

## Upside Down Kingdom: Blessed are Those Who Mourn Matthew 5:4<sup>i</sup>

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you this morning. For those of you that are guests, my name is Chris Wigley, and I serve as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. Whether you are in the room or you are joining us online, we are certainly glad you are with us today. And on behalf of our church family, we welcome you.

We would love the opportunity to get to connect with you. If you would, simply text the keyword, "TBCMP," that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to 94-000. You will then be prompted to click on a link that will provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you. And here's our promise to you... we promise not to bombard your inbox. Again, we would love the opportunity to connect with you and to pray for you.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

Today we continue in a new teaching series that we kicked off last week called, "The Upside Down Kingdom." We are looking at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5. In particular, we are examining the opening of the Sermon on the Mount called the Beatitudes. So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn there with me this morning as we look at verse 4.

We are talking about how, as believers in Jesus Christ, that we are to align ourselves to God's Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. And it doesn't take long to realize that God's Kingdom seems upside down in comparison to the kingdom of this world. So, as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, we are to not live according to this world, but rather live according to the upside down Kingdom.

Last week we talked about how the Beatitudes are progressive in that they build on one another. So, I want to, each week, read them collectively up to the point of our study for the day. So, read along with me in your copy of God's Word, Matthew chapter 5, verses 3 and 4. Jesus says, <sup>3</sup> *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* <sup>4</sup> *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."*

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Wanna Get Away Commercials**

Do you remember the Southwest Airlines Wanna Get Away commercials? There are some funny commercials. One of my favorite ones is when the guy goes to the self-wash car wash and the spray handle gets loose from him and starts to spray other people and then dents a car fender before ultimately breaking the windshield.

Of course, you know how that commercial goes. After the person is completely embarrassed, the voiceover comes on and says, "Wanna get away?"

Now, as we come to the second Beatitude, *"Blessed are those who mourn,"* I think the phrase that we all have a tendency to say is, "Wanna get away?" It is our natural position to avoid mourning. King David expressed the same feeling. In Psalm 55:6-8 he writes, *"<sup>6</sup> And I say, 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; <sup>7</sup> yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah <sup>8</sup> I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest.'"*

It makes sense to feel this way about mourning. I mean, who wants to mourn? The culture in which we live avoids this at all costs. The way in which our world is set up is that the way to happiness is to have things go your way. Yet, The King of our true Kingdom, Jesus, turns the world's approach upside down. He tells us that if we are to live for Him, it requires a reversal of the ideologies and practices of this world.

When it comes to the subject of mourning, Jesus looks at it differently. And what He is saying is that there is a difference between the way the world mourns, and the way followers of Jesus mourn.

So, I'd like for us to approach the topic this morning by examining what biblical mourning is. I want us to think through the fact that biblical mourning is counter-cultural, it is a matter of the spirit, but biblical mourning is also filled with hope.

### MESSAGE:

Let's look first at how...

#### **1) Biblical Mourning is... Counter cultural**

Jesus says in the second Beatitude that those that mourn are blessed. Remember last week we talked about how the word blessed means happy,

blissful. So, happy are the sad, Jesus is saying. This runs counter to the way our culture operates. And even more so when you really press into the word Jesus uses that is translated as “mourn.” Couple things about the word mourn here.

There are 9 different words in the New Testament to speak about the concept of mourning, which is interesting in a of itself. The Greeks had 9 different ways to describe sorrow. This speaks to the fact that sorrow is a part of the human experience and there are various degrees of sorrow.

I think it is safe to say that everyone in this room, and even those joining us online, have experienced sorrow to varying degrees in their life. It is a part of the human experience. The loss of a loved one, defeat, discouragement, crisis, disaster, and so forth and so on. We’ve all been there.

But when you zoom in on the particular word Jesus uses here, of all the words to describe mourning, it is the strongest one. It carries the idea of deep, most heart-felt grief. It was generally reserved to describe those grieving the death of a loved one. In many cases in the Scriptures when this word is used, it is accompanied with weeping and wailing. Perhaps you’ve felt that kind of deep inner agony. How can that experience be deemed a happy, a blessed experience?

And to further compound what Jesus is saying, the word mourn is a present, active participle. For those of you that are grammar nerds, your heart just leaped for joy. But here’s what that means for the rest of us. The mourning Jesus is describing here is one that is ongoing and continual. So, happy are the ones that are in a continual, deep agony. How is this possible?

Well, biblical mourning is counter cultural. It is counter cultural because of our second point this morning.

## 2) Biblical Mourning is... A matter of spirit.

There are 2 ways that mourning is a matter of spirit. First, mourning is **a recognition**. It is a recognition of our own sinfulness that leads to repentance.

