

# Sermon on the Mount: Blessedness Through Brokenness

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The sermon explores the concept of blessedness through brokenness, emphasizing that the way up is down and that real joy comes from pluming the depths of poverty of spirit and mourning.*

**Duration:** 54:17

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3-6, Matthew 5:8-10

**Topics:** "Sermon on the Mount"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing gratitude for the prayers and support received during a difficult time. The sermon is based on Matthew chapter 5, verse 4, and is titled 'Blessedness through Brokenness.' The speaker emphasizes that the words spoken by Jesus in the Beatitudes are not just random statements, but a complete picture of the Christian life. The development of blessedness in the Beatitudes is seen as a downward journey of humility, leading from being poor in spirit to being persecuted for righteousness. The ultimate fulfillment of this blessedness is only achieved when believers see Jesus face to face.

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## Transcript

Before turning to our text, may I warmly thank you all for your kind thoughts and your prayers for us at this time. My wife thought that my place was here preaching the gospel this morning rather than being at home with her, and though she is not able to be here, I'm glad to be given the grace of God to turn to the only source of comfort, the comfort that sustains us, and I believe will comfort all those who pass through the valley of the shadow of death. Thank you for your prayers.

Well now, the word of the Lord this morning is to be found in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 4. I have given it the title blessedness through brokenness, and that may be challenging to some. You may even be tempted to think it is impossible, but the speaker is not the person in the pulpit. The speaker is none other than the incarnate Son of God, and he knows, and with the authority that could only be his own, he has gone on record, a record which he has not revised over the period of time, and this is what it says, blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

In our exposition of the first beatitude, you remember we stressed that this series of sayings needs to be taken as a whole. I know it is possible for us, as we are doing indeed, taking one beatitude at a time and

seeking to recognize the divine truth in each one, but there is a danger even in that, and that is the danger of isolating any one beatitude from that which goes before it and that which comes after it, because we really have here something that belongs together, a cluster of truths that make one large truth. The second beatitude grows out of the first, and the third beatitude grows out and develops from the second and so forth, so that we really need to take some recognition of the whole if we are rightly to appreciate the part.

Now I can only say that this morning and ask you to be mindful of this as you follow in the scriptures and as you meditate upon these things and seek to learn what the Savior is really saying to us. We need to have the whole picture. I remember as a boy in school seeing a chalk artist coming in one day, and he was a miracle man as far as I was concerned, never being an artist, never having been able to be one of these immaculate people that could reproduce on paper, and he came with his charcoal and he made some deft strokes, he put one stroke there and another here, you wonder what on earth is the relationship between that up there and this down here, and then he put a third stroke somewhere else and a fourth and still he couldn't see any sense, any rhyme, any reason, but by the time he put about eight or ten strokes you could see the figure, the outline of something emerging, and you see he knew what he was about.

Now we have something of that in the Beatitudes. Each Beatitude is a stroke of the pen or of the charcoal if you like, but our Lord has the whole in mind and it is my prayer that I at any rate and you with me will be able to see in due course the whole picture that we have here, describing how the Christian life should emerge in our souls and the shape such life should take as we develop and as we mature, for we shall never outgrow the Beatitudes. In principle they should be emerging in every born-again person.

They should be there in bloom, in flower. We shall only know the glory of this even when Jesus Christ returns in glory, not before then. And there is a blessedness that comes immediately the moment we begin to enter in upon this life, but the blessedness that Jesus promised, though it develops with the years, will never be concluded in time.

It is something that awaits the vision glorious and that is why I can't be sad this morning, neither can my wife, for our dear mother has gone to be to see the glory of the Lord. And it is only at that moment that the spirit is perfected and can enter into the full joy of which Jesus speaks here. The blessedness that begins in time with the forgiveness of sins and the knowledge of the Savior is a blessedness that is worked out in the troughs of life and on the mountaintops of life, but will ultimately only be consummated when we see our blessed Lord Jesus face to face.

