church should be forgiven, comforted, and loved,

### **2 Corinthians 2:7b**

**... otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.**

... which is why the Apostle then went on to say:

### **2 Corinthians 7:8**

**Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him.**

... nor, is "Godly Mourning" a "wallowing in self-pity and false humility" (which are actually just badges of Pride.) True Mourning over Sin does not focus on *ourselves*, not even on our Sin. It focuses on God, Who Alone can *forgive* and *remove* our Sin. It is an Attitude that begins when we enter the Kingdom, and lasts as long as we are on earth. It is the Attitude of **Romans 7**.

### **The Attitude of Romans 7**

#### **Romans 7:14-25**

**14** For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

**15** For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

**16** But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

**17** So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

**18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

**19** For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

**20** But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

**21** I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

**22** For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

**23** but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

**24** Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

**25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.**

Contrary to some popular interpretation, Paul was *not* speaking about his *former* lost Condition. The Problems of Chapter 7 were *not* "one-time experiences" that were completely replaced by the great Victories of Chapter 8. The Apostle clearly says:

**Romans 7:15**

**For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.**

Here, he uses the *present* tense, as he does throughout the rest of the Chapter:

**Romans 7:18&19**

**18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.**

**19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.**

**Romans 7:21a**

**I find then the principle that evil is present in me ...**

**Romans 7:24a&25b**

**24 Wretched man that I am! ...**

**25 ... So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.**

Paul wrote these words at the very zenith of his Ministry. Yet, Righteousness and Sin were still fighting a battle in his life. As he acknowledges in verse 25, the way of Victory is "**through Jesus Christ our Lord,**" but the rest of the verse makes clear that, at that time, the Victory was not yet complete. He knew where the Victory was, and he had tasted the Victory many times. But he knew that, in this life, it is never a *permanent* Victory. The presence of the flesh sees to that. Permanent Victory is *assured* to us now, but it is not realized in fullness now.

But Paul not only spoke of the entire Creation of God anxiously longing for Restoration, but of his own longing for complete Restoration.

**Romans 8:19-25**

**19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.**

**20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope**

**21** that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

**22** For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

**23** And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

**24** For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees?

**25** But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Paul was weary of Sin; tired of fighting it in *himself*, as well as in the Church and in the world. He longed for relief.

### 2 Corinthians 5:2-8

**2** For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

**3** inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

**4** For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

**5** Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

**6** Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord —

**7** for we walk by faith, not by sight —

**8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

The Sign of the mature, spiritual person is *not* sinlessness, which is reserved for Heaven, but the growing awareness of his own *sinfulness*. The Apostle John taught:

### 1 John 1:8-10

**8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

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

**10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

... the subjects of God's Kingdom, the forgiven ones, the children of God and joint heirs with the Son, are characterized by *continual* Confession of Sin.

Several years ago, I was confronted with a false Teaching about this very subject. People, who had become deceived by it, were telling me of a great "Liberation" that they had received from the Holy Spirit. When I questioned them, they replied that God had "showed them" the true meaning of **1 John 1:9**, and now

they realized that they no longer had to confess their Sins. So, I asked them, "*But, do you still confess your Sins?*" They said, "*We don't have to anymore.*" "*I heard you, but do you?*" When several of them replied, "Yes", I rejoiced. So, I realized that, despite the false Teaching, these people were genuine Christians. Their redeemed natures refused to go along with the false Teaching that their minds had temporarily accepted.

The Greek word that was translated in **Matthew 5:4** as "**mourn**" is *penthountes*. And in **Matthew 5:4**, this word is a "present participle", which indicates a *continuous action*. In other words, those who are *continually mourning* are those who will be *continually comforted*. In his ninety-five Theses, Martin Luther said that the Christian's entire life is a *continuous act* of Repentance and Contrition. In his Psalms, David cried out:

**Psalm 38:4**

**For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me.**

... and ...

