

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - January 26, 2023

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Title: "The Sermon On The Mount" - Part III

"The Beatitudes" - Part II - Matthew 5: 1-12

I. Introduction

A. During this study session we will continue our journey into and through the greatest sermon ever preached, given by the greatest preacher of all time, the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. I would like to refresh your memory concerning the highly complex religious society in which Jesus lived while here on earth. Remember the four primary professional religionist groups that we covered in the previous lesson.

C. They were the **Pharisees**, the **Sadducees**, the **Essenes**, and the **Zealots**. (Please review the previous lesson if you need to refresh your mind concerning the positions and outlooks of these groups.)

D. I would also like for you to keep in mind the importance of this great sermon and the five reasons that were provided in the previous lesson.

E. We shall now continue with The Beatitudes and remember that they are progressive. Each one leads to the other in logical succession.

F. A Christian who has all the qualities of the Beatitudes will be (with humility), so far above the level of the world that his or her life will rebuke the world (in love), which will bring persecution from the world (Matt. 5:10-12) and light to the world (vv 14-16).

G. This lesson starts with Matthew 5:4, and I encourage you to stay focused on the Lord as we unfold these truths, one verse at a time.

II. Exposition [Part I] - Happy are the Sad (Matthew 5:4)

"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

A. In Psalm 55 David cries out, "And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness, Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." (Psalm 55:6-8).

B. Such a cry comes from the lips of almost everyone at some time or another. David echoes the cry of humanity - a cry for release, a cry for freedom, a cry for escape from things that weigh on us.

C. 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 trouble of life is much harder to find than shelter from rain.

Point: The deeper the sorrow, the harder the pressure, the worse the despair, the more elusive comfort seems to be.

D. This second beatitude seems to be from a logical standpoint contradictory. How could the path to happiness be in sadness, and the way to rejoicing is in mourning?

E. In the routine of ordinary day-to-day living, the idea seems absurd. The principle that mankind operates under is that pleasure brings happiness, money brings happiness, fame and praise bring happiness.

F. On the negative side, avoiding pain, trouble, disappointment, frustration, hardships, and other problems bring happiness. But Jesus turned the world's principles exactly upside down. He reversed the path to happiness.

G. To discover what Jesus meant, and did not mean in this beatitude, we will look at the meaning of mourning as it is used here, the result of mourning, the way to mourn as Jesus teaches, and the way to know if we are truly mourning.

III. Exposition [Part II] - Improper Mourning

A. Improper mourning is the sorrow of those who are frustrated in fulfilling evil plans and lusts, or who have misguided loyalties and affection. To those who mourn in that way, the Lord offers no help or solace.

B. David's son "... Ammon was so vexed (i.e., frustrated) that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Ammon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her." (2 Samuel 13:2).

Comment: Ammon's grief was caused by incestuous, unfilled lust.

C. Others carry legitimate sorrow to illegitimate extremes. When a person grieves so hard and so long over the loss of a loved one that he or she cannot function normally, their grief becomes sinful and destructive.

D. Such depressing sorrow is usually related to guilt, essentially selfish, and, for a Christian, is a mark of unfaithfulness and a lack of trust in God.

E. David grieved that way, in part to try to atone for his guilt. When the rebellious Absalom, another of David's sons, was killed, his father went into inconsolable mourning (2 Samuel 18:33 - 19:4).

F. Joab finally rebuked the king saying, "... Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters; and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines. In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well." (2 Samuel 19:5,6).

G. The wickedly ambitious Absalom had raised a rebel army, driven the king - his own father - out of Jerusalem and taken over the palace.

H. David's love for his son was understandable, but his judgment had been perverted. This was probably because of his great feeling of guilt for having been such a poor father, and because he knew that Absalom's tragedy was part of the judgment God sent because of David's adulterous and murderous affair with Bathsheba. The king's mourning over Absalom was abnormal.

IV. Exposition [Pat III] - Proper Mourning

A. There are also other kinds of sorrow, legitimate sorrows that are common to all mankind and for which reasonable mourning is appropriate.

B. 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.

Comment: The trouble-free life is likely to be a shallow life.

Point: We often learn more and mature more from times of sorrow than from times when everything is going well.

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

D. Loneliness for God, from whom he felt separated for a time, caused the psalmist to declare, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" (Psalm 42:1-3).

E. Defeat and discouragement caused Timothy to mourn, leading Paul, his spiritual father, to write, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;" (2 Tim. 1:3-4).

F. Anguished concern about the sins of Israel and God's coming judgment on His people caused Jeremiah to mourn. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jeremiah 9:1)

G. Concern for the spiritual welfare of the Ephesian believers had caused Paul to mourn. "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:31)

H. Because of their great love for him, the elders from the Ephesian Church later mourned for Paul as he prayed with them on the beach near Miletus, "Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship." (Acts 20:38)

I. Immeasurable divine love caused our Lord to weep at the death of Lazarus (John 11:35) and over the sinning people of Jerusalem, whom He wanted to gather into His care as a mother hen gathers her chicks (Matt. 23:37).

V. Exposition [Part IV] - Godly Mourning

A. The mourning which Jesus is talking about in the second beatitude has nothing to do with the types of mourning just pointed out above, proper, or improper.

B. The 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.

C. But those are not the kinds of sorrow at issue here. Jesus is speaking of godly sorrow, godly mourning, mourning that only those who sincerely desire to belong to Him or who already belong to Him can experience.

