

Mourners Comforted

#0126

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 25, 1975

What a privilege it is to share from day to day in personal fellowship with our Lord. In our last vespers study, we were looking at His sermon given on the mount near the Sea of Galilee, Matthew the fifth chapter. If you'll turn to that again, we'll notice the next Beatitude. We're told by inspiration that, in these verses, Jesus is giving us a progression in Christian experience.

He starts, as we noted last week (in #0125), in the third verse with the saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" Matthew 5:3.

Humility, a sense of need, this is at the *beginning* of Christian experience. We do not come to God to receive a blessing with a demand based upon our attainments, our wealth, our talents, our Christian experience. We come with a great sense of need. Does anybody have that sense of need tonight? Well, thank God, we are going to get something.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" Matthew 5:3.

Now, in the fourth verse, our text for tonight:

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"
Matthew 5:4.

What does it mean to mourn? Well, it's the opposite of being glad, isn't it? Weeping, crying, sighing—all of these give us a picture of something that most people don't desire at all. Jesus here pronounces a blessing upon those that weep.

As Luke records this sermon, He said:

"Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh"
Luke 6:21.

You see, God never intends that weeping, mourning, shall be a permanent experience. Never, never.

As He tells us in the 30th Psalm and the 5th verse:

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" Psalm 30:5.

Someone has said that in this world as we know it, all sunshine makes a desert, all rain makes a swamp. And so in our life, without the experience of tears, tears for good reasons, we would not have the growth that God desires to bring about in our spiritual gardens.

The other day, a number of us, I know, were longing for rain for our gardens. Did any of you pray for rain? Yes. Well, we're glad God heard our prayers. But I've been in places where people were praying for it to quit raining.

Someone has put it this way:

“Is it raining little flower? Be glad of rain,
Too much sun would wither thee, ‘twill shine again.
The clouds are very dark, ‘tis true,
but just behind them shines the blue.

Art thou weary tender heart? Be glad of pain.
In sorrow, sweetest things will grow as flowers in rain.
God watches and thou wilt have sun
when clouds their perfect work have done.”

We need the sunshine and the shadow, the rain and the dry spells.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted”
Matthew 5:4.

Now, that expression “they shall be comforted” is very interesting. You remember that in 1 John, the second chapter, verses 1 and 2, we are told that Jesus is our what? Advocate. That word “advocate” comes from the same word that we get this word “comfort” from. It’s translated “comforter” in John, where Jesus says, “When I go to the Father, I won’t leave you orphans, but I will send you another ‘Comforter’ that He may abide with you forever.” (See John 14:16.)

So, this is the word that we find here in this Beatitude, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Jesus our Advocate, the Holy Spirit His personal representative, with the Father—all are engaged in seeking to comfort and bless those that mourn. Well, dear friends, if the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—are all engaged in this work of comforting the mourner, indeed, thrice blessed are those that mourn. What do you say?

Now of course, it makes a difference what we're crying about. It makes a *lot* of difference. Esau wept when he saw that he had lost his birthright, but it didn't bring any blessing to him. Judas cried out in anguish when he saw that he had sold his Lord to a cruel death, but it didn't bring any comfort into his life. He died a suicide in deep despair. So, the mourning that Christ speaks of here, which is the prelude to the blessing of comfort, is the mourning first of all for sins, not because of their *consequence*, but because they have brought *grief* to the Lord.

Turn to Zechariah, the 12th chapter, and the 10th verse. And notice this picture of weeping and mourning:

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall...” Zechariah 12:10.

Do what? “Mourn.” Mourn, what for? “For Him.” Mourn for *Him*.

“...they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” *Ibid*.

Suppose that the Spirit of God begins to work with my heart and convict me of sin. Suppose that Jesus lays His finger on something in my life that needs to come out. Maybe it's a package of cigarettes; maybe it's a bottle of whiskey, maybe it's something else, whatever. And suppose that I come to the place where I am wrestling with the problem of what I'm going to do about that. If I weep because I wish I didn't have to give it up, is that repentance? Oh, no. That's not repentance.

