

# Mourning

by Anton Bosch

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*Christians should mourn over spiritual death and unrepentance, rebellion against God, and sin in the church, but also know when to celebrate and rejoice in God's goodness.*

**Duration:** 43:59

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:14

**Topics:** "Mourning"

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## Description

In this sermon, the disciples of John approach Jesus and question why they and the Pharisees fast often, but Jesus' disciples do not. Jesus responds by explaining that while the bridegroom is with them, there is no need for mourning or fasting. However, there will come a time when the bridegroom will be taken away, and then fasting will be appropriate. Jesus then uses the analogy of putting new wine into old wine skins and patching old garments with unshrunk cloth to illustrate the importance of embracing new teachings and practices. He also expresses his sorrow over Jerusalem's rejection of God's salvation and their resistance to his messengers. Finally, Jesus goes on to teach his disciples the Beatitudes, emphasizing the blessings that come to those who are poor in spirit, mourn, are meek, hunger for righteousness, show mercy, are pure in heart, make peace, and are persecuted for righteousness' sake. The sermon references passages from the Old Testament, including 1 Samuel 15, to further illustrate the reasons for mourning and the consequences of disobedience.

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## Transcript

Let's go to Matthew chapter 5, and we've been speaking about the Beatitudes, we dealt with the first one last week, Blessed are the poor in spirit, not last week but a few weeks ago, and we spent a couple of weeks on that. And this morning we come to the second one, which is, Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. But let's just read the context again in Matthew chapter 5. And seeing the multitude, he went up on a mountain, and when he was seated, his disciples came to him.

Then he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you. So the second one in verse 4, Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

And again, this tends to be applied in the human sense, in terms of those who mourn because of bereavement, or who mourn because of some loss or some other difficulty. But in the context of what Jesus is teaching, the principles that really underlie the attitude of those who are part of the kingdom. This attitude of mourning is not over those who mourn over bereavement.

Obviously those who mourn and when it says blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted, that he does comfort us when we mourn. And we will speak about comfort this morning as well. But he is dealing specifically here with spiritual mourning.

And we are going to look this morning at the reasons why Christians should be in an attitude of mourning. Now remember we said that these principles are diametrically opposed to many of the teachings that we get today, in terms of the fact that we should be celebrating, we should be rejoicing, that we should be in this euphoric state, because we are in the kingdom. But it is very important for us to understand where we are and the timing.

Ecclesiastes says there is a time to mourn and there is a time to dance. You can't mourn and dance at the same time. And there is an appropriate time to mourn and there is an appropriate time to dance.

And so when the time for mourning is there, it is not appropriate to be celebrating at that time. Hi, welcome. We are in Matthew chapter 5. We are in Matthew chapter 5. And we are dealing with the Beatitudes and we are dealing with the second one this morning, which is blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

And so there is an appropriate time for mourning and there is an appropriate time for celebration. That is what Ecclesiastes tells us. And it is important for us to understand when the time of mourning is there and when the time of celebration is there, that we act in an appropriate time.

And as we have said, many people feel that today is a time of celebration. And in fact many services or many meetings of churches are called celebration meetings. And the basis of that celebration is because we are now in the kingdom and therefore we need to celebrate.

But now let's have a look at what Jesus teaches about this. And if we go to Matthew chapter 9, a few chapters on, and it is interesting that when Jesus says here, blessed are those who mourn, that word mourn, in Greek there are nine words, nine different words for mourning. Remember when we spoke about poverty, there were I think seven different words for poverty.

And the word for poverty, blessed are those who are poor in spirit, that word poor there is the most poor of all of the states of poverty. And when he speaks about mourning, when he says blessed are those who mourn, this is the deepest form of mourning that the Greek language can express. It is the most deep sense of sorrow.

It is not just feeling a little bit bad. It is not just feeling a little bit blue. But in fact this is mourning at its deepest and its most intense form.

