

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

Read each of the following commentaries on this verse by theologians and Bible scholars. Then choose two that, in your opinion, speak to you or explain this beatitude the best.

Watson - "We must mourn for sin as sin is the highest ingratitude against God! God sent His son to die in order to redeem us and His spirit to comfort us. Shall we not mourn?"

Newton - "Spiritual mourning begins in conversion; it is the pathway to repentance. When a person faces his own lost condition before God and sees his unworthiness of forgiveness and yet God in His mercy forgives him, then you can be assured that he is comforted."

Clark - "Only such persons as are deeply convinced of the sinfulness of sin and turn from the insufficiency of worldly pleasures, in order to render true happiness, can have God's promise of solid comfort."

Puritans - "If you ever cease to know the virtues of repentance, you are in darkness. Examine yourself and see if you have forgotten how to be truly sorry."

Boreham - "Our tendency is to become insensitive to wrong. We get used to things. Mourning implies a soft copious heartfelt grief - a grief that has broken all restraint and finds relief in tears."

Stot - "We can stand before the cross only with a bowed head and a broken spirit."

Richards - "In the beatitudes, Jesus is contrasting the values of His kingdom with the values of the world. The world considers blessed the hedonistic and pleasure seeking. It is the one who is dissatisfied with sin and pained by the world who will find the comfort that is only offered by a living relationship with God".

Spurgeon - "It is not with the proud - not with you who think yourself good and excellent - does God dwell; but with men who feel their sin and own it; with men who feel their unworthiness and confess it."

Ferguson - "Jesus is speaking about life in the Kingdom of God. The grief Jesus describes is a man's mourning over his own sinfulness; it is regret that he has proven a disappointment to the Lord. Here then is an important characteristic of a Christian - he does not excuse his sin, or belittle it or ignore it! It is this - his sight of God that has made him mourn and paradoxically the same sight of God that will bring him comfort."

One of Jesus's most talked about parables is that of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-24. Record the evidence you see of the son's mourning and record the significance of the father's response.

What do you think was the level of the son's "being comforted" after repenting and knowing his father's response?

Review the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14. What evidence do you see of mourning and comfort in this story?

Mourning (sincere, heart heavy repentance) is a major theme in the Bible. Record the situations in which you find repentance in the following verses:

Mark 1:4-8

Matthew 4:17

Mark 6:7-12

Luke 24:45-47

Acts 17:29,30

James 4:8-10

Being comforted by God is also a major theme in the Bible. Record what the following verses teach about being comforted:

Psalms 23:4

II Corinthians 1:3-5

John 14:25-27

Matthew 11:28-30

John 16:22-24

Write a short summary of this lesson as though you were explaining to another person the meaning of Matthew 5:4: