The Sermon on the Mount - Session Two

**“Blessed are those who mourn”**

1a) “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matt. 5, 4)

It seems like a contradiction to say; “Happy are those who are unhappy!”

1b) The Second beatitude takes the attitude of being “Poor in spirit” one step further. After you recognize that you are poor in spirit, the next two beatitudes tell you what to do about that; First you mourn. Then you hunger and thirst for righteousness.

1c) When we think about mourning, you can apply it to your own life. You can also apply it to the community or the nation that you’re living in.

1d) Mourning comes from seeing all that God is offering to give us; all that he is calling us to be; and then recognizing how far short we fall.

1e) Mourning is a deeper and longer-lasting form of repentance; It’s a sorrow for sin that comes into you and that you carry around with you wherever you go.

**2) About Mourning**

2a) Mourning is a difficult thing to live with. The sadness of loss is always there, like a wound that never heals. It nags away at the back of your mind, it wakes you up in the night and turns your tranquillity into a restlessness.

2b) Many feel it is unbiblical to mourn, thinking that our life should be one of constant rejoicing and happiness. However, Jesus encourages us to mourn and many great men and women of God in the Bible lived in mourning.

**2c) Our mourning should with hope** because Jesus says “Those who mourn **will** be comforted” (Matt. 5, 4). “He has turned my mourning into dancing” (Ps.30, 11).

**Mourning over our own sin**

**3a) Mourning over our own sin and failure.** We’re all much more deceived than we imagine. “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Cor 10, 12)

3b) One day soon we will stand before Jesus. Part of how he changes us into His likeness involves showing us who we really are – with all our sin and failure.

3c) James outlines how we should respond; “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4, 4-10)

**4) Mourning for the sins of others**

4a) When you see bad things going on in the world, what do you do?

i) Some are seduced by the wrong and join they in

ii) Many are hurt by the wrong that others are doing and so they withdraw for their own safety

iii) Others take on a critical attitude, loudly condemning the wrong that they see. (Condemnation rarely changes anything).

iv) Most Christians pass by on the other side. They ignore it or are blind to it.

Saying; “It’s not my problem. It’s too big for me. Or they don’t care enough to get involved, or they don’t believe that their involvement will make a difference.

v) Or they offer cheap comfort that doesn’t really cost them anything.

vi) Finally there are those who get involved. Who say “This problem is now my problem”. With God’s help I will do whatever I can to change this situation.”

4b) The difference between mourning and intercession is that mourning is much deeper. It’s something that you carry around inside of you.

**5) Those who mourned**

5a) The Bible is full of stories of those who mourned but through their mourning God changed their circumstances into something different.

**Lot** was “a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (of Sodom and Gomorrah” (2 Peter 2, 7).

**Noah** was grieved as “a preacher of righteousness” in a world where “Every thought of every man was only evil all the time” (2 Peter 2, 5; Gen. 6, 5).

**Nehemiah** mourned and fasted and prayed “The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire. When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.” (Neh. 1, 3-4),

**Ezra**, when he heard abut the Israelites inter marrying with the neighbouring peoples, “tore his tunic and cloak, pulled hair from his beard and sat down appalled until the evening sacrifice” (Ezra 9, 3).

**Ezekiel** talks about angels going through the city of Jerusalem and “marking the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in Jerusalem” (Ezk. 9, 4)

**Daniel** when he was praying for Jerusalem “turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.” (Daniel 9, 3)

**Jesus** Himself was called “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Is. 53, 3)

He mourned over the sin and unbelief of the people around him and the grief and pain that it caused them. “You unbelieving and perverse generation. How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?” (Matt. 17, 17)

He wept bitterly at his friend Lazarus’ grave (John 11, 35). He also lamented bitterly over the city of Jerusalem (Matt. 23, 37-38).

**6) A vision of God’s anger towards sin**

A French pastor had a dream in which he saw himself standing before God's throne, with the earth far below. He saw what looked like a thin wisp of smoke coming up from the earth. It was the prayers of the French arising before God like incense; “ "Lord, bless our land. Send revival". To the pastor the prayers sounded like sweet music. But, to his surprise, the Lord angrily asked; “Do you hear that sound?” Then He reached up and pulled back a black curtain behind the throne. From behind the curtain came the sound of hundreds of millions of screams and shouts and groans, the cries those in Africa who had been killed, exploited or taken from their families by the French. They were crying out to God for justice. Finally God closed the curtain, and once again, all you could hear was the prayers of the French; "Lord, bless our land. Send revival". He turned to the pastor once more and said; "Now don't you see why I can’t answer that prayer" ?

