



THE BEATITUDES

BEAUTIFUL CHARACTER
FORMED BY CHRIST

PT. 2:
BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

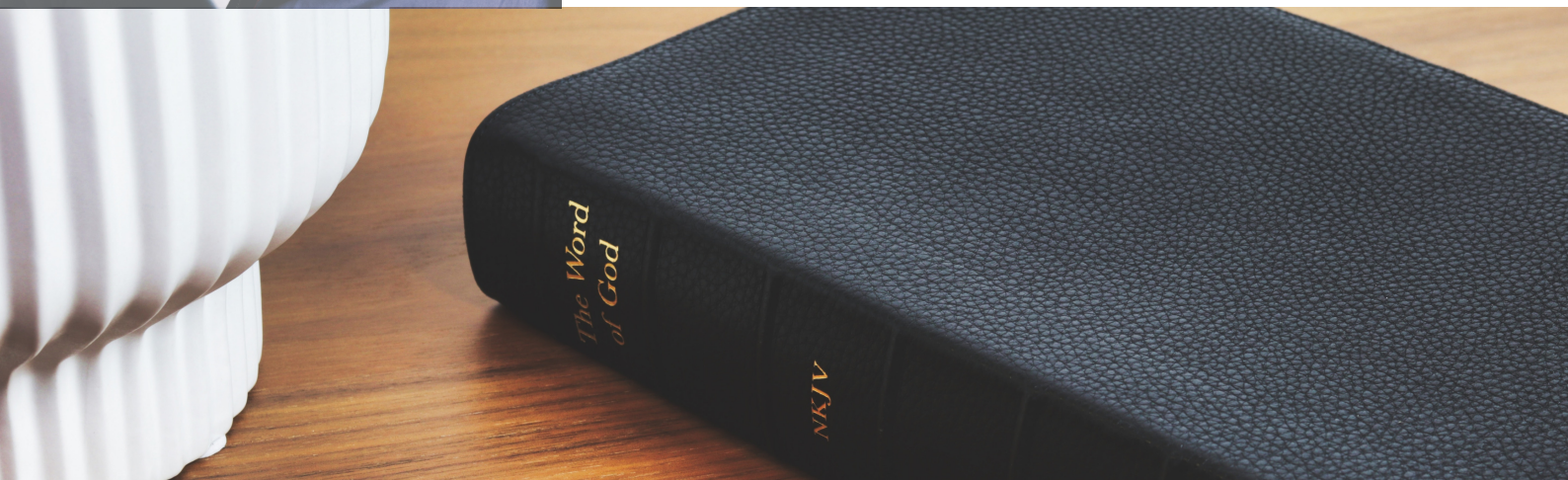
BLESSED...HOW?

N.T. Wright, in his study on Matthew tells us that the Latin word "beatus" means blessed (but this is a greek word in the Bible, just so you know!). He says "these are [not] simply timeless truths about the way the world is. If he was saying that, he was wrong. Mourners often go uncomforted, and those who long for injustice frequently take that longing to the grave. Jesus is saying that with his work these things start to come true." The people of God are to be "meek and merciful, poor in spirit and pure in heart, mourning and hungry, peacemakers and persecuted." (John Stott). What a list, eh? This is what God calls us to, but without God working in our hearts, we not only can't want this, but can't get there. We need the Holy Spirit to guide us into these blessings. And what a blessing it is that Jesus, who gave these words, lived them all.



Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted. (5:4)

Our modern culture couldn't fathom this being something to want. Aren't we just seeking pleasure and happiness? Most people say of their kids "I just want them to be happy!" Then why does God say of His children, "Happy are the unhappy?"



//BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN//

The whole sermon on the Mount “is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Ghost (Spirit) is getting His way with us.” (Oswald Chambers) In a lot of places in the world, the “prosperity gospel” which teaches that health and healing are all yours in Christ now, has made it so many Christians could hardly agree with Jesus words here. Most people want comfort now, not mourning! But when Jesus promises comfort, the New Testament itself tells us where that final and full comfort will be found. Revelation 7:17 (also passages in Isaiah) tells us that Jesus’ promised comfort will come when God restores and renews all things, but there is no promise of it now, though Jesus himself will be with us to the end, and the Spirit will intercede for us. We will experience the comfort of the presence of Christ now, but not necessarily the comfort of riches, health and lives without loss.

The teacher in Ecclesiastes also reminds us **“It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart.”** (Ecclesiastes 7:2) In a sense, living in reality, and for the sake of Jesus Christ and not for our own selves – will drive us to places where there is mourning. Where pain is a reality. Where we aren’t isolating in our castles but reaching out with God’s love to the lost, poor, sick, and in need – physically and spiritually. The Christian life brings joy in every circumstance, but not every circumstance is joyful. We are called by God to face reality with the hope of Jesus, not isolate form it with the comforts of the world. So, will you mourn? If you will mourn for your own sin, and the sins of the world, there is good news. You will find genuine, lasting comfort, in God alone!

REVELATION 7:17

**For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; ‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’
‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”**

WHEN WE MOURN

1. We do not remain passive and aloof from pain, in our castles, protected. We mourn and we know what we are mourning for. Sin and its effects. Sin and the people it hurts.
2. We mourn for our own sin. When we refer to being poor in spirit, there is certainly a sense that we mourn for our own propensity to sin, and long for the day when the sin in our own hearts is gone and we are fully sanctified!
3. We mourn for the pain we see, and sometimes cause. – We see the sin-stained canvas of the world, and we mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15), entering into mourning and bringing the light of Christ to comfort others even as we mourn with them.
4. We take to heart the reality of death, and the reality of the eternity that awaits those who trust in Jesus Christ. And we live like it makes all the difference.

REFLECT. PRAY. ACT

1. Reflect: Do you live like you avoid a "house of mourning" like the plague? Do you avoid those who struggle; don't know the words to say and so just avoid it? Reflect on Ecclesiastes 7:2 and ask: How can I take this to heart?
2. Pray: Pray for the people in your lives who are mourning and mourn with them. Write their names down. Perhaps Pray Psalm 34:17-19 as you think of the afflictions but God's presence in the midst of it.
3. Act: Consider caring for someone who is mourning. Don't know anyone? Walk the streets, the halls of your school, and talk to someone you don't know. Become a friend, pray for them, and go out of your way to be kind!