Now in Matthew chapter 9, the disciples of John the Baptist come to Jesus and they say to him, why don't your disciples fast? And this is what happens, verse 14, the disciples of John came to him and said, why do we and the Pharisees fast often but your disciples do not fast? And Jesus said to them, can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. But no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch pulls away from the garment and the tear is made worse. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins, for else the wineskins break and wine is spilt and the wineskins are ruined.

But they put new wine into new wineskins and both are preserved. Now I am not going to deal with verses 16 and 17, but there is a tremendous amount of very important information there and these verses are also often misapplied. What Jesus is saying is there is an appropriate time for certain things.

And there are appropriate ways of doing things. And so he says it's inappropriate to put new wine in old wineskins. It just doesn't work that way.

It's inappropriate to put a new patch on an old garment. That just doesn't work. There are problems with doing that.

And so what he is saying is there is an appropriate time for mourning and an appropriate time for celebration. And they were saying, well, why do the disciples not fast? And you'll see he's using interchangeably the concept of fasting and mourning. These two things are interchangeable.

And when people fasted, particularly in the Old Testament, it was a time of mourning. And when they mourned, often they would abstain from food. And we know that often this is a natural response.

Sometimes when people are in very deep mourning, they have no appetite for food. And so these two concepts are synonymous in this passage. And what they were saying is your disciples must be fasting.

They must be mourning. And Jesus says they don't have to mourn because they have the bridegroom with them. Obviously here is the bridegroom.

But he says the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away. That is now. The last 2,000 years the bridegroom has been taken from us.

And he says then they will mourn. Then they will mourn. In other words, Jesus is saying that the time in which we find ourselves now, in the absence of our bridegroom, is not a time of celebration.

It's a time of mourning. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Now we're going to look in a moment why we should be mourning.

When will we celebrate? When we are united with our bridegroom again? When we see him face to face. And we enter into the marriage feast of the Lamb. That will be a great time of celebration.

Now we're not saying that we mustn't be happy. We're not saying that the fruit of the Spirit being joy, amongst other things, mustn't be present in our lives. But at the same time, the emphasis on hilarity is not an emphasis that Jesus brings to the New Testament.

And many people say, well, you know, Jesus had a sense of humor. He may have had a sense of humor, but you know, it's interesting that the Scripture doesn't tell us about it. I'm not saying he didn't have.

But what does the Scripture, how does the Scripture reveal Jesus to us? As a man who walks down the road with his twelve disciples, telling jokes and making light comments about this and that, and really just, you know, being frivolous? At no stage is Jesus revealed as such. But what he is revealed as, in Isaiah 53, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And that is how Jesus reveals himself to us. And so we find that there is a call upon us in the New Testament, over and over in Paul's writings, for us to be sober. Now that word sober is not the opposite of being drunk.

But sober in the sense of being level-headed. In terms of having our mind under control. Not being carried away by all sorts of light-hearted things.

But being weighty. That word sober and weighty, in a sense. Now, again, we're not advocating that we must be walking around with long faces.

And we must be walking around unhappy. Of course we have much to rejoice about. Because the Lord is good and He is gracious.

But at the same time, underlying all of that, needs to be an awareness of the fact that there is much reason for mourning. And let's have a look at some of those reasons. First of all, we go to the Old Testament.

And in 1 Samuel chapter 15, And the chapter here deals with Saul, who had failed as king of Israel. And Samuel now withdraws from Saul. And the Lord withdraws from Saul.

You remember, he comes back from the battle against the Amalekites, having been disobedient to the Lord. Samuel then confronts him, and Samuel turns away from him. And verse 34 of 1 Samuel 15 says, Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.

And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel. Then the Lord said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? And then He instructs him to go and anoint David as king over Israel.

And so, the first reason for mourning is over those who are spiritually dead and unrepentant. Those who are spiritually dead and unrepentant. Now, folk, there is not one of us who do not know people who have turned from the Lord, who are unrepentant in their sin.