The rich young ruler came to Christ and asked what to do to have eternal life. Jesus said, as Matthew records it in the 19th chapter of His Gospel, that Christ quoted some of the commandments and said do that. He replied, "I've done all that. What do I lack?" Jesus told him, You lack one thing: go and sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and come and take up the cross and follow Me.

Christ put His finger on the plague-spot of his character and invited him to give up that idol—that idol of wealth. Was he sad? Yes. Did he get the blessing of this beatitude? Was he comforted? No. Why not? He was sorry for *himself*, not for *Jesus*. He was sorry for the prospect of having to give up what he wanted to keep, instead of being sad that his selfishness had brought pain and sorrow to the Lord. Do you see?

How many there are in this world tonight that are indeed weeping because they can't get what they want! This is not the mourning that Jesus blesses.

In the book *Desires of Ages*, I read:

“By every sin Jesus is wounded afresh; and as we look upon Him whom we have pierced, we mourn for the sins that have brought anguish upon Him. Such mourning will lead to the renunciation of sin” *The Desire of Ages*, page 300.

What does “renunciation” mean? Giving it up, turning away from it, saying no to it.

Now, what does it say will lead to the renunciation of sin? This mourning. This *blessed* mourning. “Blessed are they that mourn,” in this way, for this reason.

And what is it that brings about that mourning? It is looking at *Jesus* on the cross. It is sensing that it is our sins that have nailed Him there, our sins that have pierced His heart. Then we begin to weep, *not* because of some inconvenience, or worse, that might come to us, but we weep because we have hurt Jesus, because we have murdered the Son of God.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted”
Matthew 5:4.

Why yes, dear friends, the same cross that tells us how bad our sin is, tells us how good our God is. And so, that same revelation that causes us to weep in sorrow because we have sinned causes us to weep with joy because our sins are pardoned through the blood of His cross.

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Matthew 5:4.

A few years ago in a distant state, we were looking together at the scenes of Calvary, and a dear woman who was there in the meeting penned these lines afterward. I want to share them with you:

The precious Lord of all the earth now hangs upon a tree,
His head is bowed, His eyes are closed in this last agony.

Oh, how my heart goes out to Him, His pain I long to share,
and then it dawns upon my soul for me He’s dying there.

Oh, can it be my sin requires a punishment so great,
as death upon a cross of shame outside the city gate?

The angry thoughts within my heart, the idle words I say,
the countless times I fail my Lord in living day by day.

Are these so-called shortcomings sins so great that they require
the death of Christ, God’s own dear Son, to break the tempter’s power?

It’s only when I realize the sins that I have done
are worthy of such punishment that victory can be won!

For truly it was in my place the Lord of glory died,
‘twas for my sin the cruel spear was thrust into His side.

He gave His life that I might gain the mastery over sin,
and faultless stand before my God when He returns again.

Blessed are they that mourn, at the cross, seeing what sin has done to Christ, and looking until we are sorrow enough to do *what* with our sin? Give it up! Give it up! And then, as we look, the same sight that brought sorrow to us comforts us, for we see that Jesus is dying in our place, to pay the debt for our sins, to take away the

guilt, and to restore in our hearts His own image. Oh, I am thankful for the cross! Aren't you? Here is where true sorrow is inspired, and where true comfort comes.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"
Matthew 5:4.

But now, my dear friends, I would remind you that mere presence at the scenes of Calvary does not, in itself, ensure this result. There were many spectators around the cross. Most of them were joining with the priests and rulers in deriding the Son of God. They saw Him hanging there, and they mocked Him, they reproached Him; they did everything that they could think of to add to His pain. It seems hard to imagine that anybody would do that to a dying man, doesn't it? But that's the nature of sin, my friends; that's the nature of sin.

And unless you and I will *yield* to the work of the Holy Spirit, we may even *read* about the experience of the cross, we may even in our imagination see reenacted the crucifixion, and yet *fail* to enter into an experience of sorrow for sin.

Beside the rabble that were derided Him, there were His disciples. They weren't joining in the mockery, but they failed to get the lesson. Their hearts were full of doubt and unbelief. They were sorry for *themselves*, my friends; they actually felt that Christ had let them down. And they were so filled with disappointment that they were numb with sorrow. They failed to get the blessing that they could have had. And, my dear friends, as we enter into experiences from time to time that we cannot understand, if our main burden is to get it all explained to our satisfaction, we may miss the lesson that God really wants to give us.