**Psalm 51:3**

**For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.**

It is interesting that there is not a single record anywhere in the New Testament of Jesus laughing. We are told of His Weeping, His Anger, His Hunger and Thirst, and many other human Emotions and Characteristics. But, if He laughed at all, we do not know of it. Now we shouldn't get, from that, that Jesus was not happy. God is the happiest Being in the Universe. But Jesus was focused on what He had come to do, save God's people from the horror of their Sins, which is the terrifying and eternal Wrath of God. And to do that, Jesus had to "become" Sin for us, and receive the Just Damnation from God. This brought to our Savior a *continual* Soberness while He was here. And this is why the Prophet Isaiah predicted that Messiah:

**Isaiah 53:3b-7**

**3 ... was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

**4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.**

**6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.**

**7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.**

... yet today, we often hear of “another Jesus”, Who laughs and cajoles and draws people into the Kingdom by His nonjudgmental Spirit and laid-back attitude. The fun-loving, escapist world of comedians is found plying its trade even in the Church, and sadly, it is finding ready acceptance.

### The Result of Mourning

The result of godly Mourning is Divine Comfort. Jesus said, “... **they shall be comforted.**” And that is *why* they are “**blessed**”. It is not the Mourning itself that blesses, but the Comfort that God gives to those who mourn in a godly way. The way this is written in the Original Greek (emphatic pronoun, *autos* (**they**)) indicates that *only* those who mourn over Sin will be comforted. So, the Blessing of God's Comfort is reserved *exclusively* for the contrite of heart. It is only those who mourn for Sin who will have their tears wiped away by the loving Hand of Jesus Christ.

Now the word “**Comforted**” is from the Greek *parakaleō*, which is the very same word that, as a noun, is rendered as “Comforter”, or “Helper”, in **John 14:16**,

#### John 14:16&17

**16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;**

**17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.**

The Old Testament also speaks of God comforting those who mourn. Isaiah tells of the Messiah's coming, among other things:

#### Isaiah 61:1-3

**1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;**

**2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,**

**3 To grant those who mourn *in* Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.**

... King David was also comforted by the Rod and Staff of his Divine Shepherd:

#### Psalm 23:4

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

As our Mourning rises to the Throne of God, His unsurpassed and matchless Comfort descends from Him by Christ to us.

**2 Corinthians 1:3**

**Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort**

... our Lord is always ready to meet our needs, admonishing, sympathizing, encouraging, and strengthening. God is a God of Comfort. Christ is a Christ of Comfort. And the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Comfort. As believers, we have the comfort of the entire Trinity!

Now the phrase "**Shall be**" does *not* refer to the end of our lives, or even the end of the Age. Like all other Blessings of God, it will only be realized in perfect Fullness when we see our Lord face-to-Face.

**The Revelation 21:3&4**

**3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,**

**4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."**

But the Comfort of **Matthew 5:4** is "future" only in the sense that the Blessing always follows the Obedience. So, in this case, the Comfort comes *after* the Mourning. But, as we continually mourn over our Sin, now, we "**shall be**" *continually* comforted, now, in this present life, to a large degree. And that tells us that God is not only the God of "future Comfort", but also of our "present Comfort".

**2 Thessalonians 2:16&17**

**16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,**

**17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.**

Even God's written Word is a "present Comforter", given for our Encouragement and Hope.

**Romans 15:4**

**For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

So, in addition to God Himself giving us Comfort, and His Word giving us Comfort, we are also called to comfort each other with the Promises of His Word:

**1 Thessalonians 4:15-18**

**15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.**

**16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

**17** Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

**18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

#### 2 Corinthians 1:5-7

**5** For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

**6** But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;

**7** and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our comfort.

#### 2 Corinthians 7:12&13

**12** So although I wrote to you, *it was* not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.

**13** For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

#### 2 Corinthians 13:11-14

**11** Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

**12** Greet one another with a holy kiss.

**13** All the saints greet you.

**14** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Happiness comes to sad people because their "godly Sadness" leads to God's Comfort.