But having the foretaste in this life gives us the desire to know that which is ahead. Now the thing that is important here of course to see in the Beatitudes is that there is a sense in which the development is a development downwards in terms of humiliation, rather than upwards and away from a state of humiliation. This may sound quite incongruous at first, and you may wonder how on earth can you receive greater blessedness by being more and more humbled, because these Beatitudes lead from being poor in spirit to being persecuted for righteousness' sake.

You see it goes from one degree of pain to another, and this is where you end up. You are suffering persecution not because of anything in you, but for the sake of somebody else outside of you. Men of the world would say it goes from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Indeed it doesn't start with the sublime. It goes from the ridiculous to the incomparably ridiculous. The way up is down.

The way into the glory of the blessedness spoken of here is by way of the suffering and the brokenness spelled out here. And this may be bad news for us this morning. Many people want to get the joys of the Lord immediately within their grasp, and they go all out for joy.

You don't get joy that way, not the real joy. There are many preachers who do the same thing. Their preaching is aimed at providing kicks and joys for people, and sometimes their churches are full.

But I want to tell you that as far as I understand the Scriptures, that's not where real joy is found. The real joy comes from having plumbed the depths of poverty of spirit and of mourning that makes us meek and hunger and thirst after righteousness and produce purity of heart until we become peacemakers and are persecuted for our character. And when nobody wants you, and everybody despises you, that's where the joy of heaven in all its glory comes into the soul to be eclipsed, only if the word eclipse is appropriate, by the ultimate joy of beholding our Lord face to face.

So there is something here that confuses an ordinary psychological approach. There is something here that confuses the worldly wise. You see, the way up is down.

I remember hearing of the late Dr. F. B. Meyer, who was a Baptist pastor in England, turn of the century, great man of God, saying that his picture of the kingdom of heaven and of spiritual growth was something akin to what he had learned at home. There were a number of children and his mother didn't leave everything on the lower shelves in the pantry, as they called it, where the food was and any cookies and any chocolates and any whatever. She didn't leave very much on the lower shelves because she didn't want them to be able to reach everything.

The better things were on the higher shelves that they couldn't reach. So when they wanted some some candies, well she would go in and she would bring the bottle down and she would give them what she thought was sufficient for them. And he thought of the kingdom of heaven and the spiritual growth like that.

When I'm big enough, I'll be able to reach the top shelf and get as much as I can. And he said it was a tremendous crash for him to realize it was the other way around with God. The better things are on the lower shelves.

You've got to kneel and be humbled and be broken. And the more broken you are, and the more you learn to mourn for your own sin and wickedness and perversity, the better things you find in God's cupboard of grace. It's true.

Blessed, says Jesus, are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Two things this morning. One, the condition which is here described, the condition of mourning, and then after that the comfort which is here assured.

First of all, a few words about the condition that is here described. Blessed are they that mourn. Now there are some negative statements that need to be made to save any misunderstanding here.

First of all, Jesus is not referring particularly to bereavement arising out of the loss of a relative or a friend. That's not what he has in mind here in the first place. It is true, of course, that such a sorrowful experience can and sometimes does lead to an enriched experience of God's grace and understanding of his ways.

Some people only come to salvation and will not think of eternal things until they face the stark reality of their their nearest and dearest lying motionless in a casket. They only think of this life. They never think of

death.

They never think of judgment. They never think of the ultimate. Everything is in the here and now, and it has to be.

They have to see their nearest and dearest stripped of everything, unable to breathe, unable to move, to be locked in a casket and cast under the sod of earth. And in that sense of hopelessness, some try to God for mercy, and eternal things break in, knock the door of the soul, and something is heard there that is not otherwise heard. But that's not the universal experience.

There are many who pass through sorrow and suffering, and they only get harder and harder and angrier and angrier. So that's not what Jesus is talking about. He says, blessed are they that mourn in the way he's talking about mourning.

They shall be comforted. There are no exceptions here. There are exceptions in mourning the loss of a friend or a relative.

