

# LIFE LESSONS

*How Jesus Guides Our Path  
To Happiness In His Sermon  
on the Mount.*

**GREG BURDINE**

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*Life Lessons: Lessons for a Happier Life – Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount*

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ISBN-13: 978-1548125127

ISBN-10: 1548125121

# DEDICATION

This book is lovingly dedicated to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His greatest sermon has become my first book. It will take me my entire lifetime to apply its principles. But He continues to help me.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank Jesus Christ for all He has done for me. Since receiving Him as my personal Savior as a young person, He has blessed me with wonderful opportunities and rewarding relationships. Yet, the best is yet to come.

I would like to thank my family, especially my wife Judy, for making my life such a joy. I am blessed way more than I deserve. My four children have brought me laughter, pride, and grandchildren. Thanks Jennifer, Joshua, Jill and Justin.

I am so thankful for my those who have been my pastor and have modeled servant leadership and Biblical preaching: Joe Lewis and his son, Marty Lewis, David Cavin, Bill Taylor, and Bill Dinoff.

I must express my appreciation to the people I pastor at Faith Baptist Church in Adrian, Michigan. I am still amazed that people want to hear me preach and follow my leadership. Yet, these people do. God bless them.

I also want to thank those who have helped me publish Life Lessons. My editor, Douglas Williams, has walked me through this process and been an absolute joy to work with. Several friends have been part of my Launch Team and I want to thank them for their help: Tim and Vicki Schmuck-

er, Rick and Traci Arquette, Michael Burdine, Elias Correa, Kevin Davis, Ben Pearson, Rhonda Seneker, Jon Turner, Karen Wilks, Kirsten Yates, and Beth Zysk.

My passion is to help people follow Jesus better by learning the wisdom in the Bible. I hope this book has had a part in living a life full of blessing and happiness in your spiritual journey.

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# PREFACE

A BANK PRESIDENT ONE day was going to retire. So, the company threw him a retirement party. The new bank president attended. In a conversation, the new president wanted to learn how to make good decisions. So, he asked the retiring president, “In my new capacity as president of the bank, I need to make good decisions. You seem to make a lot of good decisions. What’s your secret?” The retiring president thought long and hard and finally said one word, “Experience.” “That’s a great and wise answer,” the new president replied. “But how do you get experience?” Again, the retiring bank president thought long and hard. But this time he had two words, “Wrong decisions.” It seems many learn how to live right by first living wrong.

What if you could learn how to live life right without making all the mistakes first? Wouldn’t that be great? Just think of all the pitfalls and disasters you could avoid if you just did life right the first time. I suppose many of us wouldn’t listen to such advice. But I think that deep down, all of us want to live the right kind of life. We just don’t know how.

I’ve met a lot of people in my life. But I have never met anyone who wanted to fail in life. Deep down, most people want to have a great life. They want to have good families, have a good income, have good friends, have a good job, and have good health. Nobody wants to fail.

Most people want to live right. They want to love their family, be kind to their neighbor, give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, and be the kind of person to others that they would have them be to them.

However, even though many people want to live right, most fail. For some, it's that they just don't know what they are supposed to do. I'm sure many people have not been brought up to understand the difference between right and wrong. Others may have experienced such a dysfunctional way of living that they really don't know how to treat other people. Yet, for many it's not that they don't know. They just don't know how. They have never seen right living modeled. The family structure greatly molded our former society. While this remains the primary influence in young lives, I think much of our society is more influenced by media. Yet, what is comical on television is often disastrous in real life.

We may want to have a good life. But selfishness, anger, pride and dishonesty often lead to a life nobody wants to have. Broken marriages, dysfunctional families, loneliness, and bitterness often result. This isn't the way we wanted our life to be. And this isn't the life we were meant to live. We were meant for more.

Whether they realize it or not, most people want to live out the Sermon on the Mount. Even if they are not aware, the principles of the Sermon on the Mount are ingrained in us all. I think God has placed in our society, if not in our DNA, the innate desire to live like God wants us to live. We were

created in God's image and though we have sin, we still retain the likeness of God. The creation reflects our Creator.

There is a secret to living right. There is a key to be all God wants you to be and all you want to be. It is a key that will help you in your family, your job, your school, your church, your future, and with your friends and neighbors. The secret is to follow the instructions in the Sermon on the Mount.