If our main prayer is, "Lord, why, why, why, why did you let this happen to me? We had it all planned for a glorious triumph, and now it's a cruel defeat! Why? Why? Why?" Did they get an answer to the "why?" that day? No. It isn't that road that leads to comfort.

There were some others there at Calvary that failed to get the blessing. Do you remember those soldiers that nailed Him to the cross? After they'd hung Him up between the heavens and the earth to die, they got busy with something that interested them far more than watching His expiring agonies. They wanted to divide up His clothes, and someone suggested that they get some fun out of it and have a game. And so one of those Roman legionnaires pulled out some dice, and they had a game at the foot of the cross.

I saw a picture not long ago of some of those dice the Roman soldiers carried. I don't mean that particular day, but the kind that was common with the army of Rome. I want to ask you something. If you had been at Calvary that day, where would you have been looking? Would you have been watching that Man nailed to the cross? Or would you have been eagerly watching to see which soldier was going to win that game at the foot of the cross?

Think of it next time you are tempted to watch the sports on TV or get the returns on the radio or through the newspaper. I tell you this, friends: in a sense, the Son of God is still on the cross and *will* be until sin is over. And His murderers are

still in contests and games at the foot of His cross. And if your interest is in who wins those fun games, those contest games, who gets the prize, who gets the reward, I tell you truly, you may miss, just as those soldiers missed, what's going on above you.

You cannot be focused at one and the same time on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, as He gives His life for your sins, and the fun and games of His murderers as there, under the bleeding Christ, they go ahead with their plans for gain and pleasure. One or the other will captivate you, and whichever captivates you, you will lose your interest in the other. This is what's happening to multitudes today.

Thank God, some are having the experience that one man did at Calvary—that thief that hung on a cross at His side. Two, you remember, there were—one on either side. At first, they joined with the rabble and with the priests in deriding that central figure on the cross. But finally, this one became tender. His heart was softened under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Apparently, the position of His cross was such that He could look and see the face of Jesus on the central cross. And finally, with the help of the Holy Spirit, he discovered what was really happening—that that Man on the cross was the Lamb that was sacrificed to pay his debt and to deliver him from guilt and sin. He cried, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." (See Luke 23:42.) And quickly the answer came from the lips of Jesus, "This very day I tell you truly, you will be with Me in paradise."

Oh friends, he saw what the rabble *missed*. He saw what those soldiers with their exciting game *missed*. He saw what Christ's own disciples *missed*. He saw his Savior dying for him, and it led to mourning for sin that led on to comfort and assurance from the lips of Christ Himself. He died accepted, triumphant, gloriously saved, and in eternity, we'll see him standing there near to that One who pardoned his sins at the eleventh hour.

Oh, I repeat, it takes more than a great scene to make a great impression. It takes more than proximity in space and time to an event to understand what's going on. God, give us anointed eyes! What do you say?

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"
Matthew 5:4.

Not only is this blessing for those who sorrow for sin, their own sins, but there is a blessing that also comes as we sorrow for the sins of others. Let us go to Ezekiel, the ninth chapter. In fact, as we shall see, this point is that which marks the difference between the saved and the lost at the close of human probation. It is the point that marks the difference between the wheat and the chaff in the remnant church—the gold and the dross. This is the dividing point—our attitude toward the sins of others that we see about us.

Ezekiel the ninth chapter. Here the prophet is given a view of six men, with slaughter weapons coming. God, from the sanctuary, gives them a charge. One man among them has a writer's inkhorn. The Lord says to him:

“Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” Ezekiel 9:4.