Neither is it conceivable that in using this word Jesus should be referring to that sullen type of disposition that always sees the darker side of things, and always mourning. I don't remember who it is, but some writer that I might hazard a guess, but I won't. I remember somebody speaking about people who are in his or her words as cooing doves, always mourning, always grumbling, always grunting, always under the cloud.

And there's a phrase that comes back to me, I don't know where it comes from, some of you might remember about some people who are gluttons for wretchedness, and they're never happy unless they're sad. Now don't let's exaggerate, but you know I think some people fall into that category. They never see the sun shining, they only see the little cloud that may be somewhere in the sky that others don't see.

It's always winter, and it's always night, and it's always dark, and it's always miserable. Jesus is not speaking about such, there's no blessedness there. Again it is not that deep sorrow which comes when a person has been discovered in the process of wrongdoing and exposed publicly.

That is a traumatic experience. If you've been able to do something, and you think you've got away with it, and you've covered up so neatly after you, you thought no one will know, no one will know, and then God's Holy Spirit either convicts you, and you have to take the mask off, or somebody else does it, and exposes you, and suddenly you really don't know which way to turn. You're absolutely confused.

You want the earth to open its jaws and swallow you. No, no, it's not that either. That's a terrifying experience.

I have seen big strong men who could face anything, unable to face life at that point in time. Jesus isn't speaking of that, nor can we interpret Jesus' words as referring to the man who has lost his earthly possessions, and who sorrowfully sees himself now bereft of all things he once held dear. The mourning of our text is not the grief of the tramp, who is as pleased when he discovers a quarter in the gutter, as you would be if you found a gold mine in the garden.

It's not that kind of blessedness that we're talking about here. Let me make some positive statements. The mourning of which Jesus speaks is spiritual, and it arises out of the discovery and the consequent painful realization that a man is not right with God, and that's the first beatitude, that is its burden.

Blessed are the poor, the bankrupt in spirit, the person who's discovered that he can do absolutely nothing to bring pardon of sin into his soul. He cannot make amends, he cannot atone, he cannot have an offering to bring that will wipe out the past, and change the present, and change the future. He cannot do it, she cannot do it, and she's with her back against the wall, or he's with his back against the wall, and he just has to pledge bankruptcy.

I can do nothing, nothing in my hands I bring. Now this mourning grows out of that. It's a development of that.

It's an expression of that, but taking you still down further, deeper down into the valley of humiliation. Because you can do nothing, your sin hurts you, worries you, harasses you, tears your own heart and your own spirit to pieces. You really don't know what to do, and you begin to mourn.

You know what this is? Jesus employed a word. There are nine words, I believe, in the word mourning. Jesus chose the word which expresses the most devastating kind of mourning imaginable.

A mourning that is deeply felt and excruciating to experience. As a matter of fact, it refers to a lament of the spirit which simply cannot be stifled. You know, there are some things you can stifle.

You can hold your tears back. You can go through the day and you don't tell anybody about it. There are some things, there are some experiences, and you can go through them like that.

You can keep things in check, but when this comes, it knocks the roof off. It's got to come out. It's so deep, it's like a volcanic eruption in the soul.

It has to come out. God sees it and men will see the fruit of it. You cannot keep it to yourself.

Sooner or later, it's got to out. Bunyan in his Pilgrim's Progress shows so much wisdom, doesn't he, and understanding, and not the least in this particular realm. Speaking of the pilgrim, he says, I looked and saw him open the book, that is the Bible, and read therein.

And as he read, he wept and trembled, and not being able any longer to contain, he break out with a lamentable cry saying, what shall I do? Did you get that? Not being able any longer to contain. You know anything of that concerning your own sin? Your own sin. Not other people's sin.

Not other people's. Your own. Oh, I find it easy to judge other people, and I'm sure you do.

My friend, have you seen your own sin in the light of God, that you've begun to hate them, and recognize the curse they deserve, and begin to mourn on account of them? That's what Jesus is getting at. Not being able any longer to contain. It's exactly the same verb as is used in the Greek of the Old Testament, when you remember the story of Jacob.