When I bought my first car, I discovered in the glove box an instruction manual. I'll be honest, I never read it. I just wanted to drive my car. My priority was to make sure it had gas so I could go out and hang out with my friends. But I soon discovered that I needed to use my car like it was designed.

My vehicle instruction manual told me things like what kind of oil to put in the car, what replacement bulbs I should have, how to save stations on my radio, and even how to change my tire (and where the jack was). These came in handy when I needed an oil change, my tail light went out, my new girlfriend had a favorite radio station, and when I got my first flat tire. I once had a car that had the jack under the hood. I would have never found it without the instruction manual.

We would do well to follow God's instruction book, the Bible, as our guide to life. While the Bible is a big book with some complicated areas, the Sermon on the Mount is a concise three-chapter summary of God's way to live life.

My hope is that this book will help you know and live God's best for your life. If you can put just a couple of the principles from the Sermon on the Mount into your life, you will experience a more blessed life. Blessings on your journey.

## INTRODUCTION:

# READY TO PREACH

**A**S I BEGIN this book on the Sermon on the Mount, a short introduction should help prepare you to discover God's plan for living right. My hope and prayer for this book is that you not only will discover how you are to live the life you've always wanted, but how to live the life God wants you to live.

## The Preparation to the Sermon (Matthew 4:23-25)

*“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there*

*followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.” (Matthew 4:23-25)*

Jesus had three primary areas of ministry — preaching, teaching and healing. He performed these three functions from the beginning through to the end of His life. He began His ministry by presenting the message of the Kingdom and showing Himself to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament -promised Messiah by healing people (Isaiah 61:1,2). Matthew’s Gospel can be partially outlined with an emphasis on three areas of Jesus’ ministry: (1) Teaching (Matthew 5-7), (2) Preaching (Matthew 10-11), and Healing (Matthew 8-9).

Jesus had a public ministry. His public baptism by John launched His public ministry. He would continue to guard His private ministry with His disciples and His Heavenly Father. But He was called to minister to people. People responded quickly. Crowds began to follow Him everywhere. What Jesus said and did caused such a commotion that many wanted more. The crowds came from all over. Many came from nearby. But some came from far away.

At this early time in His ministry, Jesus chose to honestly present His claims. Thus, the Sermon on the Mount is similar to the “State of the Union” address of a new President of the United States. But this is more than what He hopes will happen to His people. This is what He expects from those who follow Him.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the crowds were astonished at His doctrine and teaching. But the disciples not only heard what He said, they responded to their Lord by doing (Matthew 7:21). This sermon is not just a doctrinal statement. This sermon is more than what ought to be in the life of a believer. This sermon is not yet complete until we do what it teaches.

## The Purpose of the Sermon

Why did Jesus preach this sermon? As a preacher, it is important for me to understand the purpose of every sermon. What do I want it to accomplish? What do I want people to understand or do? A short summary of this great sermon reveals two reasons Jesus preached it:

### 1. To show the inadequacy of man's righteousness (Matthew 5:20)

We all think we are right. Even if we admit we are wrong, we do not think we are too wrong. We are slow to admit our sins and weaknesses. So, Jesus sets up a comparison of our sins in Matthew 5. He compares murder with anger, adultery with lust, swearing with honesty, retaliation with forgiveness, and love of neighbors with love of enemies. While we may minimize our sin, Jesus concludes that we are often more sinful than we acknowledge.

Jesus not only compares our sins, He also compares our good deeds. I meet very few people who will not admit they are not perfect. Our deeds, thoughts, and words reveal a sinful heart. But in Matthew 6, Jesus points out that of-

ten our good deeds are not really that good. Giving, praying, and fasting are all good things to do. But these good behaviors can be performed in a wrong manner. Rather than motivated by humility, these can be motivated by our pride. Instead of private performance, we can give, pray, and fast so others will notice us. In Jesus' day, as well as in contemporary Christianity, people often do good deeds so others will see them. This converts a good deed into a sinful deed. Even our righteousness is tainted with sinfulness and selfishness.

Jesus concludes His sermon in Matthew 7 by comparing the two forms of righteousness. There are two paths, two gates, two prophets, two vines, two trees, two confessions, and two houses. In each comparison, one leads to destruction while the other leads to eternal life. Jesus calls His listeners to reflect and recognize which righteousness they possess. Do you possess man's righteousness or God's righteousness? Often, man's righteousness looks like God's righteousness. But Jesus gives us clear vision into the hypocrisy of some good deeds. We need to turn from our own form of goodness and receive Him. It is only those who hear and obey His teaching who truly find the good life.

