

Blessed of God – Part II

(Matthew 5:4)

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I've titled the message this morning, "Blessed of God – Part 2," taken from Matthew 5, verse 4. Today we'll resume our verse by verse study of the Sermon on the Mount here in verse 4 where I left off a couple of weeks ago.

So let's look again at this passage, Matthew 5, for now let's just read down through vs. 4. Beginning again back at vs. 1, we read:

Matthew 5: 1-12:

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: ²And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

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

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

Just to bring us back up to speed, you will recall that in the first message of this series, the "Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount," we established that its central theme is the Gospel of the kingdom and the nature of the kingdom of heaven itself. Once again, keep in mind it is not a kingdom with geographical borders but rather it speaks of a dominion or reign – a spiritual kingdom, inhabited by spiritual children. It is a kingdom that most do not enter – a fact clearly set forth by Christ in these 3 chapters.

Then in the message just preceding this one, Blessed of God – Part I, you'll recall we spent most of our time reviewing things found to be true of each of these verses, commonly known as the Beatitudes – these verses which begin, "Blessed are..." So bear with me as I'll quickly review that which we found to be true of each of these verses.

We saw how the persons described here as "blessed" are certainly the redeemed ones, given to Christ by God the Father, made blessed in the righteousness of the Son. That is, justified based on obedience unto death,

His righteousness ó the satisfaction to the holy demands of God's law (both in precept ó His requirement of perfect obedience being fulfilled ó and in satisfaction to the law's penal demands ó an extraction of a sufficient payment for sin, no less than the precious, infinitely valuable blood of the God-man, Jesus Christ. But thirdly, the blessed in these verses are also the ones whom in each successive generation, have already been regenerated / set apart in spiritual birth and life with an entirely new frame of reference by the power of the Holy Spirit ó so that they now manifest (to various degrees) these characteristics or qualities, fruits of the Holy Spirit purchased for them by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

You'll recall we looked at Romans 4:6-8, which reads: "*Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*" So, we saw how these spoken of as blessed ones have discovered that all this was made theirs by imputation ó each and everyone of the sinner's sins (past, present, and future) laid upon Christ (charged to His account) and the very perfect satisfaction He made to God's law and justice, His righteousness, freely imputed or charged to the sinner's account.

You may also recall that Christ is not describing here 9 different types of people who receive 9 different blessings. Rather, he is setting forth 9 characteristics or qualities ó each of which applies in some measure, in some degree, to each and everyone one who was justified at the cross of Calvary and is brought to spiritual life so as to experience (in some measure) that which is being described. These qualities or characteristics (poor in spirit, they that mourn, etc.) are not moral virtues, but rather they are Christian graces ó fruit of the Spirit. As we established, these characteristics are not set forth as things we should strive to manifest in order that we might be blessed of God. No, Christ is describing that which is found to be true of those who are the blessed ones, because they have been blessed ó because as objects of God's eternal love, they were or would be justified by Christ at the cross of Calvary ó justified by the very one preaching this sermon to them and as a result of their justification, they were given spiritual life ó a radically different frame of reference, manifested by these various descriptions.

We reviewed how Christ doesn't say, "blessed are some of those who are poor in spirit," or "blessed are some of those who mourn," etc. You get the idea. No, Christ says "Blessed are they that mourn." I believe this means that everyone who is blessed of God mourns (in the sense meant here) and everyone who falls in the category of "...***they that mourn...***" in the sense meant here is blessed of God. So if we properly understand that sense ó what it means in this context to "mourn," then we will have come to an understanding such that it must be applied and can only be applied to those who have been redeemed by Christ and given life to look to Him alone.

As such, (and as I mentioned in the previous message), I believe we should all, individually, ask ourselves: Am I among the poor in spirit, in the sense in which this is understood to be true, and only true, of those eternally blessed of God? In that sense, am I likewise poor in spirit? And the same question should be asked by each of us as we go through the other verses ó am I among those that mourn (in that same sense ó in which this is understood to be true, and only true, of those eternally blessed of God)? And so on as we proceed through the rest of these verses.