#### Matthew 11:28-30

**28** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

**29** "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.**

**30** "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Jesus will lift the Burden from those who mourn over Sin, and He will give Rest to those who are weary of Sin. As often as we confess our Sin, He is faithful to forgive. And for as long as we mourn over Sin, He is faithful to Comfort.

## How to Mourn

What does true mourning over Sin look like? How can we become "godly mourners"?

### Eliminate the Hindrances

The first step requires removing the Hindrances that keep us from mourning, the various things that make us content with ourselves, that make us comfortable in whatever Sin we are in, and that resist God's Spirit, Question His Word, and that harden our hearts. A "stony heart" does not mourn. It is insensitive to God, and the "plow" of the Word and Spirit cannot break it up. It only stores up more and more Wrath till the "Day of Wrath".

#### Romans 2:3-11

**3** But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

**4** Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

**5** But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

**6** who *WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS*:

**7** to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

**8** but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

**9** *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

**10** but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

**11** For there is no partiality with God.

A deep and pervasive "Love of Sin" is the *primary* Hindrance to true, godly Mourning. Holding on to Sin will harden the human heart. Despair *also* hinders Mourning because Despair is "giving up on God", *refusing* to believe that He can save and help. Despair is putting ourselves *outside* of God's Grace. Of such people Jeremiah wrote,

#### Jeremiah 18:12

**But they will say, 'It's hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.'**

The person who despairs (as a way of life) believes he is destined to Sin. And because he believes God has given up on him, he then gives up on God. Despair

*excuses* Sin by choosing to believe that there is no choice. Despair hides God's Mercy behind a self-made cloud of Doubt.

Another hindrance is Conceit, which tries to hide the Sin itself, choosing to believe that there is nothing over which to mourn. It is the spiritual counterpart of a doctor treating a cancer as if it were a cold. But what we need to remember is if it was necessary for Jesus Christ to shed His Blood on the Cross to save us from our Sin, then our Sin must be great indeed!

Presumption also hinders Mourning because it is really a form of Pride. It recognizes the need for Grace, but not much Grace. It is satisfied with "cheap Grace", expecting God to forgive "just a little", because it sees little for which to be forgiven. To the presumptuous one, Sins are "Bad", but not "bad enough" to be confessed, repented of, and forsaken. Yet the Lord declared through Isaiah:

#### **Isaiah 55:6&7**

**6 Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.**

**7 Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.**

No Divine Pardon is offered at all to the unrepentant, presumptuous person who *refuses* to forsake his Sin. The "gospel" that teaches otherwise has always been popular, as it is in our own day, but it is a "false gospel", a "different gospel", a distortion and contradiction of the true Gospel of Scripture.

#### **Galatians 1:6-9**

**6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;**

**7 which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.**

**8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!**

**9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!**

Procrastination also hinders godly Mourning simply by putting it off. It says, "*One of these days, when things are just right, I'll take a hard look at my Sins, confess them, and ask God's Forgiveness and Cleansing.*" But Procrastination is foolish and dangerous, because:

#### **James 4:13&14**

**13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."**

**14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.**

... the *sooner* the Disease of Sin is dealt with, the *sooner* Comfort will come. If it is not dealt with, we have no Assurance that Comfort will *ever* come, because we have no Assurance we will have time to confess it later.

The most important Step we can take in getting rid of these spiritual Hindrances to Mourning, whatever they are, is to look at the Holiness of God and the great Sacrifice of Sin-bearing at the Cross. If seeing Christ die for our Sins does not thaw a cold heart or break up a hardened heart, then it is beyond melting or breaking. In her poem "Good Friday," Christina Rossetti gave these moving lines:

Am I a stone and not a sheep,  
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy Cross,  
To number drop by drop Thy Blood's slow loss  
And yet not weep?  
Not so those women loved  
Who with exceeding Grief lamented Thee;  
Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;  
Not so the thief was moved;  
Not so the Sun and Moon  
Which hid their faces in a starless sky.  
A horror of great Darkness at broad noon —  
I, only I.  
Yet give not oe'r  
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;  
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more  
And smite a rock.