And again this week I had confrontation with the man I mentioned earlier who has fallen into grievous sin. And again, just being aware of the absolute hardness of heart and the unwillingness to repent, the unwillingness to show any form of remorse for this terrible sin that he is living in. And you know, that is the reason for mourning.

And you know, again I was challenged concerning Samuel's attitude. You know, Samuel does not turn away from Saul and he is not angry. He does not seek revenge over Saul.

He does not seek to say, Yeah, well I told you so. But there is a deep mourning within Samuel because of Saul's failure. And folks, sometimes when we see people fail, when we see people turn away from the Lord, when we see people fall into sin, sometimes there can be a sense of justification, of saying, Well, I always thought he was suspect.

I always thought that he wasn't this or that or the other thing. But notice that Samuel mourns for Saul, even though Saul had turned terribly from his calling and had failed miserably in the anointing for which God had called him as king over Israel. And so the first reason for mourning is over those who are spiritually dead and unrepentant.

And then in Matthew chapter 23, and we are going to look at many scriptures this morning because I feel the need to prove this point because of the fact that this is a thought that is somewhat radical to some people. Matthew chapter 23 and verse 37, Jesus comes over the brow of the hill on what we call Palm Sunday. And it says, He says, O Jerusalem, sorry verse 37, Matthew 23 verse 37.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you were not willing.

So your house is left, you are desolate. For I say to you, you shall see me no more until you say, Baruch haba b'shem Adonai. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And so Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. Twice it speaks about Jesus weeping. This is one of the occasions as he looks over Jerusalem, as he sees the city lie before him.

And he says, How often had I stretched out my arms to you? How often have I sent messengers to you? How often did I not send prophets desiring to draw you to myself? And yet you would not. You resisted me all the time. He wasn't weeping, as some say, because he knew they were going to turn against him and they were going to crucify him.

This was not a personal thing about him being rejected. It was because they had rejected God's salvation. It was because God had drawn them into a relationship with himself.

And you remember that even at Mount Sinai, he says, I brought you on eagle's wings out of Egypt to bring you to myself. God had brought Israel out of Egypt because he wanted a relationship with them for himself. And yet Israel rejected God for year after year, thousands of years.

Until finally they rejected his son as they crucified him. And they cried as a mob, crucify him, away with him. And so Jesus weeps over a rebellious people who were resisting his desire to enter into a relationship with him.

And folk, even today I believe that the Lord Jesus is weeping over those that he is drawing to himself. And yet they resist him and they continue to go their own way. And so there should be mourning in our own hearts over those whom God is drawing and those whom God is calling.

And yet they are in their own rebellion and their hardness of heart continue to go in their own way. And we all know people like that. We have friends, we have members of our family, some have children who are rebellious and who are not coming to the Lord, who are not entering into that relationship with the Lord Jesus.

And in the book of Lamentations, and I won't turn you there because maybe you'll battle to find it, but Lamentations chapter 5 and from verse 15 to 18, Jeremiah who I believe wrote Lamentations, speaks about the mourning over the desolation of Jerusalem. The desolation of Jerusalem, Jerusalem being in ruins. And so there should be mourning in our hearts even today over the state of Israel, over the fact that Jerusalem is being trodden underfoot by the Gentiles, over the war and the lack of peace that is in the promised land.

But more than just Jerusalem, over the church and the state of the church in many, many cases. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, and it's interesting that this concept of mourning appears in the book of Corinthians a number of times. And remember that one of the hallmarks of the Corinthian church was the tremendous amount of celebration and ecstatic forms of worship that existed in their meetings.

And yet Paul calls them to mourning. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, and he's dealing with this issue of sin that had crept into the church, a kind of sin which was very grievous. And he says in verse 1 of 1 Corinthians 5, It is actually purported there is sexual immorality among you, such sexual immorality is not even named among the Gentiles, that a man has his father's wife.

