

“Happy Are the Sad?!?!?”

Beatitudes – Blessed are those who mourn – Matthew 5:4

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”
Matthew 5:4

My grandfather’s death was the first time I really cried.

I was fortunate to grow up without having someone close to me pass away. It was not until some time after college that I experienced this for the first time. My grandfather passed away and I was called and asked to perform the service. I was convinced I needed to be strong just like my granddad had been. I made it through the service, but it was then that I broke down. I am still not sure what happened that snapped, but I wept like a baby.

Many of you have experienced a similar situation. Why do you think your situation brought you to such mourning?

“When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.”
Psalm 32:3

The people are different, but the reason is closely the same. The person that has passed away was an intricate part of our lives. It may have been a close friend or family member or someone who has invested in us or in whom we have invested, someone that has changed our lives.

It is this kind of mourning that is conveyed in Matthew 5:4 and is the strongest of the nine types used in the New Testament. Jesus was conveying an intense, internal agony like unto a passionate lament over a lost loved one. David describes mourning in Psalm 32. He explains that he felt as if he was wasting away and his strength was spent.

Through Psalm 32, David explains why he experienced such mourning. It was a result of personal sin in his life, and it is this very reason that brings us back to Matthew 5. Those who mourn are mourning because of sin.

Why should we mourn over sin?

Sometimes people cry because they were caught in their sin or maybe because they do not want to face the consequences, but here Jesus speaks of those who mourn because they recognize their spiritual poverty. They understand that they have sinned against the righteous, loving God. Turn back to Psalm 32 and see the pain that David is going through. Also, in 2 Samuel 12:13, David, through the help of Nathan, finally admits to his sin. He recognizes that he has sinned against the Lord, and in Psalm 51 David laments over his sin.

Our sin and the sin of the world should bring us to our knees in godly sorrow as if mourning over the loss of a loved one. We see Isaiah in this very place of sorrow in Isaiah 6:1-5. Isaiah has a vision where he sees the Lord lifted high and exalted on his throne with angels worshipping around Him. Isaiah recognizes his spiritual poverty and then his sin and is compelled to cry out, “Woe is me, for I am ruined because I am a man

*"I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah."
Psalm 32:5*

of unclean lips!" He was mourning over his sin, but his response to it was just as important. He confessed.

Rather than confess we sometimes make excuses for our sin. What are some of those excuses?

The excuses that we give become hindrances to developing godly sorrow. We allow our pride, despair, or even the love of sin to keep us from mourning. We are not willing to give up what God has called us to give up.

What are some things that God has called you to give up? (They may not be sin, but any act of not obeying is sin.)

You may need to take a moment now to pray and ask God to help you release whatever it is that is a hindrance.

For those who took the time to pray, you have just taken a step towards becoming a mourner. Other ways to develop this is through a study of sin in the Bible. Consider some of the responses of people in the Bible. We have already seen David and Isaiah; there are also Jeremiah (9:1), Peter (Luke 5:8), and Paul (1 Timothy 1:15).

There are also those who chose not to be mourners. Saul would be at the top of the list. Throughout his career as the king of Israel he did what he thought was best with little regard for God and then when he was caught he made excuses. There is a drastic difference between the life of Saul and the life of David in regards to sin. They both sinned, but one handled it very differently than the other.

It still seems odd that Jesus would say that those who mourn will be happy, but the happy part is found in the second half of the verse, "they shall be comforted."

How would you describe what it means to be comforted?

Again, we turn to David to understand how someone who is mourning can be happy. In Psalm 32, we say that David was broken over his sin. He even tried to hide it, but that would not work. He finally realized his need to confess and notice the change that takes place in the passage. He confesses in verse five and then sees God as his hiding place or a place of comfort (vs. 7). David then sees God as instructing him or providing guidance (vs. 8). It is always a comfort to know where you are headed. Verse nine has a sense of warning and concern for others who would be tempted not to mourn over their sin, and there is comfort in finding those who will agree with you. David then proclaims the truth

"You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you."
Psalm 32:7-8

about godly sorrow, and there is comfort in knowing the truth. Finally, David closes the Psalm with rejoicing and a shout for joy.

It might be about time that we learn to mourn over our sin and see our sin as rebellion against our loving, merciful God. But remember "Happy are those who mourn, because they will be comforted."

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