## 2. To proclaim the righteousness God expects

Throughout this sermon, Jesus makes comparisons and statements. He wants us to recognize that our righteousness is not good enough. God expects inward righteousness and this is impossible without God.



The Pharisees were trying to live a life by obeying all the commandments. They thought to go to Heaven they had to keep the commandments outwardly. But Jesus said a strong “NO.” To go to Heaven you must keep His commandments inwardly as well.

It is not enough to not murder. You need to get rid of unjust anger. It is not enough to not commit adultery. You need to get rid of lust. To go to Heaven, according to Jesus, you need to be free of anger, lust, always practice honesty, forgiveness, and love your enemies. These are all inward attitudes that manifest in outward actions. We often flip the order and concentrate on the outward actions and assume the inward attitudes are the motivation. Not always.

It is impossible to change on the inside without the help of God. That is what conversion is. Conversion is an inward change that results in an outward change.

Jesus expects perfect righteousness. He tells us we are to be “perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Wow! We are to be free of sin and full of righteousness. We are not to do anything wrong and we are to do everything right. Is that what He wants? Yes. Anything else is sin.

That is why the life God expects is impossible outside of Jesus. Jesus lived the perfect life. He did not lower the standards of perfection just so people He loved could make it. Heaven is a perfect place and only perfect people can go there. So, if we have sin or have not performed any good we should have, we can’t go. Our righteousness is not ad-

equate. But if we believe and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, God will exchange our unrighteousness with Jesus Christ's righteousness. It is not that we ever get good enough. It is that we are given Jesus' righteousness.

## The Problem of the Sermon: Can it be obeyed?

The Sermon on the Mount is undoubtedly one of the most famous and greatest sermon ever preached. We are fortunate that Matthew has recorded it in the most widely published book in history, the Bible. We are also fortunate that it is part of the inspired Word of God so that we are assured that it is not only an accurate account, but it is exactly what God would have us know.

But as many have sought to understand its meaning, there have been two opposite interpretations as to its application. These two applications determine our practical use of the Sermon on the Mount.

Many believe the Sermon on the Mount is to be kept exactly as it is given. So, in order to follow the teachings, they avoid oaths, personal or military force, and prohibit owning property. They withdraw from all political and social life and let the government take care of itself. They see the Sermon on the Mount as a list of behaviors to avoid and to practice.

However, it doesn't take long to see that it is nearly impossible to completely observe the Sermon's teaching. While

we may be able to abstain from adultery and murder, it is very hard for anyone to keep from thoughts of lust and anger. And who can claim to be as perfect as our Heavenly Father? Surely no one would be so bold. So, I think it is too far a reach to claim that the Sermon was preached so that we would follow its teaching to gain Heaven.

So, since it is impossible to abide by the rules given, many teach that the practical application of the Sermon is for the millennial kingdom when Jesus literally reigns. This interpretation encourages a future obedience of all the commands and principles when the Christian's sinful nature will be completely removed and Jesus rules the world completely. They believe that this is just a preview of the world to come. So, they teach the Sermon is not for today, and only gives us a picture of God's ideal world.

But Jesus' model prayer tells us to pray "thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." So, evidentially the kingdom of God is not yet in its fullness on Earth. So, I have a problem with limiting the application of the Sermon on the Mount to the future, millennial fulfillment. Let me share three ideas why the Sermon on the Mount is for today.

First, Jesus does not indicate or imply teaching for another age. He uses present tense verbs for His teachings. Jesus demanded that the people listening to Him at the time live the life He was commanding.

Second, Many of the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon seem meaningless in a future millennium. For instance, Jesus refers to peaceful and loving reaction to persecution and persecutors. There will not be persecution during the millennium.

Third, many other New Testament passages encourage a lifestyle of perfection similar to the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. For example:

*“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14);*

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1);*

*“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.” (Philippians 1:9-10);*

*“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2);*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14);*

*“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” ( 1 Peter 1:15-16)*

I have a solution. This sermon gives us God’s demands (not advice) on right living and we are expected to live to the letter of the law to enter His Kingdom (Matthew 5:17,18). But since we cannot live this life perfectly (1 John 1:8), we must come to God and receive forgiveness and new life through His Son Jesus (John 1:12). This regeneration (born again) makes us a child of God, as well as a citizen of the kingdom.