And you are puffed up and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. And so he says instead of mourning over the sin that had come into the church, what you were doing is they were rejoicing. And I can only assume that what he was referring to is that they were saying, Look how open-minded we are, look how liberal we are.

And this is something which is coming into the church at large very much today. People are saying we can tolerate all kinds of sin. We're open-minded, we're not restricted to the letter of the law.

We've been set free from these things. And folk rejoice, and there are people who rejoice in their liberality and rejoice in their excesses. And Paul says you shouldn't be rejoicing, you should be mourning.

Because these are not things to feel good about, these are things to be felt bad about. And so there should be mourning over the sin which enters into the church. And when we see the kind of things that are happening in churches today, where ministers are ordained as homosexuals and all of this sort of thing, we should be mourning.

And again, we shouldn't be pointing the finger, folk. It's easy to say, I thank God that I'm not like that, that this church is not like that church. But no, we should be mourning over the state of the church.

We should be mourning over sin. Whenever sin comes into the church, whatever shape and form that sin takes, whether it's sexual sin or whether it's bitterness and anger and strife and envy and division and all of these sorts of things, whatever form of sin, when it comes into the church it should be a reason for us to be mourning before God, to be weeping before Him that by His Spirit He may bring repentance and that He might bring change. In 2 Corinthians chapter 12, again, Paul is writing to the Corinthians.

This is now his second letter, and we'll come back to Corinthians just now, but you'll find that they did in fact repent, and there was mourning amongst them. But there were still those who were persisting in their hardness of heart. And verse 20 of 2 Corinthians 12, verse 20 says, And so Paul says, when I come, he says, I trust that I won't have to mourn, that I won't have to be weeping before God, not just because of the sexual immorality which he lists at the end of verse 21, but also because of the other things, the contentions, the jealousies, the outbursts of wrath, the selfish ambitions, backbiting, whisperings, conceits,

tumults.

Remember one of the things, he opens the first letter of the book of Corinthians, and he says, there is division among you because some say I am of Paul and I am of Apollos. And he says, if I come and I find that amongst you, he says that I would have to mourn. There would be reason for weeping when I come into the church.

And so the presence of sin in the church is a cause for mourning. And in John chapter 11, John's gospel chapter 11, we find the shortest verse in the Bible, and I'm sure you know what it is, John chapter 11, and let's read from verse 33. Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled and said, where have you laid him? And they said to him, Lord, come and see.

Jesus wept. That's the shortest verse. And so this is Lazarus' tomb.

And again, I've been horrified to hear preachers preach about the fact that Jesus wept because he loved Lazarus so much. And Lazarus was now dead. That's not what it was about.

Why did Jesus weep about Lazarus being dead? Jesus knew he was going to raise him from the dead. Jesus had told Mary and Martha that he was going to raise him from the dead. Why would he mourn over someone who was just sleeping? By his own confession he said, he's just sleeping.

And he was going to come to wake him up. So Jesus was not mourning about the loss of Lazarus. What Jesus was mourning about was over the unbelief that he was seeing amongst those who were his friends and amongst the scribes.

And so even Mary and Martha did not believe in Jesus. Did not believe that he was able to raise Lazarus from the dead. And so Jesus' mourning is not over Lazarus' death.

Jesus' mourning is over the unbelief which he sees amongst those who were gathered at the tomb. Weeping as though there was never going to be a resurrection. Weeping as though there was no life after death.

And so when we exhibit unbelief, the Lord mourns. And I believe that as a church we should be mourning over unbelief in our own hearts. Unbelief in the church and unbelief amongst those who claim to be the friends of God.

Now we've spoken about some of the things in the church and some of the things that happen amongst believers that we should be mourning about. But we should also be mourning about what happens in the world. And again we tend to have the attitude about when we read the newspapers and we listen to the radio and we see the television and we see all the things that happens out in the world.

We tend to have a feeling of superiority. And we tend to feel well, you know, I thank God that I'm not in that situation. Well of course we should thank God for that.

