

The Beatitudes the Second Beatitude

by A.W. Pink

The blessed ones are those who mourn over their sins, and they shall be comforted by the removal of the guilt that burdens their conscience.

Scripture: Matthew 5:4, Luke 18:9-14, Romans 7:24, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Ephesians 1:6, Philippians 4:7, Hebrews 12:11, 2 Peter 3:13, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 21:3-4

Topics: "Mourning for Sin", "Divine Comfort"

Description

A.W. Pink explores the paradox of the second Beatitude, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,' emphasizing that true mourning is a spiritual sorrow over sin and separation from God. He contrasts the self-righteousness of the Pharisee with the humility of the publican, illustrating that genuine mourning leads to justification and comfort from God. Pink explains that this mourning is not limited to initial conviction of sin but is a continual state for believers, who mourn over their failures and the dishonor done to God. He reassures that those who mourn will find comfort through the grace of God, culminating in eternal joy and the promise of no more sorrow in the future. The sermon highlights the importance of recognizing our spiritual poverty and the need for divine comfort in our lives.

Transcript

THE BEATITUDES

THE SECOND BEATITUDE

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"

Matthew 5:4

is hateful and irksome to poor human nature. From suffering and sadness our spirits instinctively shrink. By nature we seek the society of the cheerful and joyous. Our text presents an anomaly to the unregenerate, yet it is sweet music to the ears of God's elect. If "blessed," why do they "mourn"? If they "mourn," how can they be "blessed"? Only the child of God has the key to this paradox. The more we ponder our text the more we are constrained to exclaim, "Never man spake like this Man!"

"Blessed [happy] are they that mourn is an aphorism that is at complete variance with the world's logic. Men have in all places and in all ages regarded the prosperous and gay as the happy ones, but Christ pronounces happy those who are poor in spirit and who mourn. Now it is obvious that it is not every

species of mourning that is here referred to. There is a "sorrow of the world [that] worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). The mourning for which Christ promises comfort must be restricted to that which is spiritual.

The mourning that is blessed is the result of a realization of God's holiness and goodness that issues in a sense of the depravity of our natures and the enormous guilt of our conduct. The mourning for which Christ promises Divine comfort is a sorrowing over our sins with a godly sorrow. The eight Beatitudes are arranged in four pairs. Proof of this will be furnished as we proceed. The first of the series is the blessing that Christ pronounced upon those who are poor in spirit, which we took as a description of those who have been awakened to a sense of their own nothingness and emptiness.

Now the transition from such poverty to mourning is easy to follow. In fact, mourning follows so closely that it is in reality poverty's companion. The mourning that is here referred to is manifestly more than that of bereavement, affliction, or loss. It is mourning for sin. It is mourning over the felt destitution of our spiritual state, and over the iniquities that have separated us and God; mourning over the very morality in which we have boasted, and the self-righteousness in which we have trusted; sorrow for rebellion against God, and hostility to His will; and such mourning always goes side by side with conscious poverty of spirit (Dr.

Pierson). A striking illustration and exemplification of the spirit upon which the Savior here pronounced His benediction is to be found in Luke 18:9-14. There a vivid contrast is presented to our view. First, we are shown a self-righteous Pharisee looking up toward God and saying, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. This may all have been true as he looked at it, yet this man went down to his house in a state of condemnation.

His fine garments were rags, his white robes were filthy, though he knew it not. Then we are shown the publican, standing afar off, who, in the language of the Psalmist, was so troubled by his iniquities that he was not able to look up (Ps. 40:12). He dared not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast. Conscious of the fountain of corruption within, he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." That man went down to his house justified, because he was poor in spirit and mourned for sin.

Here, then, are the first birthmarks of the children of God. He who has never come to be poor in spirit and has never known what it is to really mourn for sin, though he belong to a church or be an office-bearer in it, has neither seen nor entered the Kingdom of God. How thankful the Christian reader ought to be that the great God condescends to dwell in the humble and contrite heart! This is the wonderful promise made by God even in the Old Testament (by Him in whose sight the heavens are not clean, who cannot find in any temple that man has ever built for Him, however magnificent, a proper dwelling place--see Isa. 57:15 and 66:2)!

"Blessed are they that mourn." Though the primary reference is to that initial mourning commonly called conviction of sin, it is by no means to be limited to that. Mourning is ever a characteristic of the normal Christian state. There is much that the believer has to mourn over. The plague of his own heart makes him cry, "O wretched man that I am" (Rom. 7:24). The unbelief that "doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1) and sins that we commit, which are more in number than the hairs of our head, are a continual grief to us.

The barrenness and unprofitable-ness of our lives make us sigh and cry. Our propensity to wander from Christ, our lack of communion with Him, and the shallowness of our love for Him cause us to hang our harps upon the willows. But there are many other causes for mourning that assail Christian hearts: on every hand hypocritical religion that has a form of godliness while denying the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5);

the awful dishonor done to the truth of God by the false doctrines taught in countless pulpits; the divisions among the Lord's people; and strife between brethren.

The combination of these provides occasion for continual sorrow of heart. The awful wickedness in the world, the despising of Christ, and untold human sufferings make us groan within ourselves. The closer the Christian lives to God, the more he will mourn over all that dishonors Him. This is the common experience of God's true people (Ps. 119:53; Jer. 13:17; 14:17; Ezek. 9:4). "They shall be comforted." By these words Christ refers primarily to the removal of the guilt that burdens the conscience.

This is accomplished by the Spirit's application of the Gospel of God's grace to one whom He has convicted of his dire need of a Savior. The result is a sense of free and full forgiveness through the merits of the atoning blood of Christ. This Divine comfort is "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), filling the heart of the one who is now assured that he is "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). God wounds before healing, and abases before He exalts.

First there is a revelation of His justice and holiness, then the making known of His mercy and grace. The words "they shall be comforted" also receive a constant fulfillment in the experience of the Christian. Though he mourns his excuseless failures and confesses them to God, yet he is comforted by the assurance that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses him from all sin (1 John 1:7). Though he groans over the dishonor done to God on every side, yet is he comforted by the knowledge that the day is rapidly approaching when Satan shall be cast into hell forever and when the saints shall reign with the Lord Jesus in "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

Though the chastening hand of the Lord is often laid upon him and though "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous" (Heb. 12:11), nevertheless, he is consoled by the realization that this is all working out for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). Like the Apostle Paul, the believer who is in communion with his Lord can say, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. 6:10). He may often be called upon to drink of the bitter waters of Marah, but God has planted nearby a tree to sweeten them.

Yes, mourning Christians are comforted even now by the Divine Comforter: by the ministrations of His servants, by encouraging words from fellow Christians, and (when these are not to hand) by the precious promises of the Word being brought home in power by the Spirit to their hearts out of the storehouse of their memories. "They shall be comforted." The best wine is reserved for the last. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5). During the long night of His absence, believers have been called to fellowship with Him who was the Man of Sorrows.

But it is written, "If... we suffer with Him..., we [shall] be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). What comfort and joy will be ours when shall dawn the morning without clouds! Then "sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10). Then shall be fulfilled the words of the great heavenly voice in Revelation 21:3, 4: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

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