We are given a new nature. We have the enablement through God’s ever-abiding Spirit to live up to the demands of the “Kingdom Standard of Living.” Because we live in a sin-cursed world and still maintain a sin-cursed body, we will miserably fail in our attempt to live up to the kingdom standards. However, the divine nature now within us will continue to strive to help us live this godly life. If anyone is not living in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount, this reveals a life that is empty of Jesus, regardless of what a person may claim (Matthew 7:22-23).

Can the Sermon on the Mount be obeyed? Yes, through Christ. The key to living the Sermon on the Mount is to realize you can’t live it yourself. Only Jesus Christ can live it through you.

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh*

*I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)*

As we begin this study through the Sermon on the Mount, it is important for you to settle how you will respond to its teaching. So even before we talk about the Sermon itself, how will you approach the contents? Are you willing to change whatever you think or behave in order to follow more closely to how Jesus wants you to live? Are you willing to give up any personal belief or behavior if God’s Spirit presents you with a better pattern of life?

Will you pray the same prayer as young Samuel, “Speak Lord, your servant is listening?”

If you have not surrendered your life to God and trusted Christ for His righteousness, do it today. One day we will all stand before God in judgment. When our life is over, we must give an answer to the life we have lived. God gives life and He will demand an explanation on how we used it. So, have you lived the perfect life? I know I haven’t. But I have trusted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I will never stand before God and receive His approval on my own behavior. I have disobeyed His law. I will only stand before Him based on my acceptance of His Son, Jesus Christ. You will never live your life well enough to inherit heaven. You must have perfect righteousness — Jesus’ righteousness. Surrender your life to Him today.

If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and He is living in you, have you yielded your life to Him?

Allow Jesus to live His life through you. He died in your place. Now He wants to live His life through you. You may have yielded once or twice before. But living the Christian life is like driving a car that is out of alignment. Without constant attention, a car will begin to drift off the road. If you find yourself today drifting off the road you should be traveling down, turn back to Jesus.

If you have trusted Christ as Savior but you are definitely not living like a follower of Jesus, I encourage you to take an honest look at your life. Many people base their eternity on a decision they made years ago. We do not have eternal life because we made a decision. We have eternal life because Jesus saved our soul. I never want to encourage people to doubt their salvation. But I do think it healthy to test your salvation.

One day after wiring up a ceiling fan, I had to test it to see if it was wired correctly. Even though I thought I did everything right and it looked good, I needed to turn the power back on and check it out. If it worked, I did it right. If nothing happened, or worse, I knew the wiring was wrong. Fortunately, the fan worked and my home project was complete.

If you are not living a life pleasing to God, it could be like faulty wiring. Maybe you thought you did all the right things, but life isn't working for you. Maybe you have never truly repented of your sins and trusted His Son for salvation. At the very least, if you are disobedient, you are in danger of severe discipline from your Heavenly Father. At

the worst, you have convinced yourself that your eternity is secure when it is actually in jeopardy. Double-check your salvation.



## CHAPTER ONE:

# BE HUMBLE

**P**OVERTY IS ALL around us. In the big cities, we can see the face of poverty at intersections with signs of ‘Help Needed.’ Even in my small town, we have small tent villages of the homeless behind our local K-Mart.

A stigma is attached to the poor. Sophie Tucker once said, “Listen. I’ve been rich, and I’ve been poor. And believe me, rich is better.” But Jesus pronounces His first blessing on the “poor in spirit.” This is the first beatitude and is the foundational attitude we must have. No one enters God’s kingdom without having the attitude described here.

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)*

## What does it mean to be 'Poor in Spirit'?

Jesus does not pronounce a blessing simply on being poor. But He does proclaim that the “poor in Spirit” are blessed. To understand what this means, it may help to understand what it does not mean.

“Poor in spirit” does not mean poor in material possessions. Jesus did not say “Blessed in spirit are the poor.” Poverty is not a blessing in itself. The Bible does tell us that often riches make it harder to follow Christ. Wealth has kept many people away from the Gospel. However, many godly people in the Bible were wealthy, including Abraham (Genesis 13:2), David (1 Chronicles 29:28), Solomon (2 Chronicles 9:22), Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:26-28), and Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57).

“Poor in spirit” does not mean poor-spirited. Special blessings are not given to those who lack enthusiasm. Solomon encourages “*whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might*” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

“Poor in spirit” does not mean someone who is a coward or lacks courage. Several times throughout Scripture we are commanded to have “*good courage*” (Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:7-9; Psalm 31:24).