But when we do that in an attitude of feeling well, we're better than anybody else. Lot speaks about Lot in the book of Peter 2 Peter 2 verse 7. It says in the Old King James that he vexed his soul daily over the things that were happening in the city. Now he was compromised because he should never have been living in that city.

And yet God commends him for this. That in spite of the fact that he was where he shouldn't have been, his soul was vexed daily. He mourned daily over what was happening in the world.

And folks, that should be something that should be breaking our hearts as much as it breaks the heart of God. We know that we can't change the world unless folks come to the Lord Jesus and are born again and their lives are changed as a result of the power of the gospel. But at the same time we cannot walk away and say well that's just the way it is.

There needs to be a weeping going up before God. There needs to be a crying for God for the city. Remember Abraham concerning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

He comes before the Lord and he cries for the salvation of those cities. He weeps before God and he says Lord if there just be 50 won't you just save those cities? God give us grace that we may not just be so concerned about our own little affairs that we forget that there are those outside who need salvation. That the world is in a desperate state.

Needs a savior and yet seems to be going from bad to worse. So mourning over the state of the world. In Amos chapter 8 and again I won't turn you there in case you battle to find it.

But in Amos chapter 8, Amos speaks about a famine which is coming and he says that famine is not one of bread but one of the word. A lack of proper teaching of the word of God. And he says there needs to be mourning over the lack of proper teaching.

There will be a mourning over the famine for the word that has come. And folks our souls should be broken before God over the kind of teaching when you watch some of the stuff that goes on. When you see some of the stuff that comes on television and the books that are available and the kind of absolute rubbish that is being taught by some preachers today.

You know again it shouldn't lead us to a situation of pride but it should bring us to a situation where there is a weeping for God. And even as we travelled up to the Transvaal and Ken went with us and we listened to a tape. Someone gave us the tape and they said you must listen to this.

This is a wonderful tape. This is wonderful teaching. And we listened to this man going on and on and on and he had absolutely nothing to say.

You know the conclusion we came to was that there is such a famine that when somebody just brings anything. Folks think that's wonderful because you know when you're hungry you'll eat anything. When you're hungry you'll eat anything.

And so the little tidbits which are handed out. Folks are just grabbing and they're saying that's wonderful and yet they're starving and they're going away hungry. And I don't say that in any sense of pride or anything but as I listened to the tape desperately wanting to hear what did this man have that was so good to share.

And he had absolutely nothing except words and words and words. And so we live in a time of a famine of the word and it shouldn't lead us to pride. It shouldn't lead us to a point where we say well we thank you God that we are this or we are that.

But to a situation of mourning and saying Lord won't you send us the rains of your spirit. That there may be a harvest. That the famine may be broken.

That people may be fed by a true teaching of your word. And that there may be a great harvest of souls. And then in James chapter 4. Probably one of the hardest verses or harshest verses in the scriptures.

In the book of James. It's after Hebrews before Revelation. James chapter 4. A section of scripture which we've come back to a few times in the last month or so.

So therefore verse 7. Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double minded. Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning.

And your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. And he will lift you up.

And so mourning over double mindedness. Double mindedness. Remember that's the message of the book of James.

That from the same fountain comes both sweet and salty water. That from the same mouth comes both blessing and cursing. That we say yes in the presence of God and yet we find ourselves in the world we say no.

That our yes is not yes. Our no is not no. So there's a double mindedness.

Right through the book he deals with this. And so he says we need to weep and to mourn over double mindedness. Not just double mindedness in other people.

But double mindedness in our own hearts. How often do we not come into the presence of God. How often do we not read the scriptures and we say yes Lord I must do this.

And yet when we find ourselves in the world. We find ourselves in business or in another environment. Suddenly our yes turns to no.

How often do we not from the same mouth bring forth blessing of God. And yet we curse men with that same mouth. God give us grace that we may not be double minded.