His brothers wanted to wanted to throw some dust into Jacob's, I mean, his sons wanted to throw some dust into Jacob's eyes, and persuade him that his son Joseph had been killed by wild beasts. They of course had sold him into Egypt for 20 pieces of silver. But they weren't home, and we read, having told this pitiful story, they brought a garment that had been dipped in blood, and they said this is Joseph's garment.

He must have been murdered by a wild beast. The old man took it all in, he didn't know any difference, and we read, Jacob rent his clothes, and he put sackcloth upon his loins, and he mourned for his son

many days. It's a deep, deep mourning.

Some of the scholars put it in different words. Let me quote to you from one of them. Referring to this word, he says, a contemporary Scots scholar, and he must be good if he's Scots, don't you think? It is the sorrow which pierces the heart, this sorrow.

It is no gentle sentimental twilight sadness, in which a man can languish and luxuriate, and talk about to his friends. It is a sorrow which is poignant, piercing, and intense, indeed it will become visible. It will be seen in a person's bearing, on a person's face, and in a person's tears.

It is the sorrow which a person is bound to show to the world, and show before God, because he cannot help doing so, and it is most important that you and I know something about it. Richard Sibbes, the 17th century Puritan, describes it in his quaint language. Now this is 17th century language, to some of you young people, with your modern lingo, may think this a little bit strange.

I wasn't sure what word to use there. Well now, this is how Richard Sibbes speaks of it. Mourning is the ringing or pinching of the soul upon the apprehension of some evil present, whether it be when a man finds that absent which he desires, or that present which he abhors.

Then the soul shrinks and contracts itself, and is pinched and ringed, and this is that which we call mourning. Now this always comes to pass in poverty. Such as is the poverty, such also is the mourning.

And he goes on. Whosoever hath sin must sometime mourn. Let him take his time and place, whether he will do it in this life or in that which is to come.

Sin must have sorrow. That is a ruled case. And he that will not willingly mourn shall.

Now here is your quaint 17th century way of saying it, but it's a very serious issue. He that will not willingly mourn shall, will he or mill he, in another place. Blessed are they that mourn.

If you prefer the words of John Stott, familiar to many of you, he says that the people mourning here are not mourning the loss of a loved one, but those who mourn the loss of their innocence, the loss of their righteousness, the loss of their self-respect before God. It is not the sorrow of bereavement to which Jesus refers, it's the sorrow of repentance. And repentance is a prerequisite to salvation.

The summons of the New Testament is repent and believe. And the sorrow here is the sorrow and anguish of a penitent soul. Now this experience of mourning therefore is exactly the same as that which Jesus elsewhere put in different language, referred to in different language.

He said that when he would go away from the disciples and ascend to the Father, he would send to them the other paraclete, the Holy Spirit. And he said, I will send him to you, and he, when he comes, he will bring conviction to the world alike of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, John 16.8. Now what does that mean? Two things are involved there. The Holy Spirit will first of all convince people that they are wrong in relation to three things, their sin, righteousness, and the fact that judgment upon their sin has been executed in Jesus Christ.

It was their sin that brought the judgment of God upon him. And the Holy Spirit will convince men and women of that. This convincing is largely on the level of the mind and of the conscience.

But now there is something deeper here. Not only convincing, the Holy Spirit will convict. Convicting is different from convincing.

The word to convict really is a word of the law courts. It means this, a convicted person has been charged in a court of law. Not only has he been charged in a court of law, he has been actually tried.

The trial is gone, and he's been found guilty. The Holy Spirit says the Lord Jesus will come into the world, and he will convince and he will convict men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In other words, he will put the world, he will put each sinner in the dark, and he will convince him of his sin, and he will convict.

He will bring a verdict of guilty. Now that's where the mourning comes from. It's when you know that God has put you in the dark, and he knows every word you have spoken, every thought you have entertained, every deed you have done, everything you've wanted to do and were unable to do them.