“Poor in spirit” does not mean to have a low view of oneself. Though Scripture commands us not to think too highly of our self (Romans 12:3), nowhere does it command us to

think poorly of our self. As humans, we are all created in the image of God and bear a likeness to Him, even in our sinfulness. Oftentimes, in order to appear to be humble, people put themselves down. But this is not what it means to be “poor in spirit.”

“Poor in spirit” does not include sacrificing our individuality or personality. We are each a unique person, with specific characteristics that make us our self. In no way should a person become what they are not in order to be blessed. Surely, we should change sinful behavior and we may want to curb certain personality quirks. But we are not to be molded into the same “cookie cutter” type of person as someone else. A look at the variety of early disciples that Jesus chose should encourage diversity of personalities within the family of God.

## So, what is ‘poor in spirit?’

“Poor in spirit” is the opposite of being rich in pride. To be rich means to have more than you need. Too many of us have way more pride and selfishness than is sufficient.

“Poor in spirit” is not just normal poor — it is begging poor. The Greek word used is *ptokas*, not the typical word for poverty (*penance*). *Ptokas* is to be so poor you have to beg. It is to have a spirit that has absolutely nothing to offer and must beg God to be filled. We can’t bargain with God in our spiritual life. We are completely bankrupt, with no deposits of our own. The only asset we have is a poverty-ridden spirit.

“Poor in spirit” is an emptying, while the rest of the sermon is a filling. This first line of Jesus’ sermon sets the stage for everything else. Unless we admit our spiritual poverty, we can never receive anything else God has to offer. All the other blessings are dependent on the attitude of complete humility.

“Poor in spirit” condemns the idea that we can live the sermon ourselves. Someone has said, “This Sermon on the Mount is too high to climb. Any attempt or idea that you can live the sermon is proof you do not understand it.” It is only when we admit our defeat and utter helplessness and hopelessness that God will begin to cultivate in our life the character depicted in the rest of the sermon.

“Poor in spirit” is completely opposite of most people’s thinking. Pop culture thinks we must build up our self-image. I’ve heard many counselors say that the reason we have so many emotional problems in our world is because of low self-image or low self-esteem. But that is where we need to begin. Without God, we have nothing, we can do nothing worthwhile, and we are nothing. We are spiritually empty. Our spirits are so poor we must beg in order to live. We often hear of being “filled with the Spirit” (and this is important). But few talk about being “empty of the spirit.”

“Poor in spirit” is admitting your need. If you think you have no needs, that is your biggest need. The first step of Alcoholics Anonymous is: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.” To be “poor in spirit” is to admit that we have nothing

in which to make ourselves acceptable to God spiritually. It is to beg Him for spiritual help.

## How can the begging, humble be blessed?

The “poor in spirit” are blessed because they have a disposition that is the very opposite of human nature. It is a sure sign of a divine work of grace. Blessings follow those who are in a position to be blessed. Those who are humble will be exalted and blessed (Matthew 23:12).

The “poor in spirit” are Christ-like and anything Christ-like brings blessing. Jesus always did what His Heavenly Father desired. Even when He was hungry, He refused to turn stones into bread. It is not that Jesus thought less of Himself. It is simply that Jesus did not think of Himself. He knew who He was — the Son of God. But He refused to use His position to gain some kind of prominence over others. He even washed the disciples’ feet as an example of His humility.

The “poor in spirit” will one day be kings. Today, we are servants of the Kingdom. Tomorrow the servants will rule as kings with authority. Those who are “poor in spirit” right now (present tense) possess the kingdom. But they behave as servants of the kingdom. One day the humble will be exalted.

## How can you tell if you are humble?

“Humility is that grace that, when you know you have it, you have lost it.” – Andrew Murray

Four ways you can tell if you are “poor in spirit” ...

1. You accept others, because you have accepted yourself.
2. You accept your circumstances.
3. You have a right attitude toward things.
4. “A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.” – Thoreau
5. You accept God’s will for your life.

Pride is a terrible attitude. The Lord resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Even though the world may not tolerate nor applaud the humble, the Lord does. Humility is the first step into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Have you ever humbled yourself before the Lord God Almighty?

Is your life a life of humility before others?