Finally, in looking at verse 3 in the 2nd message of this series, the message titled "Blessed of God ó Part I," we saw how the "poor in spirit" cannot be referring to the universal spiritual poverty of all humanity, but rather that it must simply refer to those have been brought, by the life giving power of God the Holy Spirit, to know of their spiritual poverty ó to know that they have nothing to pay, nothing to merit or earn them anything before God. They have been convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit, including the sin that would deceive us all ó what the scriptures call the "deceitfulness of unrighteousness ó of thinking anything other than the imputed righteousness of Christ (the merit of His obedience unto death) charged to our account ó of thinking anything else would satisfy a Holy God so as to gain or even contribute to our acceptance by Him.

Now, let's look at verse 4:

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

Keep in mind that those who are called "blessed" in these verses, all partake in some measure of each of these qualities or characteristics described in these verses. So, these "blessed" ones also share then in each and every one of the various descriptions of their reward, cited by Christ in these verses.

That is, the ōpoor in spirit,ö are also ōthey that mourn,ö so they also (the poor in spirit) ōshall <also> be comforted.ö Likewise, ōthey that mournö are also ōpoor in spirit,ö so ōtheirs (they that mourn) <also> is the kingdom of heaven.ö So, by this we see that if you're blessed of God ö so much so that it can be said of you that you not only shall be comforted, but shall also possess, even now, the kingdom of heaven, then you are among they that mourn. Well, what does that mean?

Well, I believe we can know something about who Christ is speaking of here, the ones He describes as ōthey that mourn,ö by where these who Christ calls the ōblessedö of God find their comfort. For physical infirmities, we can ascertain the nature of the illness, at least as it has been diagnosed, by that which is prescribed for a cure so as to bring comfort and relief. The same is true here. In the Gospel, and as we studied in depth a couple of weeks ago, we know that those who are blessed of God, the ōpoor in spirit,ö only find their comfort and relief in Christ ö based solely upon His perfect satisfaction to God's justice (His obedience unto death) being imputed, or charged to their account. They bring nothing ö they come with no money, no merit ö remember, they are ōpoor in spirit.ö Since we're speaking of the same group, those blessed of God, then the comfort from this ōmourningö described here, must be derived from the same cure.

So their comfort is not derived from any blessing of God that might be presumed to be a result of (or stem from) any merit produced by them, through them, or found within them. For ōthey that mournö are also those who have been enlightened to their spiritual poverty ö how they are bankrupt and in need of mercy. This speaks of an acceptance by God that is derived from a source totally outside of them, based upon no less than His blood and righteousness ö the person and work of none other than the God-man ö Jesus Christ.

To mourn means to grieve and we know that everyone, (not just the blessed of God, but all), grieve over many various things at various times for many various reasons. But if we're to understand the sense meant here by Christ as He refers to ōthey that mourn,ö I believe it must be in a sense that is only true then of those who find comfort from that which will address the cause of their mourning. It should be obvious that ōthey that mournö cannot refer to anyone who experiences sadness or grieves for any reason. If that were the case, then all would be eternally blessed of God ö ōblessed are they that mourn.ö

And we see throughout the scriptures ó including in the next chapter over in this Sermon on the Mount ó that most are traveling a broad way that leads to destruction, not the strait gate, the narrow way that so few go in thereat.

So again we must interpret this in light of other scriptures or else deny its validity. In the parallel passage to these verses as recorded by Luke, chapter 6, we read in verse 21: "***Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.***" And then in vs. 25: "***Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.***" So this òmourning,ö according to Luke shall lead to laughter (meaning joy and comfort) and it would seem in the context that whatever this mourning is about ó that those who would laugh now (experience comfort and joy) over that same thing that causes the blessed to mourn, end up being those that Luke says shall ultimately òmourn and weep.ö

