

**Matthew**  
**Those Who Mourn**  
**Matthew 5:4**  
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It was in October of 2022, that Taylor Swift released the lead single from her album *Midnights*, a catchy song entitled “Antihero.” In the song, Swift repeatedly sings these lyrics, “It’s me, hi, I’m the problem, it’s me.” In interviews about the song, Swift described it as confronting, “the ugliest parts of yourself.” But it’s interesting that the song is, in fact, lighthearted, almost playful, as she confesses serious sins like narcissism and relational sabotage. Even secular reviewers have pointed out that the lyrics blur the distinction between confessing sins and celebrating them. She makes fun of her own darkness, singing about her worst tendencies, but doing so in a way that invites sympathy and even laughter, rather than repentance. Social media users have even adopted one line from the song, “I’m the problem,” as a meme, using it for bad behavior that they see as humorous. As I thought about that, it occurred to me that really the song is a perfect illustration of how all of us, as humans, tend to downplay our sin, to admit it without shame and to recognize it without repentance.

But as we learn today, it’s entirely different for Jesus’ true followers. They sincerely mourn their sin. Just to remind you, Jesus begins “The Sermon on the Mount” with the qualities that mark the character of His true subjects, a description of those who are in His spiritual kingdom. So, the eight qualities that we call the Beatitudes, in fact, define those who are truly Christians. According to Luke, the opposite of the Beatitudes defines unbelievers. Jesus began each of the Beatitudes here in Matthew’s account with the word “blessed.” As we learned last time, Jesus is actually using an Old Testament concept. He uses the Greek word that the Septuagint, the Greek translation, done a couple of hundred years before Christ, that that translation uses for the

Hebrew word '*esheré*.' The Greek word here translated blessed is '*makarios*.' Now Jesus uses this word to describe a life that is in desirable circumstances, marked by happiness, all because that life enjoys the favor and blessing of God. And Jesus describes such a blessed life with these eight qualities that we call the Beatitudes.

Last week, we examined just the first of them. Look at verse 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Here, we're reminded that every true Christian is painfully aware of his own personal spiritual bankruptcy before God. And every believer, out of an awareness of that poverty, has begged God for the grace of forgiveness. We are beggars before God, and true Christians have been reduced to begging, asking God for the forgiveness that He alone can give.

Now today, we come to the second Beatitude, just one verse in our text. Look at it with me, Matthew, chapter 5, verse 4, "Blessed are those who mourn," Jesus says, "for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Now, as we study this Beatitude that appears, on the surface, to be pretty simple, I want us to understand that it is pregnant with meaning. And to really appreciate that meaning, we need to consider three key facets of this Beatitude that will help us really plumb the depths of its meaning. Let's look at these facets together. We'll turn them sort of like a diamond as we look at this Beatitude. The first facet concerns "The Character of the Believer's Sorrow," the character of the believer's sorrow.

G.K. Chesterton defined a paradox as "Truth standing on its head calling for attention." This Beatitude is a "Divine Paradox." I mean, think about what Jesus says here. Jesus essentially says, "Happy are the unhappy!" What does He mean? "Blessed are those who mourn their

spiritual poverty.” Now to interpret the second Beatitude, you have to understand that it stands on and is intimately linked to the first Beatitude. The first is an intellectual awareness of our spiritual poverty that reduces us to begging God for mercy. The second Beatitude is an emotional response to that poverty.

Now, as we consider the character of the sorrow, I want to start by making sure we know “What Jesus Did Not Mean” when He said, “Blessed are those who mourn.” because there's a lot of confusion about this. First of all, Jesus did not mean, “Blessed are those spiritually depressed.” That's not what He's talking about. Secondly, Jesus does not mean, “Blessed are those who lack joy.” In fact, we're commanded to be joyful. We're commanded to rejoice that our names are written in the Lamb's *Book of Life*. Joy is supposed to mark the Christian. So, as our Lord says these words, Lloyd-Jones puts it this way, “He is not saying, blessed are grim, cheerless Christians.” Thirdly, Jesus does not mean, “Blessed are those who never experience circumstantial happiness.” You know, our God is good, and He gives good things to all of His creatures—even to those who don't know Him, even to those who hate Him. And because of that, we experience happiness in our circumstances, good things that He fills our lives with. Jesus isn't saying, “Blessed are those who don't experience that.” Number four, Jesus is not saying, “Blessed are those who mourn the difficulties of life.” Unbelievers do that. That's not what He's talking about. Number five, Jesus is not saying, “Blessed are those who mourn sin's consequences.” We know that because unbelievers do that. Think about Esau. In Hebrews 12, verse 17, “He found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.” He wept, he mourned, but not over his sin —over what his sin cost him, over the consequences of that sin in his life. Same thing is true for Judas. In Matthew 27, verse 3, Judas, after selling Jesus out, “felt remorse and (he) returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.” So, Jesus is

not saying, “Blessed are those who mourn over the consequences of their sinful choices,” the disastrous results of the choices they've made.

So, now let's consider then what Jesus did mean. The Greek word translated ‘mourn’ is defined like this by the leading Greek lexicon; it is ‘to experience sadness as the result of some condition or circumstance;’ ‘to grieve or to mourn.’ This word occurs some forty-five times in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. And let me show you, just so you get a better sense of what this word really means, let me show you how it's used in the Old Testament. It's used, for example, of “Abraham's mourning over the death of his wife, Sarah,” Gen. 23:2. They had been married for many years and Sarah died. That's the kind of grief we're talking about. It's used of “Jacob's mourning for his son, Joseph, whom he believed, as it turned out wrongly, had been killed” in Genesis 37. It's used for “The mourning of David over his son, Absalom.” You remember that tragic story of Absalom's young death. It's used when “Judah mourned the death of King Josiah” in 2 Chronicles 35. You begin to get a glimpse of the depth of this word.

And the sense of this word stays basically the same when you come to “The New Testament.” In the New Testament, the disciples mourned for Jesus before they knew that He had been raised from the dead. In fact, of the nine Greek words in the New Testament that express grief or sorrow in one way or another, this word is the strongest and the most profound. That's why it's often used of mourning the death of someone that you love. In his *Synonyms of the New Testament*, Trench defines this word like this, it is ‘a grief which so takes possession of the whole being that it cannot be hid.’

So, let's define this word 'mourn' like this, 'It is a deep, profound sorrow that grips the heart and often expresses itself outwardly with tears.' Now, Luke, in his version of the Beatitudes, uses a different word. Luke 6, verse 21, he says, "Blessed are you who weep now." Matthew's word 'mourn' refers to the depth of the grief. Luke's word 'weep' refers to the outward expression of that grief. So, taking then what we've briefly learned about this word 'mourn,' we could interpret our Lord's comment in this Beatitude like this, "Blessed are those who mourn like they are mourning and weeping over the death of someone they love." That's "The Character of the Believer's Sorrow." We're not talking about something light; we're not talking about something that doesn't penetrate to the depths of your soul. We are talking about something that grips you and doesn't let you go.

A second facet of this beatitude that helps us further understand what Jesus means here, we'll call "The Cause of the Believer's Sorrow," the cause of the believer's sorrow. Why is the believer in this verse mourning? There are only two possible causes that Jesus could have meant. First of all, He could have meant that believers "Mourn about Their Trials." There are a few commentators who argue that that's what this is talking about. It's simply mourning over the normal sorrows and difficulties of this life. But friends, that cannot be true because of the context. Jesus here is describing the character of those who truly belong to Him. That means this mourning can't be merely mourning over the troubles of this life because everyone experiences that, believers and unbelievers alike. That in no way identifies true believers and distinguishes them from unbelievers. No, what's happening here must be the kind of mourning that identifies those who belong to Jesus' kingdom. So, Jesus then is not talking about mourning over the trials of this life.

In context, Jesus' statement is crystal clear. The first Beatitude gives us the interpretational key for the rest of the Beatitudes. And the first, Jesus is not talking about physical realities; He's talking about spiritual realities. And the same is true with this second Beatitude. So, when Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn," He's describing His followers' spiritual response. They are "Mourning (not about their trials, but) about Their Sin." This second Beatitude pictures the believer's response to sin. All true Christians mourn sin. Specifically, we mourn about sin in two ways. First of all, true believers mourn "Our own sins," we mourn our own sins. If you doubt that, read the Psalms, the Psalms of Penitence, the Psalms that are about confession of sin. Read Psalm 32 and the depth of David's emotion as he expresses that. Read Psalm 51 after his adultery and the taking of Uriah's life; and read the depth of his grief over his sin.

But in the New Testament, we see this same grief even in the heart of the Apostle Paul. Turn over to Romans, chapter 7; Romans, chapter 7. Here's Paul, as an Apostle, after probably some thirty years as a Christian, and listen to the angst he feels about the sin in his life. Now, don't get Paul wrong here; Paul was a righteous man; his life was characterized by righteousness. But as a person who still had the flesh like you and I, he still sinned. And that remaining sin grieved his heart. Look at how he describes it, verse 18, Romans 7:

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but the sin (my flesh) which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. (Now, watch how a believer responds to God's law.) For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man (That's what I want; that's what I love.), but I see a different law in the members of

my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, which is in my members. (So, how does a believer respond to the sin in his life?

Verse 24.) Wretched man that I am!

That's how believers see their sin. Even though, as you grow in Christ, you sin less, your sin becomes more despicable, more gross to you, because now you're not just looking at those external actions, now you're looking at your heart, you're looking at your motives. And you realize, as Paul says, "What a wretched man I am!" "How could I think like that? How could I be so selfish? How could I be so proud? How could I be discontent with God's goodness in my life?" There is a grief we have over our own sins. 2 Chronicles, chapter 34, verse 27; 2 Chronicles 34:27, God says, "'Because your heart was tender (responsive) and you humbled yourself before God (Me) when you heard...and *because*...you wept before Me (in my presence), I truly have heard you,' declares the LORD" "Because you really were grieved about your sin, God says, I heard you" (Paraphrase).

Psalm 51:17, I love this, David says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." I love that. When we're broken about our sin, when we come to God grieved about our sin, God never despises that response. He always accepts the person who comes like that. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 7, verse 10, Paul describes two different kinds of sorrow. First of all, he talks about an earthly sorrow, and that earthly sorrow just has feelings of sorrow and regret. He said that produces "only death." But then he says there's a true "godly sorrow" that produces "repentance without regret," and that leads "to salvation." That's the kind of true mourning over our sins. J.C. Ryle put it like this:

A right knowledge of the way to heaven is to feel that we are on the way to hell. To be sensible of our corruption and abhor our own transgressions is the first symptom of spiritual health. We must know the depth and malignancy of our disease in order to appreciate the great physician.

I love that, “We must know the depth and malignancy of our disease in order to appreciate the great physician.” True believers profoundly mourn over their sin. If you doubt that, for example, get the Puritan collection of prayers called the *Valley of Vision*, we sell in our bookstore, and read the prayers of confession written by Christians in the past. They grieved and mourned over their sin. Or listen to this entry from the missionary, David Brainard's journal, on October 18th, 1740. He says, “In my morning devotions, my soul was exceedingly melted and bitterly mourned over my exceeding sinfulness and vileness.” You see, when we have the Holy Spirit, we begin to see our sin like God sees our sin, and we mourn over it—we hate it!