Last week we pointed out the fact that the Beatitudes are logical, they’re progressive in nature. That is that they build upon one another. We talked about how being poor in spirit means to recognize our spiritual bankruptcy by

evaluating our sinful condition. This leads us to trust in the finished work of Jesus and is how we gain entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

And mourning goes along with being poor in spirit. When I recognize my spiritual bankruptcy, I come humbly, then I come sorrowfully. I mourn over the recognition of my sin. Oh God, please forgive me!

Being a believer in Jesus means that we are called to live lives of conviction. And conviction of the Holy Spirit leads us to repent of our sinfulness. And if we are honest, living lives of conviction is often painful. But it is vital to our relationship with a holy God.

### ILLUSTRATION: Darkness of a movie theater.<sup>ii</sup>

One pastor put it this way. Imagine you are in a movie theater enjoying a giant bucket of popcorn. While the movie is playing, it is dark in the movie theater. And we don’t realize the mess we are making with the popcorn. It is not until we exit the movie and step into the light that you realize that you have remnants of popcorn all over you. It is the light that reveals the mess we’ve made.

Isn’t that true when it comes to living lives of conviction? When we come into the light of God’s glory, we realize the mess that we have made as a result of our sin and selfishness.

But I want you to hear me. This is important. The end goal is not that we stay stuck in our sin. See, there is a big difference between conviction and guilt. Guilt is a tool of the enemy to leave you stuck in your sin. Conviction is a tool of the Holy Spirit that pushes us toward holiness.

Romans 2:4 says that, “*God’s kindness* [His conviction, grace and mercy] *is meant to lead you to repentance.*” The conviction of the Holy Spirit leads us to mourn over our sin, but ultimately to repent from our sin, leave it behind, and pursue holiness.

Biblical mourning is a matter of the spirit by way of the recognition of our sin. But also, biblical mourning in our spirit is **a response**.

In other words, not only should our spirit recognize the brokenness in our own lives, but it should also respond to the brokenness in the lives of those around

us. As I grow in my relationship with Christ, I become more aware the brokenness in my life but also in the world surrounding me.

In case you haven't noticed, this world is a hot mess. It is broken. It is not as God originally designed. When sin entered the world, it forever changed the world. Sin has brought conflict, suffering, disease, devastation to families, and injustice. And as believers in Jesus, with kingdom vision, we ought to see the brokenness and mourn. Mourn as a response to the brokenness in the world. Our hearts should break for the very things that break God's heart.

This is what differentiates people who live according to the kingdom of this world and those that live according to the Kingdom of Heaven. See, people that belong to the earthly kingdom live in the same messed up world as those that belong to the Kingdom of Heaven. The difference is how we see the mess.

Think about it for a moment. What are the things that break God's heart? And how do we view those very things? Let me give us some examples to ponder.

The border crisis along our Texas border. Now listen, I know there is a lot to think through on this issue and there is nuanced thinking here. I'm not trying to be political. I'm not a politician, I'm a pastor. I'm simply asking that when we look at the mass of humanity that is gathering at the border, and the broken lives that people are fleeing, and the families that are in disarray, and the people who are starving, and the people who are sick, and our troopers that are serving in harms way, it ought to break our hearts! The whole thing ought to break our hearts.

I mean, our theology says people are image bearers of Almighty God and therefore have an intrinsic value. Beloved, we cannot be a people that grows cold to the brokenness of humanity in our world. I don't know the answer. And I understand the political arguments on both sides of the aisle. But hear me, if Christians grow cold to the brokenness of humanity, then God help us all! We ought to mourn the display of the effects of sin.

Think about another issue. What happens in our hearts when we ponder the number of children in foster care? According to the Texas Department of Family Protective Services, there were 14,577 children in foster care in the state of Texas as of August of this year.<sup>iii</sup> Half a million across our country! Beloved, these are children whose family lives are so shattered that they

wonder where they will sleep tonight, what they will eat tomorrow, and in the recesses of their hearts wonder if anyone truly loves them.

There are a ton of displays of brokenness in our world in addition to the two I've highlighted. Cancer, racism, abortion, poverty, abuse, war, and unfortunately, the list goes on and on. And here's my question. How do we respond to the brokenness that we observe? Do we respond with fear? Anger? Frustration? Or do we respond with mourning?

I think our Lord is inviting us to not only see the effects of sin in our world, but to enter into the pain of others and mourn with them. When we allow our hearts to break for what breaks God's heart, we are moved with compassion.

Biblical Mourning is counter cultural and is a matter of the spirit. Thirdly, ...

