

Who Needs Comfort?

The Mourners
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Matthew 5:1-10; 23:37-39

John 11:1-44

Two Sundays ago I started a new series from the Sermon on the Mount under the title, “Living Right Side up in an Upside Down World.”

Last week **we talked about always coming to church hungry, empty, poor in spirit.** Please come to Jesus poor in spirit every day. He has his part, and we cannot be passive. Work out your salvation, Paul says. Yes, entering the Kingdom is God’s gift of grace; no one can earn it. But once you are in it, God will help you and mold you. Christ will teach you to live right side up in upside down world.

Someone said to me last Sunday, “But Badveli, as a Christian I am the richest person in the world.” She was right. We are the richest people in the world. But it does start by recognizing how desperately we need God in our lives.

Theses are teachings **of seeking first His kingdom** and **His righteousness** and all things will come after that...all things.

As my pastor friend Shawn Reese described it, **“Living right-side up in an upside down world.”**

Why it is upside down world?

Start from the beginning, from Genesis. **Sin** destroyed our relationship with God and each other. Paul makes this clear saying: **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). Everything went upside down. Sin bankrupted us from loving God and to loving each other. Sin bankrupted us from God’s grace. Because we sensed we brought pain and suffering, and loss to this world. A friend of mine in Bay Area describes this by a picture of cracked earth. Sin crakes things; sin breaks things. **In the OT writings,** we see the authors were looking forward to **the day that the Messiah** would come and things would turn back right-side up. It

happened with the coming of Christ. Because of him, our universe is saved. Because of him, we have a chance to live right-side up in an upside down world.

So welcome to an important invitation **to be a member in the Kingdom of God**, the Kingdom of Heaven.

It all starts with being poor in the spirit. The poor in spirit are the ones who have realized they are no one if they are not part of the Kingdom of Heaven. "I need God, I surrender". Once you are there, you see yourself; you see your sins and the sins of the world around you and you mourn for them and ask for forgiveness.

So we are taking the second beatitude:

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matt 5:4
ESV)

Who wants to mourn? I have seen so much pain of war and loss of people from war or sickness. I am tired of mourning. I don't like mourning. Yet, there is an important invitation from Jesus to you and me to find real comfort in life.

Mourning is not encouraged in our society, western society. I come from Middle East which mourning is part of the life.

What is going on here? Who died so we are mourning?

1. Jesus mourned

Let me start with Jesus. I am sure Jesus wept on different occasions feeling with our pain. There are two passages and two events in the Gospels where Jesus weeps.

- Lazarus is ill. He delays his coming to Lazarus. He comes after death of Lazarus. For three times he tells them (in my own words), "Don't worry, Lazarus is sleeping. I am the resurrection, and those who believe in me will not die. All these happened so God will be glorified." People don't get it. John writes: he (Jesus) was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. Then Jesus wept. (John 11:34,35). In my words: "How long you will not see that death is not an end? He is

resurrection and the life, and whoever believes in Him though they die yet they shall live.”

-The other occasion is when he wept for our disobedience to God. He wept over Jerusalem (Matthew 23). He looked over the city and tears came down knowing what humans do would humans. They would kill the prophet; they would stone God’s messengers; they would reject God’s presence; they would ignore God’s warnings; they would crucify the Son of God; they would think they are somebody without God. No wonder Jesus was mourning.

That was about Jesus. So why should we mourn?

2. We mourn for how selfish we have become (sin dominates)

We are such a Self-centered Society

-**Selfies** have become an accessible way to take a picture of yourself when there is no photographer. However, people whether adults or teenagers overdo selfies to make a point. You see their picture over and over: “Here I am, watch me.”

-Behold, last week Apple introduced iPhone 11 with new feature called: **Slofies'** which means **Slo-Mo Selfies**. That’s all we need, we should watch ourselves in slow motion. How far are we going with this???????

We are a society of **self-esteem, self-determination, self-centeredness**, self and self. On the other hand, when people feel disqualified, or lose their self-esteem they will be psychologically unhealthy and will need encouragement and confidence.

There is nothing wrong in encouraging people. But let us see how God encourages us.

-**Moses** felt very inadequate to lead his people. God challenged him and invited Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. “Who, me? I cannot speak? Are you kidding me, God? Who am I?”

The way God deals with Moses is NOT tapping his back saying: **“Moses, you are Ok...Moses, you can do it, man...I believe in your abilities...Moses you are gifted.”**

God said to Moses: "Stop looking at your own unworthiness and uselessness and look at me. I made your mouth. I will be with you. I will help you. I will teach you what to say. Look to me and live!" The biblical answer to the paralysis of low self-esteem is not high self-esteem; it is sovereign grace.¹

Don't you think we spend too much time in indulging ourselves?