But we also “Mourn the sins of others,” not only our own sins, but true believers mourn the sins of others. Psalm 119, verse 136, the Psalmist writes, “My eyes shed streams of water, because they do not keep Your law.” In fact, mourning over the sins of others is part of what marks a true Christian. Turn back to Ezekiel, look at Ezekiel, chapter 9. The context here is the nation is about to be judged by God for their sin, their idolatry, by the Babylonians. And here we see a little picture of what true believers look like. In verse 2, there are seven men identified; six of them are angels, the seventh, the man clothed in linen, is a pre-incarnate appearance of the eternal Son of God, this is Christ. Now watch verses 3-6:

Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub (in the temple) on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. (So, from the holy of holies to the threshold of



the temple.) And He (God) called to the man clothed in linen (That's Christ, God called to the Messiah.) at whose loins was the writing case. The LORD said to him (The Messiah, now watch this.), “Go through the midst of the city, *even* through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men (And here's what true believers look like.), the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.” (And then he says.) “But to the others (unbelievers) He said in my hearing, ‘Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. Utterly slay...(All of those who are unbelievers; those who do not mourn over the sins.).’”

In Luke 19:41-44, our Lord mourned over the sins of Jerusalem. Paul rebuked the church in Corinth for not mourning over the sins committed among them. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 2, he says, “You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead (over the sexual sin of another member), so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.” By the way, there's one way true believers mourn the sins of those who profess Christ among them. If necessary, they practice church discipline. 2 Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 21, Paul says, “I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented.” So, true believers mourn over sin, their own and the sins of others. Jesus' point then is this, those who belong in His kingdom are not only intellectually aware of their spiritual poverty, that they're beggars, that's the first Beatitude, but they also emotionally mourn over their sin—the sin in themselves and the sin of others. That's the second Beatitude. That is “The Cause of the Believer's Sorrow.

Now, that brings us to a third facet of this Beatitude, and that is “The Consequences of the Believer's Sorrow,” the consequences. What results from this sorrow over sin that characterizes

a true Christian? There are two consequences. First of all, and this is counterintuitive, “We Are Spiritually Blessed.” It's what Jesus says, look at verse 4, “Blessed are those who mourn.”

Again, we looked at that word last time, ‘Blessed.’ Jesus calls his true followers ‘*makarios*,’ or ‘blessed,’ because first of all, “We are in an incredibly desirable circumstance—we belong to His (Jesus’) spiritual kingdom;” and therefore, “We are inwardly happy and joyful,” while at the very same time, we mourn over our sin. We mourn our sin, but we're joyful because our names are written in the Lamb's *Book of Life*. “And both our circumstances and our happiness are the result of God's unique favor and grace.” Jesus says that's what those who mourn over their sins enjoy.

But there's a second consequence of sorrow over sin, and this is the point of the Beatitude, “We Are Spiritually Comforted,” we are spiritually comforted. Notice what he says. “Blessed are those who mourn (Here's why they are blessed.), for (because) they shall be comforted.”

“Because they,” and in Greek, the pronoun is emphatic, “because they and they alone shall be comforted.” You'll notice “shall be comforted.” The verb is passive. That is, the one who's going to comfort isn't named. This is what scholars call ‘a divine passive.’ It's put in the passive voice, but the real actor is God. So, Jesus here is promising that those who mourn over their sin, God Himself will comfort them.

When and how will God comfort them? Well, it's clear from the Scripture that God comforts the believer in three ways, or we could even say in three tenses. The believer enjoys comfort, first of all, “In the past,” in the past. You see, if you're a believer, at the moment of your salvation, you were convicted of your sin. In fact, that was the moment when you felt the greatest conviction of your life. That's when you really, your eyes were open to see the ugliness of your sin, to see the affront that it was to God. And you grieved at that moment like you had never

grieved over your sin. But in that very moment, you also enjoyed the comfort of God. How? In comprehensive salvation and assurance of His forgiveness. How did you enjoy that assurance? Through the promises of the Gospel. Acts 10:43, “Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His (Jesus') name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.” And so, in that moment of your worst conviction, that moment of your worst grief over your sin, suddenly your heart was flooded with joy and peace and a sense of forgiveness because of the promises of the Gospel—He comforted you. Colossians 2, verse 13, He has “forgiven us all our transgressions.” The promises of the Gospel flooded your heart with comfort. You knew what John describes in 1 John 2, verse 12, even as a new baby Christian, you knew this, you knew you had the Father, that the Father was now yours, and you knew that “your sins had been forgiven.” You were comforted.