That we may be single minded in our devotion to the Lord. That what we say in private and what we say in public may be the same thing. What happens in our hearts and what happens outside may be the same thing.

What happens in the meetings and what happens in the world may be the same thing. That we may be people who are single. Who are not double minded.

And that we may weep over our own double mindedness. And then in 2 Corinthians and then I'm going to turn to the issue of comfort. But in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 you remember we spoke about the sin which had come into the church of Corinth.

And 2 Corinthians 7 as you may remember deals with the issue of repentance. And I'm not going to read the whole passage because we're going to run out of time. But you can if you go home please read from

verse 8 through to verse 12.

And you'll find that he speaks about the need for mourning. Not just remorse. Not just feeling sorry about our sin.

But the need to come to repentance. And this is the problem is that we often feel sorry about some of the things that we've spoken about earlier. We feel sorry about our double mindedness.

We feel sorry about our unbelief. And yet that sorrow is not deep enough. It is not true mourning that brings us to a point of repentance.

And so we just feel bad. But we don't come to repentance. And so Paul says to the Corinthians he says he rejoices.

Because he had to write a hard letter to them. And this letter made them feel bad. This letter brought them to a place of mourning.

Rather than rejoicing over the liberal approach they had to sin. This letter had brought them to a point where they were sorrowing over their sin to the degree that they had repented. And this is the problem is that often times we read the word of God or we hear the word of God preached.

And we recognize that there is something that I need and I feel bad about it. There's remorse. But in fact I'm not feeling bad enough about it.

If I can put it that way. I'm just feeling bad that I failed. But in fact I've not come to mourn to the degree that I say I must turn away.

I must turn away from this thing. I must change my life. I must turn to God.

And so the remorse needs to be deeper. It needs to come to true sorrow of our sin. To the degree that there would be true repentance.

And that's what he deals with there in 2 Corinthians chapter 7. Now while we're in Corinthians let's go to 2 Corinthians chapter 1. And let's talk about the comfort. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. And that's the joy and that's the good news.

The Lord Jesus never just gives us bad news but he always gives us the good news as well. And so he pours in the oil and the wine. The wine burns.

The wine is a disinfectant and it kills the germs. And when you pour wine into a wound it stings. But the oil soothes and the oil brings healing.

And so both are necessary. If you just put on the oil well the germs are still going to be there and the thing is not going to heal. If you just put in the wine well it will kill the germs but there's still going to be a lot of pain.

And so he does both. He pours in the oil and he pours in the wine. And so the reasons and the need for mourning.

But blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. And where does this comfort come from? In 2 Corinthians chapter 1. And we've looked at where the mourning comes from. The reasons for mourning.

Let's look at the reasons for comfort. In 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

The God of all comfort. And so he reveals himself amongst other things as the God of comfort. The God of all comfort.

That's within the nature of God is to comfort those who mourn. To comfort those who sorrow. To comfort those who find themselves downtrodden and downcast.

That's the very nature of God. Remember that one of the names of the Holy Spirit is that he is called the Comforter. The Comforter.

And so we are in a time when we are without our bridegroom. We are in a time of mourning. And in fact he says not only do we mourn but the whole of creation prevails together.

Until the manifestation of the sons of God in Romans chapter 8. So not only is the church mourning but in fact the whole of creation is mourning. Waiting to be set free from the restrictions and the consequences of sin which has come upon the world. And so the whole world and creation is decaying and going backwards all the time.

Because of sin which has come in. Because of Adam. And so even creation he says is mourning and crying out for deliverance.

For the manifestation of the coming of the Lord Jesus. But the Holy Spirit has come. And his function is to comfort us.

And God is the God of all comfort. All comfort. And you know real comfort can only come from him.

We try and comfort one another and we will see in a moment that one of the sources of comfort is other Christians. We should be comforting one another. But you know sometimes our comfort for one another is very shallow.

You know we stand next to someone at a grave site and we say well you know my condolences. What does that mean? It means absolutely nothing. Because I'm not really in that person's position.