All the sexual and immoral lusts of your life, and all the sins of your career, he knows them all. He says you're guilty. That's where mourning comes.

You know the remarkable thing is this, real joy does not begin in the soul until we have known that mourning. For the simple reason that until we know this mourning, we do not know the Holy Spirit's work very deeply. And real joy, real blessedness is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It's the fruit of the Spirit. It's a byproduct. You see, that's why the world is not getting joy.

They're paying any price for it. They're going anywhere for it. They're doing anything for it, but they don't get it.

When they think they've got it and take it home, there have been holes in the bucket, and the bucket can't contain it. And they've got to go out again and back to the same old places, do the same old things. You know, but the real joy of which Jesus speaks, blessedness that goes on into eternity, you see, it is derived here in the valley of humiliation and brokenness.

There is no other way. There's no shortcut into it. You try it, you'll miss the blessedness Jesus speaks in all its width and depth and height and glory.

John Newton, it's amazing how soon John Newton became a theologian after he became a Christian. One of the things that he discovered, and I think it shook him because he wrote about it, was the fact that in the Christian life, this mourning and this rejoicing seemed to go on together. And somebody said to him, don't talk so much about mourning, talk more about rejoicing.

Now, he did rejoice. You'll read his hymns, and I don't think you'll find anybody ascending higher. But he discovered that the two things go on almost together.

And then he said this to the person who spoke to him, you say you are more disposed to cry miserere than hallelujah. Why not both of them together? When the treble is praise and heart humiliation the bass, the melody is pleasant and the harmony is good. Good old John Newton.

The treble and the bass, they go together and the harmony is good. And of course, is not this the experience of men in the New Testament? Is not this the experience of the apostles? I hear the apostle Paul going down to the depths, oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this

death? I'm carrying a corpse around with me, he says, and it's smelly. And I want to get rid of it.

It's the corpse of the old nature. And I can't do the things I want to do. And then he rejoices.

I thank my God, he says, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But you go on into chapter 8, and you'll find that he's still talking about the same kind of thing. But you see, they're sandwiched together in Christian and in human experience.

God has arranged it so. And the deeper your sense of sorrow for sin, the deeper your rejoicing will ultimately be. They have most joy and pleasure in the presence of God, who experience most pain in the presence of sin.

And you cannot change the order. To me, one of the saddest things about the church today is this, there's so little pain because of sin. We almost tend to criticize the world and what is happening in the world, just like the non-Christian politician.

I'm not speaking of all politicians, I'm speaking of the non-Christian. We don't see what's behind it all, the fallenness of man, the ruin of the image of God in man, and the misuse of life and of all the gifts of God. We don't see the real spiritual tragedy.

We miss it all. We're not pained by it, even in the church of Jesus Christ. We've got our doctrine, we say we believe it, but we don't seem to react as if we believed it.

When last did you lose a tear because of your own sin? Have you ever lost a night's sleep because of your condition of soul? Brothers and sisters, this is really something shocking in my experience and yours, if this is true. I must hurry. What do we do if we don't know any such experience of pain, of mourning? Oh, come back to the New Testament as quick as you can, and come to the heart of it, come to the cross of our Lord Jesus.

If nothing else breaks your heart, that should. That's what your sin is capable of doing to God. Now, Jesus is not here in the flesh and you can't crucify him today, but if God became incarnate in the 20th century, my friends, the verdict of the Bible would seem to be this.

Men would do exactly the same with him as they did 2,000 years ago. It is in your sin and mine to do exactly that, and if that doesn't bring repentance, nothing else will. There is a poem by Christina Rossetti.

I don't know how many of you read poetry. I don't read much, though I love poetry. I don't have time for some reason or other, but I came across this and I thought, really, it has a punch in its last line which is very magnificent, and that's why I quote it to you.