God also comforts us secondly, not only in the past at salvation, but “In the present,” we enjoy comfort in the present. Every day, as a believer, when you confess and mourn over your sin, God extends the comfort of forgiveness to you, again, through His promises. Psalm 32, verse 5, where David is pouring out his heart, he says, “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD;’ and You forgave the guilt of my sin.” When you confess your sin, Christian, every day you have a sense of forgiveness.

Why? Because of the promises of God. That is God's comfort to you; He's assuring you that that's who He is—He is a God of forgiveness. I love Psalm 86:5, “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant (abounding) in lovingkindness (steadfast love) to all who call upon You.” 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful,” that is faithful to His own character, He's a forgiving God, faithful to His promises, He's promised to forgive. “And He is...righteous,” He can forgive you and be righteous because Jesus Christ paid for your sins on

the cross, “to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” So, believer, you enjoyed comfort in the past at the moment of your salvation. You enjoy comfort every day when you confess your sins.

But God will also comfort us “In the future,” in the future. Luke 6:21b puts the Beatitude like this, “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.” You weep now over your sin; you're devastated about your sin, but you're going to laugh forever because the sin's going to be gone; the guilt is going to be gone. No more sin to confess, completely covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. In fact, turn over to 2 Thessalonians; 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, I love the way Paul puts it here, 2 Thessalonians 2:16, “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us (And then notice how He's described here.) and given us eternal comfort.”

Believer, that's what you wait for. You weren't only comforted in the past by forgiveness and the assurance of that forgiveness. You're not only comforted now by the promises of God when you confess your sin and turn from it, but you will be comforted forever—eternal comfort! Revelation 7:17 puts it like this, “For the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd...and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” You will be comforted forever—that's the promise of God!

Now go back to Matthew, chapter 5, and verse 4, remember who Christ is talking to here; He's teaching His disciples. They were already saved, so they had already known God's comfort in the past. So, when He says here, “those who mourn, they shall (will) be comforted,” He means primarily in the present, and I think, especially, He means in the future—He means forever!

That's why Lloyd-Jones puts it this way:

There is another comfort, that which we may call “the blessed hope.” In that eternal state, we shall be wholly and entirely blessed. There will be nothing to mar life, nothing to detract from it, nothing to spoil it. Sorrow and sighing will be no more. All tears will be wiped away, and we shall bask forever in eternal sunshine and experience joy and bliss and glory, unmixed and unspoiled. “Happy are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

How can Jesus make this blanket promise that all of those who mourn over their sin will be comforted? He can make it because every person who truly mourns his sin and mourns that it is an affront to a holy God, that person always turns to God in repentance. And whenever a sinner turns in repentance to God, God always brings the comfort of forgiveness and peace. No one ever truly believes in Jesus Christ unless he's first seen his spiritual poverty, the first Beatitude, and mourned over it, the second Beatitude.

But listen, Christian, mourning over sin doesn't stop with salvation. It is so important that you understand this. Notice what Jesus says in verse 4, “Blessed,” literally in the Greek text, “Blessed are the ones who are mourning.” Not who mourned in the past at some point when they prayed a prayer, walked an aisle, but “Blessed are those who are mourning.” A.W. Pink puts it this way:

This mourning is by no means to be confined to the initial experience of conviction and contrition for observe the present tense of the verb. It is not “have mourned,” but “mourn,” a present and continuous experience. The Christian himself has much to mourn over. The sins which he now commits, both of omission and commission, are a sense of daily grief to him, an ever-deepening discovery of the depravity of his nature, the plague

of his heart, the sea of corruption within, ever polluting all that he does, deeply exercises him. Consciousness of the surgings of unbelief, the swellings of pride, the coldness of his love, and the lack of his fruit make him cry with Paul, “O wretched man that I am!”