Then, to the others, He gives the commission to go after him and kill everybody that isn't marked by that first man. This is a picture of the awful outpouring of the wrath of God in the seven last plagues. Before that universal slaughter comes the marking. The angel, sent by God Himself, is going from door to door in Jerusalem, representing God's church, and he's listening. What's he listening for? He is listening for sighing, crying, weeping. What about? Because people don't have all the money they wish? Is that what they are weeping about? Not the ones that get the mark. Because the people can't buy all the expensive furniture, fine clothes, big houses, and all that? Is that why they are weeping? Not the ones that get the mark. Are they weeping because they can't keep up with their neighbors in display? Not the ones that get the mark. What are they weeping about? They're weeping over sin in the church, my friends! They're the only ones in this chapter that get the mark. And they are the only ones that are spared in the slaughter that follows.

Now, in *Volume 3*, I read the divine comment:

“Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those ‘that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done’ in the church” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3*, page 267.

How does sin in the church affect you? Just as there were various reactions at Calvary when the Son of God died, so there are various reactions to sin in the church today. Some seem to ignore it, act as if things were about as good as they'd always have been. Some even seem to rejoice that the remnant church is getting more in step with the times, getting out of the “horse and buggy” days—finally catching up and catching on, and learning what things are all about.

Some get discouraged and depressed as the disciples did at Calvary. But there are some who are heart to heart with Jesus in this solemn closing hour. And while He's working to cleanse the Heavenly Sanctuary of sin, they are working with Him on earth to cleanse their individual hearts of sin and to cleanse the church. These are the ones that get the mark.

Notice in *Volume 5* of the *Testimonies*:

“The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God” *Ibid.*, *Volume 5*, page 211.

Notice that this is no self-exalted feeling of holier than others—“holier than thou.” No, nothing like that. The prophet Daniel is an example of this kind of weeping. The ninth chapter of his book gives his somewhat lengthy prayer in which

he confessed his own sins and the sins of Israel. He linked himself with his people. He didn't merely pray *for* them, he prayed *with* them, praying on their behalf—pleading with God to change the hearts of Israel and open the way for God's name to be vindicated. This is the spirit of those who understand the heartthrobs of the Son of God today.

Sin in the church should never make us laugh, for it makes Jesus weep. Doesn't it? Ah, if we are heart to heart with Him, we will not pass around the juicy bits of gossip. We will not congratulate ourselves that we are not like other men. That's what the Pharisee did. But as we see our brothers and sisters affected by the rising tide of worldliness, we will go to our closets and plead with God for His church. And then we will seek to help all that we can, all that will listen, seeking to help them to see that we're in the closing moments of the Day of Atonement—that the great work now is the work of cleansing the sanctuary.

There is another kind of sorrow that Jesus is thinking of as He says, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." In this, there is absolutely no selfishness at all. It is sharing the sorrow of Jesus because of the pain and woe that fills this world. This is, in a special sense, to be the experience of the true medical missionary. One of the reasons, dear fellow workers, that God gave us the work of ministry to the sick: He longed to have our hearts drawn out in sharing the sorrows of others.

We are to *weep* with those that weep. We are to *hurt* with those that feel pain. Concerning Jesus, it is written:

"In all their affliction He was afflicted" Isaiah 63:9.

And so, today, we are told that Jesus feels the woes of every sufferer. And if we are heart to heart with Him, as we come in contact with human woe, whether of the body or of the spirit, our hearts will be drawn out in sorrow for others, and we will share with them the love and sympathy of Jesus.

Turn to 2 Corinthians, the first chapter. A most wonderful text. Notice again in this text, as in some of the others that we have had, God does not intend that sorrow shall be a permanent experience. He intends that it shall be the prelude to comfort, consolation, relief. He wants this to be so in our own experience. He wants us to share this with others.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" 2 Corinthians 1:3–5.

You remember that the apostle Paul, when he met Jesus on the Damascus road, was called into a ministry of witness, of suffering, of consolation. He's speaking here of his personal experience and that of those who shared with him in

this ministry. You and I are invited into this same ministry—a sorrow which, as I have said, has in it nothing of selfishness: a sorrow for the *wounds* of others, a sorrow for the *pain* of others, a sorrow over the *distress* of others. But we are to get from God—don't miss it—the consolation that will enable us to comfort those that mourn—to bind up the wounds of those who will let Jesus pour in the oil of His Spirit and the wine of His love.

Notice how it's put here in one of the other translations:

“For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share in comfort too” 2 Corinthians 1:5.