See how all this fits. If you recall in the introduction to this series, we reviewed Romans 14:17 which reads: "***For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; (see it's not physical) but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.***" We're talking here about the òblessedö ó the citizens of the kingdom ó a kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. I believe this peace and joy of the kingdom is the primary comfort, the laughter that is being spoken of here rather than any temporary comfort we might enjoy over relief from the sad circumstances that commonly plague almost everyone in this life. Now this comfort found in Christ, certainly can and does affect how we deal with all sorts of grief because as we've pointed out, the òblessedö spoken of here in these verses certainly possess a new frame of reference, based upon having received spiritual life and the abiding presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

You see, it is certainly true that the redeemed and regenerated children of God, the inhabitants of this kingdom, do and will gain comfort from all sorts of grief due to their vibrant relationship and oneness with Christ. But keep in mind that many religious people who remain on the broad way that leads to destruction also gain comfort from a presumed relationship with Christ.

I'm speaking of those who still ultimately base their hope of salvation on something that proceeds from them, their faith, their perseverance ó whatever, something they presume distinguishes them from others so as to merit their salvation ó they are not òpoor in spirit,ö ó they are not among those who have been convinced by the Holy Spirit of their spiritual poverty, so convinced of sin to see that nothing but the righteousness of God in

Christ, charged to their account, will justify them. I'm speaking of those who still cling to the idea that some merit springs from them so as to seal the deal to gain God's blessing. They may sing the song, "Nothing but the Blood," but their remedy, what they presume will reconcile them unto God, exposes they lack genuine God-given faith and repentance that would prove they truly believe what they sing — that it really is nothing but the blood — as they rest in that which would top off the work of Christ (so to speak), by making it applicable to themselves based on something done by them, through them or found in them — something perhaps they believe merely appropriates God's blessing to them. Often this condition they meet, that they presume would insure God's blessing unto them, is that they do their part by believing. Or perhaps it's more subtle — perhaps they just imagine that God found them a little less obstinate, more compliant and so intended the work of His Son to be applied to them. Anyway you cut it — it remains a presumed way of salvation conditioned on them, the sinner — in some way to some degree — salvation by works — the broad way that leads to destruction.

Now any so fooled (as we all are initially) often presume that all good fortune, all reversal of circumstances that give cause for grief or mourning, that such better fortunes are comforts from God. And that's understandable since we know from Romans 8:28 that "*....all things do work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" Since they presume themselves to be of that number, they apply this to themselves as well — just as I did while I was lost and ignorant of the only ground of salvation — the imputed righteousness of God in Christ. So they do receive a comfort of sorts in their minds from things over which they mourn. I think that is what Luke was referring to when he wrote, "*Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*" See, they are happy, comforted now — over that which the truly blessed — of God mourn over. They who are happy now find comfort from the religion of works — from something produced by, in or through them that presumably distinguishes them from the cursed of God. And the truly blessed — of God — they that mourn now — they mourn for what they find in this wretched body of death (as Paul calls it) — in the only thing which can come from them — wickedness that deserves death.

That's why I believe that Christ is referring to those who mourn over their spiritual poverty, whose hearts do melt over their wretchedness before God. They find comfort in Christ and no where else. I'm not just talking about a

sorrow over their immorality or indifference, but rather their sorrow over having ever thought they could be accepted ultimately based on something they did ó something that proceeded from them. Being convinced of sin by God the Holy Spirit ó seeing their absolute, abject spiritual poverty ó they receive no comfort whatsoever in falling for the popular suggestion that Christ has done it all and youøll be blessed IF you do your part ó IF you believe, IF youøll receive him ó IF you meet some condition or find something within yourself (your willingness to be more compliant, more objective ó whatever it is) ó that youøll be among those Christ refers to as eternally blessed, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. No ó you mourn over such, seeing your own wretchedness, knowing that if not for pure sovereign mercy and grace in Christ, based upon His fulfillment of all that is required, that you would have no hope. So, the very thing they laugh over (find joy and comfort in regarding their state before God), these blessed ones mourn over. But sadly for those who derive such a false comfort now, there will be a ñmourning afterö (spelled with a ñouö ó a m-o-u-r-n-i-n-g after). Thatøs why as God through Paul wrote ó knowing the terror of the Lord, we try to persuade men. As Luke says, they shall mourn and weep. But those who mourn over that which they find concerning themselves ó wretched sinners, spiritually destitute before God ó they shall be comforted. Or as Luke put it, ***“Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.”***