That's what true believers demonstrate; they mourn. They mourned at salvation, and they continue to mourn over their sin.

But what do unbelievers demonstrate instead of mourning? What do unbelievers do about their sin? Well, they do several things according to the Scripture. In many cases, they just ignore it; they just pretend it doesn't exist. They just go on and live and don't even think of it as sin. They merely ignore it, or they treat it lightly. If they're aware of it, it's not a big thing to them. It's not a serious thing. In many cases, they rationalize it, excuse it. Jeremiah, chapter 8, verse 12, God says, “Were they ashamed because of the abomination they had done? They certainly were not ashamed, and they did not know how to blush.” That's God, “They didn't know how to blush;” they had no clue about their sin. And then unbelievers rename their sin with euphemisms—‘anger’ becomes ‘frustration;’ ‘drunkenness’ becomes ‘alcoholism;’ ‘fornication’ becomes ‘premarital sex;’ ‘adultery’ becomes ‘an affair;’ ‘homosexuality’ becomes being ‘gay;’ ‘rebellious against how God created you’ becomes ‘trans.’ We just use euphemisms to rename our sin. And then having renamed it, unbelievers reclassify sin, not as morally evil, but as morally good. Romans, chapter 1, verse 32, “they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same (Listen to this, they not only commit these sins.), but (they) also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” In other words, they say, “That's not bad; it's good, it's noble, celebrate what was once called sin.”

Jesus summarizes every unbeliever's approach to sin with one surprising word. Turn over to Luke, chapter 6. Notice what Jesus says here, Luke, chapter 6, and look at verse 25, second part of verse 25, “Woe *to you* (Notice this.) who laugh now.” Clearly Jesus is describing those who are not part of His spiritual kingdom. They laugh at sin. Spurgeon said, “If you can look on sin without sorrow, then you've never looked on Christ.” Jesus here says, “If you truly belong to my kingdom, you are not only painfully aware of your own spiritual bankruptcy, but you also mourn over your sin from your heart” (Paraphrase).

On the other hand, and friend, this is true of you, if the shoe fits, if you belong to Satan's kingdom, you don't mourn over your sin. In some way or other, you laugh about it, you take it lightly, it doesn't really matter. Instead of mourning about their sin, all unbelievers laugh about their own sin and the sin of others. They just don't take it seriously. But look at what Jesus says about such people. Verse 25 again, “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.” Jesus says, and this is not me, this is sobering, this is Jesus Christ, your Creator, the One who sustains your life, the One who keeps your heart beating right now. He says, “Judgment on you who laugh now about your sin. You better laugh now because you're going to mourn and weep forever” (Paraphrase). In fact, it's sobering, but seven times in the Gospels, six times in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus refers to hell as a place where there is weeping; forever, unbelievers will weep! They laugh now, but they'll weep forever. In fact, look what Jesus says. Turn over to Matthew, chapter 13; Matthew 13, and look at verse 40:

So just as the tares (those who claim to be believers but are not) are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness (These are false believers connected to the church.) and (He) will

throw them into the furnace of fire, in that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

They're not weeping in repentance over sin; they are weeping because of regret over lost opportunity. They are weeping over physical and spiritual suffering forever. In fact, Jeremiah 6:15 puts it this way, "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they've done? They were not even ashamed at all; they did not even know how to blush. Therefore...at the time that I punish them, they shall be cast down." Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn, who mourn over their sin now, for they shall be comforted now and forever. But woe, judgment on those who laugh at sin now, for they shall mourn and weep forever" (Consolidated paraphrase).

