



St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)

Worship Address : Cerritos High School Auditorium
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November 8, 2009

Theme: Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

Text: Matthew 5:4

This is the second message in our series on the Beatitudes. We are covering eight sayings of Jesus that introduce the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus promises great blessing to those who are willing to live life on God's terms. The first three Beatitudes are what we call "paradoxes." A paradox is a truth that seems to be a contradiction but it really isn't. The saying, "Blessed are those who mourn." Seems like a contradiction. Joy is usually associated with blessing—not mourning. But Jesus always told the truth, so we can believe that what he says here is true also. This is another element of Jesus' prescription for spiritual blessing.

In the Scriptures, people mourn for a variety of reasons: (1) They obviously mourn for the death of a loved one. (2) They mourn because of their sin. (3) They mourn because of the sin of God's people. (4) They mourn because of the sin of unbelievers. As you may have guessed, we are going to focus upon what it means to mourn about our sin. Or we could put it another way: We are going to focus upon mourning about our spiritual poverty before God.

First, let's look at what mourning about sin would mean for an unbeliever who is coming to faith. It means very much the same thing as repentance. Repentance has several aspects to it. Repentance literally means that we change our mind. First repentance means that the person is sorrowful before God because of their sin. Second, repentance means that we change our mind about what sin is. The person admits that much of what he/she called more or less "normal" behavior was actually sinful behavior. Repentance also means that the unbeliever changes his/her mind about who Jesus is. Before repentance we may have thought of Jesus as a morally good person or a great religious teacher. He was both of those things and more. When a person repents, he/she comes to confess that Jesus is Lord, the Messiah of Israel, and the Son of God. Finally, when we repent we are filled with the Holy Spirit who empowers us to change our behavior. We will not be perfectly sinless. But true repentance means that we more and more turn away from sinful behavior and turn toward behavior that pleases God.

This is what mourning means for the unbeliever. But remember that Jesus was teaching His disciples when he gave this teaching. When we turn to Christ, we almost immediately become aware of the presence of sin in our lives. We are completely and totally forgiven—we are justified before God. But we still have what theologians call the "sin nature." Paul calls it the flesh. The flesh is that part of us that wants to drag us into sin—even though we know better. This sinful nature will remain with us until we die or until Jesus returns to earth—whichever comes first. So we mourn whenever we give in to the flesh. We



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change our mind again about the nature of our sinful behavior. We admit that it is sinful and we confess this to God. When we do God purifies us from all unrighteousness. He gives us a clean heart and a clean start.

At this point, I want to clarify something about having sorrow for our sins. Scripture speaks of godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Paul writes of the difference between the two in his second letter to the Corinthians. "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, worldly sorrow brings death." So how does a person tell whether they have godly sorrow or worldly sorrow? It is quite easy actually. Godly sorrow leads us towards God. Worldly sorrow leads us away from God. It's that simple. We might be inclined to think that mourning is unpleasant and therefore, we might want to avoid it. But mourning is actually liberating because it is the first step in finding freedom from sin.

Mourning is also liberating, because when we mourn in the right way for our sins because we receive God's comfort. The main emphasis with regard to receiving God's comfort lies in the future when the eternal kingdom of God comes. In Revelation 21, Scripture says that God will wipe away every tear from the believer's eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain when God's eternal kingdom comes. But Jesus also taught that the kingdom was here in the present. He invited people to enter the kingdom by following Him in discipleship. This means that we may expect God's comfort already in this life. God's comfort is something that we should experience as we follow Jesus. We can expect God's comfort already in this age. As we confess our sins specifically to God, God removes our sorrow and any feelings of guilt that we may have and replaces them with His love, joy, and peace.

Do you desire to be blessed beyond belief? Learn the discipline of mourning, repentance, and confession. Then you will be positioning yourself to receive God's personal comfort. You will be supremely blessed because you will be living life on God's terms.