

## ...Those who Mourn(2)

*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Mt 5:4*

Of all the beatitudes, this is one of the most difficult. "Blessed (supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off, happy, honored by God) are those who mourn."

*penthos; pentheo "to mourn," "to grieve" "to bewail," The noun penthos "sorrow," "grief," and also painful event or fact. Originally penthein or penthos denotes sorrow of heart, (Kittel TDWNT: 3996)*

The first time we read this and its counterpart in Luke we are somewhat at a loss. It doesn't sound possible.

*Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh... woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep. Lk 6:20-26*

Like many of Jesus statements this one is meant to force us to think and evaluate. Since it does not logically fit our understanding, it forces us to re-evaluate our logic. Either what Jesus said is wrong(impossible) or our present view of things is wrong.

The first attempt some make to harmonize, describes mourning as something done before becoming a Christian. After obedience to the gospel the comfort begins and the mourning ends. But the grammar will not allow this view. Jesus used a Present Active Participle(here and in Luke 6:20; 26). In Greek, participles do not have time built into them. There is no past, present, or future there is only action. A Present Active Participle is only used when the speaker is defining continuous action. Jesus actually said: "blessed are the mourning ones" or "blessed are the ones who are mourning." A Greek speaking person would mentally add "always." "Blessed are you who are always mourning." So though the easy answer is we mourn until we become a Christian and then are comforted. It is not what Jesus said. We are going to continuously mourn and we are going to be continuously comforted. We will mourn and be comforted over and over again.

Yet this presents a paradox when joined to other Scriptures. After baptism the Eunuch went on his way rejoicing(Acts 8:39). Isn't that the way it is supposed to be? We mourn until we become a Christian, and then we rejoice always? Isn't that right? Isn't that what Paul said?

*Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Phil 4:4*

How do we harmonize these two Scriptures? How do we rejoice while we mourn or mourn as we rejoice always? The truth is our heart is big enough for both, because the circumstances of life will bring both.

When we first heard the gospel, the only logical emotion was grief, sorrow and mourning. The good news of salvation was joined with the terrible news of our own spiritual condition and the fate we deserve. The gospel is good news because God has given us the means to be forgiven. But first comes the bad news:

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Rom 3:23*

*I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He you shall die in your sins. John 8:24*

*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Eph 2:1-3*

If we did not mourn when we heard these words, we would never have obeyed the gospel. This is why Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who are mourning. This mourning leads to obedience and the comfort of salvation. Because the gospel created mourning we repented and in our godly sorrow we obeyed and received comfort. But is this a once in a lifetime experience? Will we never sin again? When we sin again should we be oblivious to the consequences? The truth is that we will mourn again and again after each sin either of commission or omission.

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. Ps 51:17*

*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. James 4:8-10*

*Now while Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there was gathered together unto him out of Israel a very great assembly of men and women and children; for the people wept very sore. Ezra 10:1*

When we commit sin, we must feel remorse, sorrow and grief for that sin. Each sin must be confessed with mourning and sorrow over falling short. The only way we avoid mourning is to refuse to admit sin.

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive 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. 1 Jn 1:8-9*

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he was deeply concerned at their lack of sorrow and grief over the sin that had entered the congregation. Far from “rejoicing always,” such a lack of mourning only revealed pride.

*And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst. 1 Cor 5:2*

When Paul wrote the second letter he commended them that the strong rebuke in the first letter had led them to mourn and sorrow for their sin. This had led them to godly sorrow, repentance, forgiveness and comfort.

*For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 2 Cor 7:8-11*

The passage revealed how we fulfill both commands. Every act of sin in ourselves or others must create godly sorrow and mourning. Such godly sorrow always leads us to act. We repent and confess sin. After sin is forgiven there is rejoicing, in heaven and in our own heart. Only then is it safe to feel comforted.

*I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repents (more) than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance. Luke 15:7*

Those who rejoice always are also those who mourn always over their sins and the sins of others. The joy comes from being forgiven after we mourn, the joy comes from the grace and mercy of God. But our own attitude should be humble and sorrowful as we contemplate our sins, which in turn leads to joy and rejoicing in our forgiveness. Since this is a continuous process, each of us must learn how to make it a part of our daily life exactly as Jesus said in the beatitude.

Yet sin is not the only thing that we will mourn over. Paul felt great grief and unceasing pain over the plight of the lost.