### Study God's Word

The second step toward godly Mourning is to study Sin in Scripture, to learn what an evil and repulsive thing it is to God, and what a destructive and damning thing it is to us. We should learn from David to keep our Sin ever before us (**Psalm 51:3**), and from Isaiah to say, "**Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips**" (**Isaiah 6:5**). We should learn from Peter to say, "**I am a sinful man**" (**Luke 5:8**), and from Paul to confess that we are the "chief of sinners" (**1 Timothy 1:15**). As we hear those great men of God talking about their Sin, we are forced to face the Reality and the depth of our own.

Sin tramples on God's Laws, makes light of His Love, grieves His Spirit, spurns His Forgiveness and Blessing, and in every way resists His Grace. Sin makes us weak and makes us impure. It robs us of Comfort, and, much more importantly, robs God of Glory.

### Pray

The third step toward godly Mourning is to pray for "contriteness of heart", which only God can give and which He never refuses to give those who ask. It must

always be recognized that Humility depends on the work of God's Spirit. The Way to godly Mourning lies, not in pre-salvation human works, but in God's saving Grace.

### How May We Know if We are Mourning as Jesus Commanded?

Knowing whether or not we have godly Mourning is not hard. First, we need to ask ourselves if we are sensitive to Sin. If we laugh at it, excuse it, take it lightly, or enjoy it, we can be sure we are *not* mourning over it, and are outside the sphere of God's Blessing.

The "fake righteousness" of hypocrites, who make every effort to appear Holy on the outside (see **Matthew 6:1-18**), have no *sensitivity* to Sin. They are only sensitive to their own personal Prestige and Reputation. Also, those who engage in a "fake gratitude", who thank God they are better than other people (**Luke 18:11**), have no sensitivity to Sin either. King Saul correctly "regretted" that he had disobeyed God by not slaying King Agag and by sparing the best of the Amalekite animals. But he was not truly repentant, because he never mourned over his Sin. Instead, he excused his actions by claiming that the animals were spared so that they could be sacrificed to God, and that the people made him do what he did. He twice admitted that he had sinned, and even asked Samuel for Pardon. But his real concern was not for the Lord's Honor, but for his own.

#### 1 Samuel 15:30

**Then he said, "I have sinned; *but* please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the Lord your God."**

... Saul had "ungodly, human Regret, not "godly Mourning."

The godly mourner will have true Sorrow for his Sins. His first concern is for the Harm that his Sin has done to God's Glory, not the harm its exposure might bring to his own reputation or welfare.

If our Mourning is truly godly, we will grieve for the Sins of fellow believers and for the sins of the world as well. We will cry with the psalmist,

#### Psalm 119:136

**My eyes shed streams of water, Because they do not keep Your law.**

... we will wish, with Jeremiah, that our heads were fountains of water that we could have enough tears for weeping (**Jeremiah 9:1**; cf. **Lamentations 1:16**). With Ezekiel, we will search out faithful believers "**who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed**" around us (**Ezekiel 9:4**; cf. **Psalms 69:9**). And we will look out over the Community where we live and weep, as Jesus looked out over Jerusalem and wept (**Luke 19:41**).

The second Way to determine if we have genuine Mourning over Sin is to check our sense of God's Forgiveness. Have we experienced the Release and Freedom of knowing our Sins are forgiven? Do we have His Peace and Joy in our life? Can we point to true Happiness He has given in response to our Mourning? Do

we have the Divine Comfort He promises to those who have forgiven, cleansed, and purified lives?

**Psalms 126:5&6**

**5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.**

**6 He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying *his* bag of seed, Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves *with him*.**

Amen.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.