### 3) Biblical Mourning is... Infused with hope.

Praise God that Jesus doesn't stop with mourning. He says, "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*" When we mourn, we are blessed because we know that we are going to get comforted. Not might be comforted. It's a promise. The people of God who mourn will be comforted.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,<sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*"

Though the mourning Jesus calls us to is the strongest form, it is still infused with hope. Ours is a hopeful mourning for two reasons. First, we are hopeful because of **God's company**.

When Jesus uses the term translated as comforted, it is the same Greek word used to describe the Holy Spirit. In John 14:16, Jesus is teaching His disciples about the coming Holy Spirit and He says, "<sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another *Helper*, to be with you forever." Some translations translate that word as Comforter. And this Helper will be with Jesus' disciples.

In other words, those that mourn will be comforted by the very presence, the company, of God. There is hope in our mourning because of God's presence.

The second reason that our mourning is infused with hope is because of **God's commissioning**. We see this idea in the 2 Corinthians passage we read.

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,<sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, **so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction**, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”*

Pastor Jerry Bridges says it this way, **“God never wastes pain. He always uses it to accomplish His purpose. And His purpose is for His glory and our good.”**<sup>iv</sup> In a way that only God can, He can take our pain, our mourning, and use it as a ministry. He takes our hearts that break for the very things that breaks His, and He sends us, he commissions us.

Isaiah 61:1-2 says, *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; **he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted**, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; **to comfort all who mourn.**”*

Our mourning is different than that of the kingdom of this world. Our mourning is infused with hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 highlights this difference. *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.* We have a hopeful mourning because of God's company and His commissioning.

### **CONCLUSION:**

As we come to a time of response in our service this morning, **I want to ask the band to come back up and lead us in that time of response.** And as they are coming, I want you to consider how The Lord is stirring in your heart.

Perhaps you are here this morning and you have never responded by faith to Jesus as Lord of your life. Maybe the brokenness you are experiencing in your heart right now is The Holy Spirit revealing to you the fact that you are a sinner. The Bible says we are all sinners that have fallen short of the glory of God. And that our sin has brought eternal death in a real place called Hell. But that God loved us so much that He gave His one and only Son, Jesus. And in Jesus' death upon the cross, and in His resurrection from the dead, God has extended to us an amazing, free gift of salvation. The Bible also tell us that if

we confess with our mouth and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. That everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved from their sin.

Have you trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If not, you can do that today. We would love nothing more than to visit with you about what it means to make Jesus the Lord of your life.

Perhaps you are here this morning, and you are already saved, but The Lord is stirring something different in your heart. Maybe He is revealing to you the brokenness of our world. Maybe He is creating within you a sense of mourning. Maybe you feel prompted to sit in your seat and pray, mourn, call out to God. Or maybe it is your desire to make these steps an altar for you to kneel before God and pray.

Or it could be that you are here this morning and you are mourning something in particular. You are in need of the God of all comfort to visit you this morning. You need prayer for a situation, prayer for a decision, prayer for a struggle. Our elders will be here at the front ready to receive you and pray over you.

Here's the thing. Whatever The Lord is prompting in your heart, be obedient to that in this time of response. I trust that He is stirring, respond to that stirring.

I'm going to pray, we are going to stand, and we are all going to respond.

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation of this sermon: Chris Colvin, “*How to Preach the Beatitudes*” article written September 2, 2020; John MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary*; Grant Ethridge, “*What Does it Mean that Those Who Mourn will be Comforted and Blessed?*,” article written October 29, 2020, LibertyLive.church; Ligonier Ministries, “*Blessed are Those Who Mourn*,” article written November 22, 2011; David Brown, “*The Gospel According to Matthew Commentary*,” Matthew 5:1-16; Vance Pitman, *Radical Red Letters: “Blessed are Those that Mourn*,” message preached September 27, 2020 at Hope Church Las Vegas; Dr. Michael Gossett, *The Upside Down Life: “Hopeful Mourning*,” preached September 27, 2021 at Green Acres Baptist Church; Skip Heitzig, *Expound, “Matthew 4:18-5:4*,” Calvary Church Albuquerque, October 5, 2011; J.D. Greear, *The Whole Story: “8 Ways to Be Happy, According to Jesus*,” Summit Church, September 25, 2016.

<sup>ii</sup> I adapted this illustration from Pastor Vance Pitman.

<sup>iii</sup> Statistic from August 2021, Report located at:

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About\\_DFPS/Monthly\\_Data/default.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Monthly_Data/default.asp)

<sup>iv</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts*, published in 1988.