*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Rom 9:1-3*

*Streams of water run down mine eyes, because they observe not thy law. Ps 119:136*

As long as we live, the plight of the lost will bring sorrow and pain. We will ultimately be comforted, but it is a great burden to carry now. Those we love are destroyed by sin. But we are a better people when we feel sorrow. Truly the more we understand, and the more wisdom we gain the more sorrow we feel.

*Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain. Ecc 1:18*

Even death leads to a sanctifying and strengthening mourning that leads to comfort and wisdom as we prepare.

*A good name is better than a good ointment, and the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth. 2 It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart. 3 Sorrow is better than laughter, for when a face is sad a heart may be happy. 4 The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure. Eccl 7:1-4*

There must be no minimizing here. Death is an enemy we must conquer. Comfort can only come

with a right relationship with God. The more death we face and the more grief we endure, the greater the comfort we feel.

*But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1Th 4:13-14*

So now we see both extremes. We must mourn to be comforted and we must rejoice always. Both are true, but must be done in their own domain and order.

*To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: 4 A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance; Eccl 3:1, 4*

There is no question we should rejoice and no question that we will mourn.

*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe. Phil 3:1*

*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Phil 4:4*

*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Mt 5:4*

*Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh... woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep. Lk 6:20, 26*

In the same book we find “rejoice always” and “sorrow in the same verse.”

*For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. Phil 2:27-29*

We also see “rejoice” / “weep” and “sorrowful” / “rejoicing” in the same verse.

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Rom 12:15-16*

*as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; 2 Cor 6:10*

*Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me. Phil 2:17-18*

When we continue to mourn after becoming a Christian we actually show great character strength.

- Those who are mourning have a tender heart and tender conscience.
- Those who see their own spiritual condition and mourn over it will be devout servants.
- Those who see the true condition the lost and mourn over it will be active in evangelism.
- Those who hear of trials and troubles in others and mourn and sorrow will feel compassion and mercy.

We can't insulate ourselves from sorrow and mourning by quoting “rejoice always,” but we can mourn and receive comfort over and over again. When we are afflicted and in great sorrow God will comfort us.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation. 2Cor 1:3-7*

When burdened with sorrow and care leading us to feeling heavy laden, Jesus will bring rest and comfort.

*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Mt 11:28-30*

*The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening (of the prison) to them that are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be*

glorified. Isa 61:1-3

Jesus stressed the importance of true sorrow over sin in a parable(Lk 18:9-14) to those who trusted in themselves and thus never mourned. When these two men went to pray, the self-righteous Pharisee had no mourning or sorrow. He prayed a very different prayer than the penitent grieving Publican and Jesus emphasized the difference in result.

*"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Lk 18:14*

We must not minimize our sins or become apathetic about the suffering and troubles of others. When godly sorrow and mourning over sin leads to repentance and confession, they have done their work and can be safely set aside until needed again. After repentance and confession to God(and to our brethren if public), we are forgiven. God's promise of forgiveness is our balm of comfort.

If we skip any of these steps and seek a continuous comfort that shuns and avoids sorrow for sin, then we are only minimizing our guilt. This leads to a dangerous pride. Saul, Solomon, and the Pharisees all fell because of pride. If we want to avoid the pitfall of a proud self-righteousness that inflates our ego while impoverishing our spirit, then we must see ourselves as Jesus reveals in the first two beatitudes. When we do, God will give us the true comfort:

*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work. 2Th 2:16-17*

The reason Jesus words are a paradox is that life is a paradox. Just about the time things ought to get easy and we ought to be able to relax some tragedy throws us into grief and sorrow. Just when we think we have risen about our weaknesses we are drug back down into the mud. Just when everything is peaceful and prosperous a loved one or friend is thrown into tragedy. But no matter what we pass through, a fullest immersion into sorrow will always lead to comfort.

*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:2*

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Jas 1:2-5*

- 1 What kind of action does a present active participle show?
- 2 Does a Christian only mourn until they obey the gospel?
- 3 What is the paradox when we consider Mt 5:4 with Phil 4:4?
- 4 Why is sorrow one of the emotions we feel when we first hear the gospel(good news)?
- 5 Can we truly obey the gospel if we do not mourn?
- 6 Are remorse and grief always involved in repentance for our sins?
- 7 What was Paul's concern about the emotions the Corinthians were feeling as they witnessed another commit a grievous sin?
- 8 Why did Paul commend them so strongly in the second letter?
- 9 What is it that brings more joy in heaven?
- 10 How did Paul feel about those Jews who had not obeyed the gospel?
- 11 What comes with much wisdom? Why?
- 12 Can we be comforted in every grief?
- 13 Can grief become a useful tool to be used when needed then removed by comfort?