**7) Mourning in the life of Jeremiah**

7a) The level of Mourning needed is dependent on the level of pain. In order to change a season, the depth of repentence has to match the depth of the sin.

7b) Jeremiah lived and preached in Jerusalem during the last 40 years of Judah’s history before the exile, up until the time in 586BC when the Babylonian army came and totally destroyed the city of Jerusalem, killing most of the people but just taking a small percentage off into exile in Babylon.

7c) It was a hard time to be a preacher, because in those days, the hearts of the people of Jerusalem were so hard that they had no desire to listen to what God might be saying. During the 40 years of his preaching, there was absolutely no response at all to Jeremiah’s preaching. In fact, before he even started, God told Jeremiah that he was called to preach His message, however God told him from the start that the people wouldn’t listen or change their ways. Because of their sin, I am going to destroy this nation. God even told Jeremiah 3 times not to even pray for the nation to be saved. (Jeremiah 7, 16. See also 11, 14 & 14, 11). God even said; “Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people” (Jer. 15, 1).

7d) Jeremiah was constantly persecuted. He was mocked, he was rejected, he was put in the stocks and beaten. On one occasion he was cast into a deep cistern that had no water in it and he sank down into the mud at the bottom and couldn’t get out. He spent many weeks in prison on several different occasions.

7e) Eventually, what Jeremiah prophesied came to pass. No-one repented and turned back to God, and in the end, the Babylonian army came and destroyed the whole city and took the few survivors into exile as slaves.

7f) Jeremiah often asked himself; God what is the point of all of this? How is my ministry making any difference to anyone. When we give our lives to God, one thing we have to surrender is the right to understand what God is doing with our lives.

**8) The weeping prophet**

8a) We know more about the personal inner life and struggles and fears and disappointments emotions of Jeremiah than of any other character.

8b) Even though these people rejected everything that he ever said and persecuted him ruthlessly, he still loved them, and his heart was deeply troubled for them.

8c) “Oh that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears. I weep day and night for the slain of my people” (Jer. 9, 1).

8d) “Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me (Jer. 8, 21).

8e) “My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed.” (Lam. 2, 11).

**9) The book of mourning**

Jeremiah even wrote a book called “The book of mourning”. Lamentations.

Lamentations is an acrostic poem. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew Alphabet. Each chapter has 22 verses. The first verse begins with the letter A. The second with the letter B and so-on right through the whole alphabet. Except for the middle chapter where the first 3 verses begin with A, the next 3 with B and so on.

This book of “mourning” is a deep, reflective compilation of who Jeremiah was and what his life was about. A life of mourning for a nation.

**10) Those who mourn shall be comforted**

10a) Mourning eventually brings about a change in season.

10b) God’s promise is that “Those who mourn will be comforted.”

10c) Mourning is not just about expressing grief. Mourning is the birth pains of a new season.It is a part of the process of moving from the old to the new. Until someone mourns enough, the season won’t change. Jeremiah was stuck in this constant mourning for 40 years.

10d) God told Jeremiah that the exile will only last for 70 years. Then, after 70 years, I will visit these people once again and I will bring them back to the land and I will bless them more than blessed them before”. And I will send to them the greatest son of David ever to be born, the greatest king will come and be the future ruler of this nation. His name will be “The righteous saviour” (Jer. 23, 5-6; 33, 15).

10e) in the 69th year of the exile in Babylon, Daniel read Jeremiah’s scroll and discovered God’s promise that the captivity in Babylon would only last for 70 years (Daniel 9, 2). Daniel fasted and prayed with such fervour that the archangel Gabriel was sent to him to release the answer to that prayer and to bring the Jews back home. – Because of Jeremiah’s words.

10f) Jeremiah could never have known that over 500 years later, at a place called Caesaria Philippi, the promised Messiah of the Jews would ask his disciples “Who do people say that I am?”, and they would say of Jesus, himself nicknamed the man of sorrows; “Some say that you are Jeremiah”.

10g) Nor could he know that in 2022, the world’s favourite Bible verse would be “I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope”. (Jer. 29, 11).