She writes, she was a Christian, of course. Am I a stone and not a sheep that I can stand, O Christ, beneath thy cross and number drop by drop thy blood's slow loss? And yet not we, not so those women loved who with exceeding grief lamented thee, not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly, not so the sun and moon which hid their faces in a starless sky, a horror of great darkness at broad noon. I, only I, yet give not war but seek thy sheep, true shepherd of the flock, and here's the punch, greater than Moses turn and look once more and smite a rock.

You've got it, haven't you? Moses lifted his hand and he smote the rock in the wilderness and water gushed out of it. Now she turns to the Lord Jesus and she says, you greater than Moses lift your hand and

from the rock of my heart bring out the tears of remorse, strike the rock. Just a word about the comfort which is here assured, they shall be comforted.

You see the distress of the morning envisaged here is not the end of God's purposes. Now we've got to see that, we've got to recognize that or it wouldn't make sense. The end is not the morning, the morning is a means to an end, the cause of the morning is to lead us beyond the morning itself.

The end is the blessedness. We must be careful lest we charge God Almighty, lest we charge the divine physician with greater carelessness than we would describe to our human physicians. No self-respecting physician would inflict pain upon his patient without having a healing end in view.

You think God would? Out on your life. The humbling experience of morning is a necessity in the healing of the soul, but it is meant to lead beyond itself and to produce something that nothing else can produce, even in the hand of God, but mourning. And what is the discovery? It is this, Jesus puts it, for they shall be comforted.

Now I said to you earlier on that Jesus chose a word for mourning which is one of the strongest that you could possibly use, if not the strongest. I think he does the same kind of thing here when he speaks of being comforted. The comfort is no less potent than the experience of mourning, no less deep and real.

Actually, Jesus used a word here which comes from the same base as the name he gave to the Holy Spirit when he was introducing the Holy Spirit to his disciples. You remember he said that when I go to the Father, when I ascend, I'm going to send to you, as he said, another paracletos, another paraclete, translated in some of your Bibles as comforter, or counselor, or advocate, and there are many other words, many other terms that could possibly bring out some aspect of it and therefore appear in some of our translations. Well that's the word.

Now what Jesus said is this, if I may, if I may transliterate the Greek verb, it's like this, blessed are they that mourn for they shall be paracleted. What does the word paraclete really mean? It means this, it refers to someone coming alongside of you to keep you company. Oh but that's not the main thing, that's precious in itself, just to keep you company.

But he comes alongside of you to take your part, to plead your cause, as an advocate in the court of law, to plead for you where pleading is necessary and to take you out of your misery and out of your experience into the larger experience of peace and joy and so forth. Oh blessed be the name of God. That's the blessedness.

It is when a man is mourning for his sin, when a woman is broken-hearted because of sin, there is someone who comes down into the valley of tears, the valley of acorn, and makes it a door of hope. And that one is none other than God, Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. It's the Father who often did it in the New Testament, in the Old Testament, who brought David out of the pit and the miry clay.

Oh he was paracleted. He says the Father did it. Who brought Job out of that desert land into which he had gone and where he was being broken and ruled the day in which he was born? Who brought him out? The paraclete, God the Father.

Who brought Peter back from his spiritual wilderness having denied his Lord three times with cursings and oaths? Who brought him back from that experience of weeping bitterly as a man lost and forlorn? Oh the paraclete brought him back, but the paraclete was the Son there. The Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, it

matters not who, but it's only God can bring a man or a woman out of the miry clay, out of the depths of despair, out of this experience of mourning, into the wealth of his infinite love. My dear friends, how many of us are there this morning? I pray some of us are, if we've never made out peace with God before.

You say it's a terrible thing to pray for for anyone? Well yes, unless the words of Jesus are true. But if it means that you can only find eternal comfort and eternal blessedness and eternal salvation in the valley of brokenness, my friend, it's the best thing that you can pray for yourself. Can I give you an illustration? I don't know whether I've ever mentioned this here before.

I could have. Forgive me if I have. Old age is creeping up with me and I'm forgetting.