I cannot take his sorrow and put it upon myself. I can't take some of his grief away. We are helpless in that situation.

But God is the God of all comfort. He is the one who is able to truly comfort us. He is the only one who truly understands how we feel in times of discouragement.

And particularly in times of mourning. And when we mourn over the things that we have spoken about, he mourns with us. And when we mourn over the sin in the world, he mourns more than we do.

And so he understands absolutely how we feel. When we mourn over the brokenness of the church, he feels that far more intensely than we can ever feel it. And so we're able to, when he says I want to comfort you, I want to come alongside you, we understand that he knows what it's about.

Because he feels that mourning, he feels that loss and that disappointment. He feels that far greater than we can ever do. And so the second source of comfort is also in the next verse, who comforts us in all our

tribulation.

Not just the emphasis on all. And sometimes we say, well does God know about this issue? Or does God know about that? Yes, he knows about everything. And he 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. And so the first source of comfort comes from the Lord.

The second source of comfort comes from other believers. And so he says he comforts us so that we may be able to comfort others. With the same comfort with which he has comforted us.

And so if I found true comfort in my relationship with the Lord Jesus, I will have true comfort to give to someone else. Not false comfort like the world does. And you know, when you look at a grave site and you see unbelievers comforting one another with absolutely empty false hope.

No hope whatsoever. And yet true Christians who have had true comfort from the true Lord of all comfort, we are able to extend true comfort to one another in all kinds. And notice you'll see here that the comfort is not in times of bereavement.

Notice he says he comforts us in all our tribulation. In our tribulation. So we need comfort in spiritual matters far more than we need in temporal and physical matters.

And in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 you'll find reference to Titus. 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 6. Nevertheless God who comforts the downcast comforted us by the coming of Titus. Comforted us by the coming of Titus.

And so God comforted us but he didn't send a message or a word from heaven. But he sent Titus. And Titus brought comfort.

Now you can read the context of that and how that actually happened. But it's interesting when you read the book of Corinthians, you see how many times Paul spoke about the need for mourning in the Corinthian church. In both the letters, in 1st and 2nd Corinthians.

And it's interesting to see how much he speaks about comfort in the 1st and the 2nd letter. And so mourning and comfort go together. There is a need for us to be mourning.

But there is a need for us to be comforted. That we may not find ourselves being overburdened. And in fact Paul writes concerning the man who had sinned.

And remember they had to put him out of the church. And then he says, but now that he has repented, restore him. Lest he be overtaken in his sorrow.

And so he says God does not want us to be overburdened. He doesn't want us to be mourning to a degree that we feel we are going to fold. That we are not going to manage and we are not going to cope.

But in fact he brings the comfort. And he says that even when correction is brought, he sends the comfort. And he restores us again.

And so that's the wonderful goodness and the grace of God. It's not just discipline. It's not just correction.

It's not just mourning. But there is restoration and there is healing. And there is comfort.

And so the comfort came in this instance through this young man called Titus. And then in Romans chapter 15. And this is the third.

And there is really three sources only of comfort. The Lord God is our comfort. We are to comfort one another.

And then finally our comfort is in the word. Our comfort is in the word. Romans chapter 15 and verse 4. Whatever things were written before were written for our learning.

That we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. And so the scriptures bring us comfort. And you know the reality is that in times when I've been in great difficulty.

When I've mourned. In times when I've had great need for comfort. I've found the comfort in the word of God.

As God gives us hope. And you'll see that that comfort is in the context of hope. That we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

And so what do the scriptures remind us? That this is not the end of the conversation. We're not always going to be in this state. The church is not always going to be broken.

There's not always going to be sin in the world. But his kingdom is coming. And he's going to set up his kingdom.

And he will rule and reign forever. And it will be in justice. And there will be no more sin.

And there will be no more injustice. And that all of these things are going to be repaired. And there is a resurrection.