What are the implications of this Beatitude for us? Let me give you two of them. Number one, examine yourself against this Beatitude to see if you're really a believer. You see, this Beatitude is like all the others; it's a test. Jesus is describing those who know Him, those who are in His kingdom. So, if you claim to be a Christian, ask yourself in your heart of hearts, right now, ask yourself this question, "Do I truly mourn over my sin? Do I see it as an affront against God? Do I hate it? Or do I take it lightly, ignore it, rationalize it, rename it with some pleasant-sounding euphemism, or even redefine it as good?" Listen, in these Beatitudes, Jesus completely exposes the sham of those who have the correct answers, but don't have a changed heart. Jesus says, "Listen, I don't care what you claim; if you're not characterized by mourning over your sin, then you're not a Christian." And Jesus says, and this is very sobering, but Jesus says, "You better enjoy all the laughter and happiness in this life that you can get because you're going to spend eternity in overwhelming grief and regret and mourning."



Now, if you're here this morning, and as you look at yourself in the mirror of God's Word, you say, "Wow, I'm afraid that's me. What do I do?" Well, there's really good news for you because you need to go back to the first Beatitude. You need to recognize you're a beggar in spirit, that you have nothing that you can come to God with, and say, "I deserve to be in Your presence. I deserve salvation. I deserve eternity with You." Instead, you come to God like a beggar, acknowledging your spiritual bankruptcy, throwing yourself on His mercies, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner," like the man in Jesus' story. That's how you have to come. If you fall on your face before God, if you mourn over your sin, if you plead for His forgiveness, then here's the good news; David said, "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." God will not turn you away if you come to Him like that. God will receive you. Why? Because of Jesus Christ. Because, you see, here's the Gospel that Jesus taught. He came into the world. God's only Son became fully man. He added to Himself a full and complete human nature. He lived among us; He lived the life you were supposed to live, a perfect life of obedience to God. And then Jesus died the death of all of those who would believe in Him. He satisfied the justice of God by dying the death we deserved so that God could be just and forgive us our sins. And then God raised Him from the dead and He is alive forever. You have to turn from your sin and put your faith in Him; you have to come to God as a beggar, throwing yourself on God's mercy, asking that everything Jesus accomplished be applied to you. That's my prayer for you today.

But if you're here this morning and you're a believer, and that's most of us in this room, I think, there are two very practical applications for you. Number one, this Beatitude should give you confidence that you belong to Jesus and you belong to His spiritual kingdom. Think about it. Jesus says that if you mourn over your sin, if you're broken over your sin, then God has already comforted you with salvation and He will comfort you forever. That's God's promise; believe

God. “God,” as the prophet said, “is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent; has He said it, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Numbers 23:17). You can trust Jesus when He says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

There's a second implication, and that is this Beatitude should encourage us all to manifest a lifelong pattern of mourning over our sin; it's what Jesus taught us. You remember in the Lord's Prayer, Matthew, chapter 6, verse 12, He said, “Pray like this, not only for your daily bread, but pray daily, forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who have been our debtors”

(Paraphrase). 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins.” You see friends, confession of sin must be the consistent practice of all true Christians.

That's why Martin Luther's very first of the “Ninety-Five Theses” read like this, “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent,’ He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Let's pray together. Father, thank You for the truth of this passage. Lord, for us who are believers, help us to believe our Lord; help us to trust Your promises. If our lives are marked by mourning over our sin, grief over what our sins do to You, then Lord remind us that we will be comforted forever. Lord, but help us to continue to take our sins seriously, to confess them daily, to grieve over them, to say with Paul, “Wretched man that I am,” but thank You that You will deliver us from the body of this death into the glory of Your presence.

Lord, I pray for those here this morning who maybe came in thinking they were Christians, but as they've looked to themselves in light of the second Beatitude, they are painfully aware that they don't mourn their sin and they're not truly Christians. Lord, help them this morning to

throw themselves like beggars on Your mercy, crying out for You to forgive them because of what Jesus did. And thank You, oh God, that “a broken and a contrite heart You will never despise.” We thank You and praise You, in Jesus' name. Amen.