

Jesus spoke on a mountain about those who mourn Sunday 23rd March 2014

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Mat.5:4)

Beloved in the Lord,

Joy and mourning are a part of life. I imagine, that most, if not all of us have experienced both these aspects of life to a greater or lesser degree.

Jesus once said: ***“In the world you have tribulation...”*** Praise God that the sentence doesn't end there. Let's look at the whole statement ***“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)***

Tribulations, trials, troubles, call them what you may, are a very real part of our lives. We have trouble, because we live in a sinful fallen world. It is only when we get to Heaven, will all of our problems cease.

This is so beautifully portrayed in the last book of the Bible, in Revelation chapter 21. I often read these words because they are so full of hope, and they bring peace to a troubled soul, and most of all they are true!

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” (Rev.21:1-4)

One day, in the not so distant future, those of us who believe in Jesus, will experience a brand new life in the New Heaven and the New Earth. There will be no more sin, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more sickness, no more death.

Until then, Jesus says: ***“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”***

Jesus is bigger than any problem we have. He is bigger than any difficulty we may face. He tells us to take courage. He is telling us not to allow our problems, our trials and tribulations to overwhelm us. He is telling us to take courage, fear not, be brave. We can, if we fix our focus squarely and fairly upon Him alone. Jesus is inviting us to surrender absolutely everything to Him.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

Jesus is simply inviting us to lay our burdens upon Him. We do not have to bear the burden alone. He loves us. He wants to help us. He wants to lighten the load. He wants us to allow Him to help us. He has overcome the world. He has conquered sin and death. Don't go it alone. Come to Him and receive His peace and let Him help you.

Now back to our text: ***“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”***

We have briefly touched upon problems we have in life, grief's and sorrows, but Jesus is speaking about something more here in this text. The deeper meaning in this passage is Blessed are they who sorrow or mourn over sin. Sin in their own lives and sin in the world. This is speaking of those who take sin seriously, and who sigh in their spirits over the hardness of men's hearts and the state of humanity.

Sin is a very serious thing. It was sin that sent Jesus to die on the cross. He Himself was pure, holy and sinless, but He suffered the punishment of our sin. Jesus the spotless, sinless Son of Almighty God, became sin, bore our sin in His body upon a cross that we may be saved. He died a substitutionary death for us. He became cursed for our sakes.

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—“ (Galatians 3:13)

Jesus became cursed for us. On Good Friday, Jesus literally experienced hell so that we would not have too. He did it because of our sin. He was rejected by the Father, so that we would not have to be.

He did it, because very simply, He loved us. I know that we often hear these words of Jesus, but listen to them in a new light, with an open heart, and take them as a personal word to you from our Lord Jesus:

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” (John 3:14-17)

You see, sin is a very serious matter indeed. In order to save us from eternal death, from the wages of sin, Jesus had to shed His blood and die in our place. Therefore, may we never treat sin lightly. Sin is horrible, it is terrible, it is awful.

The problem with many Christians today is that they are complacent about sin. Many do not take sin seriously.

Jesus said: ***“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”***

Are you mourning? Are you sorrowful over your sin? Does your heart ache and spirit groan when you see the sin all around you? Does it tear at your heart that so few love Jesus? If the answer is yes, then according to Jesus you are blessed! You are blessed because your heart is reflecting the heart of Almighty God.

There is an interesting happening described in Ezekiel chapter 9. Ezekiel receives a vision in which he sees that God is about to punish those who have worshipped and are worshipping idols. Six men stand before God with swords in their hands which will be used to slay the wicked. One has in his hand an instrument for writing. To him it was said:

“Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.” (Ezekiel 9:4)

The rest of the men were told to follow and to kill all who did not bear a mark on their forehead, but were instructed to save those who did have the mark.

In his comments on this text Martin Luther says that this shows the advantage a Christian has. Those who think like God are saved.

This has always been the case. God saved Lot when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, because Lot had a righteous heart. We read in 2.Peter 2:7-9: ***and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men⁸ (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.”***

Thinking about Lot, thinking about the six men in Ezekiel, thinking about what Jesus said: I ask myself what is my attitude toward sin? What state is my heart in? Do I sigh and grieve over sin? Do I grieve as I look at the state of the world? How about you?

The answer will tell you a lot about how close you are to Jesus, and how much you are in this world. The more you are in Jesus, the more you will mourn, you will sigh, you will grieve over sin, over the hardness of men’s hearts, over the complacency that abounds.

The good news is that if you do, then you are blessed. God has promised that you will be comforted.

You know there is no greater joy; no greater comfort in life; than to be fully surrendered to Jesus. The joy, the peace, the hope, the comfort is greater than anything this world affords to you.

That is why the peace of God and the joy surpasses all of our human understanding. It is spiritual.

This peace and joy and comfort comes when we present ourselves to God as an empty vessel that He can fill with His Holy Spirit. We saw that last week when we considered that Blessed are the poor in spirit.

God's way is a blessed way.

May we make it our aim to know Him better, to get closer to His heart and mind as revealed to us through Christ Jesus our Lord.

May we surrender all to Him in faith and be blessed.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.