Now having said that, also beware of those who go the opposite direction of neglecting themselves and making themselves a doormat. They always think negative about themselves and feel worthless. This kind of thinking will lead you to another bankruptcy in your life.

Let me give you some biblical examples from last week's sermon:

David: the man who sinned against the Lord, wrote in Psalm 51:

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Ps 51:17). This is mourning for your sins.

When did David write this Psalm? Psalm 51? This is after his sin with Beersheba.

Peter: In his fishing boat, where his self esteem is up (he is in the fish business), he comes to Jesus...

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (Luke 5:8)

Jesus did not give up from Peter. Jesus turns Cephas to Peter the ROCK.

Christ gave him a new name and made him the Rock.

How about you?

3. We will be comforted

I look to the Greek word for comfort. *Mkhitaroutyoun (Armenian)*.

Comfort in Greek is *paraklethesontai*, the root of this word is: *parakleton*, or the *paraklete*, the word used to describe the “Comforter” or “advocate” that Jesus promised us. He will send us the Comforter. One of the attributes of Holy Spirit. (John 14)

You know mourning will help us to be comforted. Sometimes I have seen people hold their tears; they don't want to cry. Crying is good. It helps us to deal with the pain and sufferings that we face. But this mourning invites the Holy Spirit to comfort us in a deeper and everlasting way. When we mourn over our sins, God gives us real comfort, real peace in our heart that is beyond earthly peace and comfort. God's comfort is everlasting where death is defeated and new life prevails in His Kingdom.

4. We mourn for the Sins of Humanity

I don't know how you face the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, Rwanda's Genocide, human trafficking, misuse of power, abundance of drugs, alcoholism... you name it... (the upside down world)

Or cancer cases, sickness, disease, especially when it hits children.

We mourn for the failures of God's people and failure in the church. We mourn, even though we are in the kingdom of God, but we live in defective world. We mourn for God's justice to be implemented in this imperfect world where kingdom of God is in us yet attributes of His kingdom are not fully implemented. Kingdom is here yet waiting for Kingdom fully implemented. One day when Jesus returns, the King of kings will rule forever.

Application:

1. We desperately need God in our lives. God will COMFORT you.

Everyone looking for comfort. Everyone are looking for peace of mind. The nonbelievers are looking for that. Two weeks ago Kevin Heart had back car accident. On TV I saw this prayer, idea? I don't know what to say:

“Let all send him positive energy healing thoughts. He is good man, get well ...”

What is positive energy?

You see the answer in in God, in truing to God’s Spirit ; turning to Jesus who will comfort us.

Turn to Jesus and see how desperately hungry and poor you are, and you find out how SIN destroyed and bankrupted us from God’s presence, then you turn around and mourn for your sin.

PACC is big family. We mourn for members who are suffering in our midst. We pray together that God comfort us all. When a member hurts, we hurt with that person. When a person rejoice, we rejoice with the person.

2. Don't compare or judge others. Well, badveli this sermon is good for inmates in the jail. I have not committed any crimes. Why are you teaching this to us?

Badveli Kevin has a writing on his door that says:

As Flannery O’Conner writes in one of her prayers: “Most of us have ‘lost the power to vomit’ over sin, especially our own.”

Did I lose the power to vomit over sin? Did sin become so “normal” in our lives that we don't confess anymore to God and each other? Do you say, “ It’s ok; everyone is doing it

3. Come to Jesus, Ask for Holy Spirit to be in YOU, Come to near to the Heart of God.

Come to Jesus today. If you never had prayed and asked his presence in your heart, today is the day.

There is this hymn Near to the Heart of God:

There is a place of quiet rest,
near to the heart of God,
a place where sin cannot molest,
near to the heart of God.

Refrain:

O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
sent from the heart of God,
hold us, who wait before thee,
near to the heart of God.

2 There is a place of comfort sweet,
near to the heart of God,
a place where we our Savior meet,
near to the heart of God. [Refrain]

If you gave your heart to Jesus but you need to reexamine your commitment. Ask yourself, am I coming daily to Jesus poor, asking him to fill me up with his Spirit.

Am I taking these Beatitudes seriously, mourning on my sins, seeking him like a hungry person, learning to be meek and humble from Jesus....

¹ <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/blessed-are-the-poor-in-spirit-who-mourn> (John Piper)

