

NICK GUY & HAPPY ARE THE SAD AFFAIR

NICK GUY, BEATITUDES - VOLUME 17

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THEME: Why did Jesus tell us that those who mourn would be happy?

NOTES: Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew chapters 5 through 7 provides us with solid, practical guidelines for Christian living. Several of the things that Jesus said strike us as paradoxical, the opposite of what we would think.

In Matthew 5:4, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." It appears that Jesus is telling us that the way to happiness is by being sad. For us to understand what this promise means, it's important to know specifically what Jesus meant by each key word.

BLESSED: The word "Blessed" is how we translate the Greek word *Makarios*. It means happy, fortunate and blissful.

There is something important to realize about applying this word. The kind of happiness, blissfulness or contentment Jesus is speaking of is the kind that cannot be found in external things. True blessedness, true happiness is within our hearts and is not affected by the circumstances of life. It is inward and not dependent on outward circumstances.

TWO KINDS OF MOURNING: In 2 Corinthians 7:10, the Apostle Paul describes two kinds of mourning, or sorrow. He wrote: "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." How can we tell the difference? How do we know whether or not someone (or even ourselves) are expressing godly sorrow or worldly sorrow?

The Gospels provide us with a great contrast of these two kinds of sorrow or mourning.

GODLY MOURNING: Speaking about the night He was betrayed, Jesus had prophesied that Peter would deny knowing Him three times. And that is exactly what happened. But what is especially interesting and pertinent to our case is what Matthew 26:75 records about what followed that event. It reads: "And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly."

Peter mourned over what he had done. We later find that Peter was forgiven and he went on to accomplish much for the sake of the Kingdom, becoming a pillar in the early church. In fact, Luke 22:32, records Jesus foretelling, not only of Peter's denial, but also of his restoration. Jesus told Peter: "But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

This is certainly an example of someone's mourning leading to comfort.

WORLDLY MOURNING: But from the same chapter 26 of the Gospel of Matthew, the first five verses tell of Judas, who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. When he saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the money, saying "I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood." But the chief priests and elders said, "What is that to us? That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself."

That's an example of someone's mourning *not* leading to comfort.

CONTRASTING THE TWO: "Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."

Godly grief, or mourning, is an expression of sorrow because we have sinned against God and violated His commandments. Worldly grief, or mourning, is an expression of sorrow, but it's over what our sin has cost us, and the pain and suffering it has caused us, not that we have sinned against God.

THE EXAMPLE OF ESAU: That's the same kind of mourning described in Hebrews 12:16,17. Esau was the older brother of Jacob. He sold his birthright, his by virtue of being the first-born of Isaac, to Jacob for a single meal. Hebrews 12:16,17 calls him immoral and unholy, and says that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

Esau did not value God nor the things of God, but at some point, he realized he had given up God's blessing and apparently selfishly wanted it back, although he still didn't want God. Just because he sought it with tears doesn't indicate true remorse, or perhaps more accurately, that the remorse he felt was for the wrong thing. The loss he was mourning was not the loss of God or His favor, but merely the loss of the blessing.

JUSTICE VS. MERCY: God is just and God is merciful. His justice demands that sin be punished. God tempers His justice with mercy. But mercy is voluntary with God. It is not required of Him.

Someone who is truly sorry their sin acknowledges that they deserve justice. They don't assume that mourning, in and of itself, requires God to show them mercy, as if God were obligated to give it.

COMFORT: The word translated "comforted" in Matthew 5:4 is the Greek word "Parakaleo." It's the same word, used as a noun, that Jesus uses to refer to the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, which reads: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper (Or Advocate, or Counselor), to be with you forever,"

The comfort promised in Matthew 5:4 is much deeper and more expansive than the kind we normally experience when we comfort one another over a loss or tragedy.

This is the kind of mourning David was experiencing when he wrote the 51st Psalm. It reads, in part: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions...Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight...

In that same Psalm David made this petition of God: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.”

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And God did that, because, as David proclaimed: “A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

And that is the comfort that Jesus promised.

CONCLUSION: The mourning spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 5:4 is “godly sorrow.” A mourning caused by the realization that we have sinned against God. And the comfort He promised as a result of that mourning is the forgiveness of our sins, through the blood of Jesus Himself. The blessing, or happiness, He promised is not in the mourning itself, but in what God does in response to it.

RESOURCES: John MacAurhtur’s New Testament Commentary; R.C. Sproul’s “Essential Truths of the Christian Faith.”