Have you had sorrow? Then you can comfort somebody that's *in* sorrow. Have you had *deep* sorrow? Then God may use you to comfort someone who is going *through* deep sorrow. But oh, friends, it'll take something more than a story of how God helped you to keep from getting irritated when your wife burnt the toast. It'll take something deeper than that to help a person that is really in a pain and problem. Won't it? Yes.

Certainly, we ought to get past being irritated when somebody burns the toast, but oh, there are *real* sorrows, *real* problems, *deep* troubles all about us. And God wants us to share the sufferings of Christ with these, dear ones, that we may share in His consolation.

Somebody says, “But Brother Frazee, it seems to me that I have more than my share.”

Listen, it's good news for you. Here's the way Weymouth translates this fifth verse:

“For as we have more than our share of suffering for Christ, so also through Christ we have more than our share of comfort” 2 Corinthians 1:5 (*Weymouth Translation*).

Isn't that wonderful? Oh, I think that's marvelous. What a blessing we have to share with others. What do you say?

Oh, deem not they are blest alone
Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep;
The anointed Son of God makes known
A blessing for the eyes that weep.

The light of smiles shall fill again
The lids that overflow with tears;
And weary hours of woe and pain
Are promises of happier years.

There is a day of sunny rest
For every dark and troubled night;
And grief may bide an evening guest,

Do you remember that first vision given to the advent messenger in December of 1844? There, under the Tree of Life, she heard the remnant meeting together and checking up on the experiences that they had gone through while some were sleeping. Brother Fitch and Brother Stockman said, "Tell us of some of the things you've gone through while we were in the grave."

Then she said:

"We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, 'Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!' and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven's arches ring" *Early Writings*, page 17.

Ah yes, friends, there will be an eternal comfort for whatever trials, little or big, we have gone through in this world. There indeed the fullness of the beatitude will be experienced:

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"
Matthew 5:4.

But, here in this world we have a foretaste, and God intends that each experience of sorrow (whether sorrow for our own sins, sorrow over the sins of others, or sorrow in sympathy with the pains and woes of others) shall lead us into an experience of comfort, of assurance, of peace, of confidence that fully fulfills the Savior's promise, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

[Testimony service]

Do you really want to help others? Will you go to school so you can learn? The school of sorrow? The school of pain? The school of disappointment? Not to just give up to dumb sorrow, but to learn to pray our way through these experiences and get through the tears on to the comfort. What do you say?

Let's say that beatitude once more together:

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"
Matthew 5:4.

Isn't it true? Did you ever mourn and get comforted? Well, then you are ready to comfort somebody else.

As we go to the Lord in prayer, is there a burdened heart here tonight? It's longing for special help, and you'd like to have us bear your name to Heaven in prayer? Just raise your hand; God will hear your request.

Another question: Is there a heart here tonight that feels that God has spoken to you and that He has a mission for you to perform in reaching out, more than you

have before, in sharing the sorrows of others as Christ's representative? And you'd like to respond to the conviction of the Spirit and say, "Yes, Lord, take my hands and use them in loving ministry, take my voice and let me speak the words of cheer." Those that have heard that convicting call and will respond; will you raise your hands? Thank God.

Another question: Is there a soul here tonight that, as we have come to Calvary and you've seen the Son of God uplifted on the cross, it has brought to you a sense of sin that has separated between your soul and God, and tonight you're giving up the sin that God has brought to your attention? Would you raise your hands? Thank God.

[Audience joins Elder Frazee in singing "I Surrender All."]

Yes, blessed Lord, we thank Thee for the sorrow that prepares us for comfort. For the repentance that leads to the moment of pardon. We thank Thee, for the blood dropping from the cross, which tells us how bad sin is, and how good Thou art. And tonight, we're turning from sin to accept Thy pardon. We're turning from selfishness that our lives may be used as Thy tools to bring comfort to others. We're bringing our lives, our hearts, to Thee, that we may become Thy agents to share with others the love and peace and joy which Thou dost share with us. We thank Thee, in that wonderful name. Amen.

God bless you all and give you a happy Sabbath. Share with others.

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