D. Paul speaks of this sorrow in his second letter to the Corinthians. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you. (2 Cor. 7:10-11a)

Points:

- 1) The only sorrow that brings spiritual life and growth is godly sorrow, sorrow over sin that leads to repentance.
- 2) Godly sorrow is linked to repentance, and repentance is linked to sin.

E. As the first beatitude makes clear, entrance into the kingdom of heaven begins with being "poor in spirit," with recognition of total spiritual bankruptcy.

F. The only way any person can come to the Lord Jesus Christ is empty-handed, totally destitute and pleading for God's mercy and grace. Without a sense of spiritual poverty no one can enter the kingdom.

G. Spiritual poverty leads to godly sorrow; the poor in spirit become those who mourn. After his great sin involving Bathsheba and Uriah, David repented and expressed his godly sorrow in Psalm 51: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightiest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." (Psalm 51:3,4)

H. Job was a model believer, "blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil (Job 1:1). 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.

I. 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. "I have heard of thee by

the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee, Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5,6).

Point: God loves and honors a morally righteous life, but it is no substitute for a poor (i.e., humble) and contrite spirit, which God loves and honors even more (Isa. 66:2).

J. As it was pointed out in our previous lesson dealing with the first beatitude, **makarios (blessed)** means to be happy, blissful. That happiness is a divine pronouncement, the assured benefit of those who meet the conditions God requires.

K. The condition of the second beatitude is mourning: **Blessed are they that mourn.** //Please stay with me.//

L. Nine different Greek words are used in the New Testament to speak of sorrow, reflecting its commonness in our life, and of the nine terms used for sorrow, the one used in this beatitude (**pentheo, mourn**) is the strongest, the most severe.

M. It represents the deepest, most heart-felt grief, and was generally reserved for grieving over the death of a loved one. It is used in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) for Jacob's grief when he thought his son Joseph was killed by a wild animal (Gen. 37:34).

N. **Pentheo (mourn)** is used of the disciples' mourning for Jesus before they knew he was raised from the dead (Mark 16:10).

O. This word is used to express the mourning of world business leaders over the death of its commerce because of the destruction of the world system during the Tribulation (Rev. 18:11, 15).

P. The word **mourn** 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 (Ps. 32:3-5), he could declare, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is not guile (deceit)" (Ps. 32:1-2).

Points:

- 1) Happiness, or blessedness, does not come in the mourning itself. Happiness comes with what God does in response to it, with the forgiveness that such mourning brings.
- 2) Godly mourning brings God's forgiveness, which brings God's happiness.
- 3) Mourning is not merely a psychological or emotional experience that makes people feel better. It is a communion with the living, loving God who responds to the mourner with an objective reality - the reality of divine forgiveness.

VI. Exposition [Part V] - The Result of Mourning

A. The result of godly mourning is comfort: for they shall be comforted. That is why they are blessed.

B. The emphatic pronoun **autos (they)** indicates that only those who mourn over sin will be comforted. The blessing of God's comfort is reserved exclusively for the contrite of heart (those expressing genuine remorse for sin). It is only those who mourn for sin who will have their tears wiped away by the loving hand of Jesus Christ.

VII. Exposition [Part VI] - How to Mourn

A. What does true mourning over sin involve? How can we become

godly mourners?

1. Eliminate Hindrances

- a. The first step requires removing the hindrances that keep us from mourning; anything that makes us content with ourselves, that makes us resist God's Spirit and question his Word, and that hardens our heart.
- b. A stony heart does not mourn, it is insensitive to God and His plow of grace cannot break it up.
- c. Love of sin is the primary hindrance to mourning, holding on to sin will freeze the heart.
- d. Despair hinders mourning because despair is giving up on God, refusing to believe that He can save and help. Jeremiah wrote - "And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart." (Jer. 18:12)
- e. Another hindrance is conceit, which tries to hide the sin itself, choosing to believe that there is nothing over which to mourn.
- f. Presumption is also a hindrance to mourning because it is really a form of pride. It recognizes the need for grace, but not much grace. Presumption knows that sin is bad, but not bad enough to be confessed, repented of, and forsaken. Yet the Lord declared through Isaiah - "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55:7)

- g. Procrastination hinders godly mourning simply by putting it off.

Point: Procrastination is foolish and dangerous, because, the Word of God says - "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14)

VIII. Exposition [Part VII] - Study God's Word

- A. 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.
- B. Sin tramples on God's laws, grieves the Holy Spirit, turns away God's blessings, and resists His grace. It robs us of God's comfort and, sin robs God of His Glory!

IX. Exposition [Part VIII] - Pray

- A. The third step towards godly mourning is to pray for contriteness of heart, which only God can give and which He never refuses to give those who ask.

X. Exposition [Part IX] - How To Know If We Are Mourning as Christ Commands

- A. Knowing whether or not we have godly mourning is not difficult. First, we need to ask ourselves if we are sensitive to sin. If we laugh at it, take it lightly, or enjoy it, we can be sure that we are not mourning over it and are outside the sphere of God's blessing.
- B. The mock righteousness of hypocrites who make every effort to appear holy on the outside (see Matt. 6:1-18), have no sensitivity to sin.

C. The godly mourner will have true sorrow for his or her sins. Their first concern is for the harm sin does to God's glory.

D. The second way to determine if we have genuine mourning over sin is to check our sense of God's forgiveness. Have you experienced the release and freedom of knowing that your sins are forgiven? Do you have peace and joy in our life?

E. The Word of God declares - "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm 126:5,6)

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

I pray that this lesson has been a blessing to you and you have a clearer understanding of the Great Comfort that we have in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In The Master's Service

Pastor Austin