In one of our mid-Wales area counties, the farmers, most of them breed sheep, mountain sheep. There came into this county a policeman who was going to live in the area and police the area. And of course, he was a city lad, knew very little about the country, certainly nothing about sheep, just that they were sheep and wool grew on their backs.

One day he was out on his bicycle and he saw that the sheep of a certain farmer had fallen over a cliff and was caught on a ledge no larger, I understand, than this pulpit, this pulpit. And he saw the sheep precariously poised there and there was a drop of about 300 to 400 feet below. He jumped on his bike and he went to the farm and he told the farmer off that he was not looking after his cattle, not looking after his sheep.

The farmer said, what's the matter? What's the matter, man? He said, well, he said, there's a sheep of yours. I know it's your field. He says, I know they're your sheep.

This sheep is down on the ledge, he says, and it's only got two or three steps to go and it'll be, it'll be dead. All right, says the old man to him, you go your way, I'll see to that, that's my business. He says, I'll look after the sheep.

Three days later, the policeman was back again and he thought he'd look over to see what had happened to the sheep. But the sheep were still there and if he got mad the first time, he got more than mad the second time, I tell you. And you know, with all officialdom written across his face, he went up to the old farmer and he, this time, held no punches back and he put him in the pit before he had a chance to say anything.

The old man squared back at him. My boy, he said, before you come around here, you need to learn a few things about sheep. Now he said, shut your mouth and let me talk to you.

And he did. The old farmer said to him, how did you expect me to save that sheep? I've no ladder, he says, that can stretch 400 feet up to that ledge. And if I put the bottom of a ladder long enough anywhere down there, he says, it's, there's so much gravel there, it would have sunk and it would have slipped.

I couldn't have got to the sheep that way. There's only one way to save it. I have to come down from above and somebody has to dangle me on a rope and hold the rope above.

And what do you think the sheep would do if the sheep saw my two feet coming over its head? Well, I'll tell you, he says, you don't know. I'll tell you. The sheep would just jump over the precipice to its own undoing.

So he said, you know what I have to do? Now, he says, hold your breath. I have to let it starve and I have to leave it there in its pain and in its misery until I judge that it hasn't got enough strength left to move to its own doom. And then he says, I'll get two strong men and I'll go down by a rope.

And they'll let me down and she won't be able to run away from me. And I'll be able to put my arms around her and I'll get another rope and we'll take her off. Have you got the point? You know why Jesus, you know why a loving heavenly father has to let some of us get to the end of our tether? Because we'll run away from him.

If he came sooner, we don't want him. And so he's got to let us come to the depths and plumb the depths. But blessed are they that mourn and can do nothing about it and are like the sheep, incapable of leaping to our own doom and disaster.

Then we welcome the grace of God. They that are whole have no need of a physician. Tell him to keep away, go next door.

I don't need you. But in this condition of soul, the Savior is welcome. My friend, if you do not know what this is, I'm going to ask you this morning to do something.

Not visibly, nor audibly, but in your soul. Pray God to give you the view of yourself that he has of you. Now, I won't make you comfortable.

I don't care who you are. It doesn't make me comfortable. Pray that you will see your own soul and your own life just as God sees it and cause you to mourn.

For it is only out of that condition that the meek is born and the pure of heart and the man who seeks for righteousness and who is capable of becoming in due course the salt of the earth and the light of the world and a man who can entertain and build by the grace of God the kind of ethical superstructure that this sermon on the mount will later speak of. Blessed mourningness, it sounds outrageous, but it's true. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Let us pray. Lord, our God and our Father, we thank you for your holy namesake that you do come into our lives, and you come into our lives particularly when the situation is ripe and when we deeply mourn our sad condition so as to welcome your coming. Grant to each one of us gathered here this morning this experience.

Grant us, O Lord, we pray, to exemplify before your throne that we mourn for our sin, and may we make the great discovery that you by your Holy Spirit have joy to give and blessedness to impart that cannot be contained in its entirety by this body, but can only be brought to complete fruition and consummation out of the body in our new bodies when at last we behold your face. Hear us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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