You see, those who mourn over their sin in the light of seeing how desperately they need mercy, continue to mourn over their sin as they walk through this life ó and they only find comfort for that mourning, that sorrow over sin, in the same exact place. As they shamefully grow in appreciation of their sinfulness before God, of their unworthiness, in remorse and in repentance over their daily sins, their thoughts are always turned to the same exact place for comfort ó to their blessedness in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ñ*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*” (Eph 1:7) Being so blessed in Christ, they do mourn in Godly sorrow over sin ó but without fear of punishment. Theyøve been redeemed through His blood, their sins are forgiven!

Some commentators suggest that the uniqueness of the grieving or mourning which Christ speaks of here is derived from its intensity ó suggesting that born again believers truly mourn, languish, and grieve more deeply over their sins. But even believers, described here as ñthe blessed of God,ö if theyøre honest, must admit that they donøt really mourn and constantly

languish over their sin, ever mindful of the evil affront to a holy God ó not commensurate with the truth that their very sin before God the Father was, and is, so evil in His sight, that He killed His Son when those sins were laid upon Him, imputed or charged to Him. Consider King David, a man after God's own heart, who was devastated in his anguish and grief over his sin when he wrote Psalms 51, but who beforehand obviously wasn't very mindful of his sin as he fooled around with Bathsheba and even arranged the murder of her husband. No he wasn't languishing in deep grief over his sin at that time ó at least not before the prophet Nathan brought it to his attention.

Like me, you may also have ran across some very religious, but lost, unregenerate types ó folks still ignorant or not in submission to the only valid ground of salvation, the righteousness of God in Christ (His perfect satisfaction to law and justice). And we've seen some in this very state who major on, and gain some of their assurance from, dwelling upon their sense of unworthiness ó determined to wallow in continual sorrow, taking some sort of twisted comfort not from any source of relief, but rather from being beat up on about their shortcomings. In some ways these remind me of the masochistic woman who tells her husband, "beat me more." Some even seem to compete for who can describe themselves in the lowest, most despicable terms regarding the worms they are ó all the while taking a twisted sort of pride in having arrived at this òhumilityò that actually they are taking pride in.

No, I do believe it is our wretched, sinful condition which is the cause of the grief or mourning Christ refers to here but I believe the uniqueness comes from the reason for the mourning or grief rather than from its degree. I think òthey that mournö refers to those who mourn over their sin, as do the òpoor in spiritö ó that is, in recognition that they have nothing to commend themselves unto God. It isn't the degree of their mourning that distinguishes them, but what they mourn over in finding themselves unfit, spiritually bankrupt ó both initially and continually. They now mourn over something that was foreign to them before. Remember they have been blessed to see something that would bring on repentance ó a total change of mind, affections and will. They are comforted, and uniquely so, in the mercy seat ó in Christ, based upon His person and finished work ó His perfect satisfaction ó and they can find no comfort for this mourning anywhere else.

Turn with me to Isaiah 61. I believe this passage speaks so well to both the mourning and the comfort of which Christ is speaking in Matthew 5. In Isaiah 61, beginning in verse 1, where Christ is speaking through the prophet Isaiah, we read:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; ³To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”

Consider these verses. Christ, speaking here through the prophet Isaiah, says He has been anointed ó commissioned by God the Father ó to preach good tidings unto the meek. That is to preach the good news, the Gospel, the same gospel of the kingdom that Christ is preaching in His Sermon on the mount ó He ós to preach this to the meek. The next verse back in Matthew that we will address deals with the meek ó Blessed are the meek ó they too are the blessed of God ó the ones God has humbled by showing them their sin ó their spiritual poverty so that they submit unto the righteousness of God in Christ ó ascribing all of their blessing to the mercy and grace of God.

Christ says He is sent to “...***bind up the brokenhearted...***” ó those cut to the heart by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (the ósharper than any two edged swordó Word that cuts the heart asunder). See, these whose hearts he binds up have been wounded with great cause to mourn ó finding themselves broken, with nothing to plea but for mercy ó remember they’re poor in spirit.