And so he instills the comfort. Not just with a false comfort that we would do with one another. One of the things we say to one another.

No it's not so bad. You know when little Johnny bumps his knee. No it's not so bad.

Well to him it is that bad. And you telling him it's not so bad is really no comfort whatsoever. And yet we comfort one another with these empty words of comfort.

And yet his word contains true comfort. And the comfort lies in the hope of the resurrection. In the hope of a new heavens and a new earth.

In the hope of the fact that he is coming again. In the hope that we will see him face to face. In the hope that we will be able to have true fellowship and communion with him.

As we see him face to face. Not just through a glass darkly. But that we see all things and we know all things even as we are known.

And so the scriptures remind us of the faithfulness of God. And remind us of the fact that there is a new day coming. That there is a hope in the future.

And so our comfort comes from the Lord. Our comfort comes from believers. And our comfort comes from the word.

And that's where we need to find our comfort. It is sad when believers turn to the unbelievers and to the world for comfort. Turning to all sorts of other sources of things that will maybe make them feel better.

Maybe make them feel happy. No, our joy and our comfort is found in the Lord Jesus. It's found in his word and it's found in the church.

And then I'm just going to remind you of two more final scriptures as we close. In Psalm 126, I'm sure you know the verse. Those who sow in tears will reap with joy.

Those who sow in tears will reap with joy. And you know that's the wonderful comfort that we have. Is yes, we may need to be sowing.

And as Jesus sowed in tears as he spent these three years of ministry. Three and a half years. As he went about healing the sick, being rejected.

Seeing men turn away from the word of God. Seeing the hardness of the Pharisees. As he weeps before God for the unbelief that he sees amongst those that he was ministering to.

As he dies that terrible death upon the cross of Calvary. And just sees the absolute unbelief in those who were supposed to be his closest disciples. And yet as he sowed in tears, he is reaped in joy.

And you know that's why it speaks about the temptation that he faced not in the wilderness, in the garden of Gethsemane. That it was for the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross. What was that which strengthened him in the time of difficulty? In the time of temptation? In the time of sorrow? It was the joy that was set before him.

And so for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross. Those who sow in tears will reap with joy. And then finally in Revelation chapter 21.

You see in the new Jerusalem he promises us that there will be no more tears. He will wipe all tears from our eyes. There will be no more sorrow.

And there will be no more crying. And so there is a time. And this is a time of weeping.

This is a time of hardship. This is a time of difficulty. As we find ourselves working our ways and living our lives through this earth.

But the time is coming when we will rejoice. When there will be no more sorrow. There will be no more crying.

And so blessed. Happy. And you know that's a contradiction in terms it seems.

Happy are those who mourn. We say but how can you be happy when you're mourning? And yet that's the kingdom. The kingdom's values and the kingdom doesn't work the way the world works.

Happy are those who mourn. Because they will be comforted. Amen.

Father we thank you for your word. Lord we understand that some of these concepts are very difficult for us to deal with. Lord none of us want to be in a time of sorrow and of mourning.

We all want to be happy and rejoicing. And yet Lord we pray that you give us grace. That we may find happiness your way.

That we may not find happiness the world's way. That we may not find happiness the human or the carnal fleshly way. But Lord that we may indeed find joy and happiness and peace the way you offer it to us.

And so Lord help us to see ourselves the way we are. Help us Lord to see the church and the way it is. Help us Lord to see the world and all of its difficulties.

And Lord not in any way to feel justified, vindicated as a result of those things. But Lord that there may be truth crying before you. Weeping before you over the state of the world.

Over the state of the church. Over the state of our own hearts. And Lord that we may be comforted by the God of all comfort.

Lord we can talk about these things and we can theorize about them. But Lord we need them to be real in our lives. We need these values to be imprinted upon us by your spirit.

And Lord you alone can do that for us. And so we turn to you and we pray Lord that these things may be real and not just theory. And not just philosophies.

But that they may be the realities of our lives. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

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