But Christ binds their wounds by speaking words of comfort to them ó words of the Gospel. Verse 2 says He has been *anointed* “...***to comfort all that mourn.***” So this mourning is one that it is alleviated by His “...***good tidings...***” ó this message of comfort ó this proclamation of what He has done, as commissioned by the Father, to proclaim to them their liberty and the freedom in Christ (whereas they were captive, servants of sin ó now they

are free to serve ó servants of righteousness). They were captive to Satan and the law and prisoners to them ó held fast there with no way to rescue themselves ó no prospect of escape. But Christ, the author of liberty obtains their liberty, and He proclaims it in the Gospel ó the truth that sets His people free. They are enlightened thereby and find that they are freed from the curse of the law. ***“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them”*** (Gal 3:10) ó but they discover that requirement to have been met for them ó by their Substitute, Jesus Christ, made under the law to fulfill it perfectly ó and the merit of that charged or imputed to their account.

By His spirit, Christ puts comfort in them who through unbelief, otherwise refuse to be comforted (who foolishly cling to the bondage of the law). And He has appointed a fixed time when He will have mercy on Zion (His church ó all those who will inhabit His kingdom). Oh yea, remember ó ***“His kingdom is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”***

So Christ comforts them by bringing to them life through His gospel where they discover pardoning grace and mercy. Verse 3 says He appoints unto them who mourn in Zion (His church) to give them ***“...beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...”*** What a picture for they that mourn. In times of mourning, it was customary for them to put on sackcloth and ashes (not a pretty site I imagine) but instead of this, Christ gives his mourners the beautiful garments of salvation, a beauty not natural to them, but one that is of His grace; not acquired, but given; not fictitious, but real; It is a beauty that is perfect and complete, lasting and durable. It’s an eternal blessing. Blessed indeed are these that mourn.

To these, Christ gives ***“...the oil of joy for mourning...”*** This óoil of joyó speaks of that which was poured on the heads of people at times of rejoicing (e.g. ó festivals, weddings, etc.). Yes ó they that weep shall laugh. He clothes them with the robe of righteousness, a garment of praise, (i.e. ó one preferable to all others) and most notably, it’s a garment suitable to their circumstances, to the spirit of heaviness as one ópoor in spiritó ó with nothing of their own to offer ó ***“...that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”*** They stand tall as trees of righteousness ó in full confidence (comforted),

whose root is in Christ, made so by the imputation of Christ's righteousness ó “*...the planting of the Lord...*” And there is where He is glorified.

Look with me quickly back a few chapters at Isaiah, chapter 40. These verses in Isaiah 61 tell us that Christ was anointed or commissioned to preach the good tidings (the Gospel) that would comfort all those that mourn. And this is precisely what all who would preach God's Gospel, the very Gospel of the kingdom that Christ preached concerning Himself ó this is what they too are to preach. Look with me at God's command given through the prophet Isaiah in chapter 40, beginning in verse 1. There it reads: “***Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.***”

He appoints His servants to “*...speak comfortably...*” to spiritual Jerusalem (those who inhabit His kingdom) and what is this message they were to preach? It's the Gospel message of Christ's finished work on the cross wherein they see that the warfare for them has been accomplished, (not merely initiated ó but accomplished) and that their iniquity (their sins) for which they would mourn are pardoned. And on what basis? “*...she (heavenly Jerusalem) hath received of the Lord's hand* (i.e. ó Christ's work alone ó His hand) ***double for all her sins.***” That's the Gospel wherein they find comfort for they have the double cure ó saved from wrath and made pure as the songwriter put it. This speaks of Christ accomplishment in fulfilling the law by His obedience unto death ó perfectly satisfying the justice of God by satisfying both the law's precept ó perfect obedience, as well as its penal demands ó Christ dying for their sins. It's a double cure and all they need. That speaks of His righteousness ó the scepter of His kingdom ó that which is revealed in the gospel and that which speaks comfortably to God's people. In this sense ó

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself ó the Bible.

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