## CHAPTER TWO:

# BE SAD

EVERYONE LIKES TO laugh. It's contagious. Jerry Lewis once said, "The people of the world who have the ability to laugh at themselves are those who survive." The Bible says, "*A merry heart doeth good like medicine*" (Proverbs 17:22).

The world's philosophy is: "Smile, smile, smile!" But Jesus says, "Mourn, mourn, mourn."

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

What is Jesus telling us in this second beatitude? What kind of mourning is He talking about?

## Jesus and Sorrow

God cares about your sorrow. He really does. This second beatitude proves it. He notices when you hurt. Jesus gives a special blessing on those who mourn and cry. I believe when we hurt, He hurts. What hurts us hurts Him. He really cares about what we care about.

Your sorrow is okay (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 4). Some people think it is a sign of weakness to cry. But God created us to cry. God even cries at times. Mourning is an expression of our love for others. Often at a funeral I spend time with families who are overcome with grief and sorrow. It is almost as if they can barely breathe. But I've expressed to them that we cry because we love. And the deeper we love, the deeper we cry. To remove the tears, we would need to remove the love. So, it's good to cry. It shows we love. God has promised that He will comfort those who mourn. Comfort cannot be received until we have really mourned.

Sorrow is an important aspect of life. We find many people in the Bible cried. Abraham cried when his wife died (Gen. 23:2). David cried over his loneliness (Ps. 42:2-3). Timothy cried in discouragement (2 Tim. 1:3-4). Jeremiah cried as he preached (Jer. 9:1). Paul cried as he taught (Acts 20:31). A father cried over his son (Mark 9:23-24). A woman cried tears of devotion at Jesus' feet (Luke 7:37-38). I once had to break the news to two young boys that their father had been killed in an automobile accident. One reacted by crying uncontrollably. The other tried to hold it in and not show any emotion, just a few tears. Over the course of many months,



the boy who cried was able to adjust to the loss. However, the boy who held it in had troubles. I think it was because He refused to mourn over the loss of his dad. Sometimes you just need a good cry.

Most mourning will not go on forever. In this beatitude, Jesus promises a time of future comfort. At the moment of intense loss, it seems like we'll never be the same. I remember when my dad died. It seemed like I cried all the time. But as time went on, my mourning turned to fond memories. Even today, I have times of intense pain because my dad is no longer with me. But God has given me great comfort. Time does heal our emotional wounds.

Jesus offers blessing to those who mourn. For those who follow Jesus, something good will come from our tears, so it's okay to walk through sorrow. This is not a natural response. Normally people do not want to confront anything that may cause them sorrow. People deliberately turn from anything unpleasant, especially if it makes them sad. Sometimes we make having "fun" such a high priority that we don't do anything that causes sadness. If it doesn't make me laugh, we think it's boring. But Jesus gives a blessing to those who mourn.

## What kind of mourning is Jesus talking about?

Natural sorrow can bring comfort. Human sorrow teaches us to appreciate good things. It increases our sensitivity to others, especially their needs. It teaches us to be better

people. Sorrow and grief reinforces the fact that this life is not all there is. And sometimes it drives a person to God. Natural sorrow is good. But I don't think Jesus is primarily talking about natural sorrow.

The Greek word Jesus used here for “mourn” is the strongest of the nine words used for grief. It is the mourning over someone who has died — a deep, inner agony you can't hide. It is definitely associated with the first beatitude. Humility and sorrow go together. Just as the first beatitude speaks of spiritual poverty, this beatitude speaks of spiritual mourning. It is sorrow over sin. Jesus tells us there is a blessing to those who mourn over sin, for they shall be comforted.

Jesus is talking about sorrow over sin. It is an emotional reaction to the first beatitude. When a person sees his spiritual poverty, he can react in one of four ways:

1. He can deny it.
2. He can admit it and try to change.
3. He can admit it and give up.
4. He can admit it and turn to God.

Many people know they are sinners, yet never mourn over that fact (Zech. 12:10). But the attitude of mourning over sin is called repentance. It is a change of heart over our sinful condition. Instead of being happy with sin or trying to hide sin, it is a sorrow and confession of sin.

## How will mourning over sin bring comfort?

A person who truly mourns over their sin will confess it to God. This brings God's forgiveness. There is great comfort in knowing that Jesus forgives all sin.

A person who truly mourns over their sin will be given power to overcome those sins. God's Spirit will help you battle the temptations that entice you into wrong. You can live a life of less sorrow if you turn from sin to God. Sin brings sorrow, but forgiveness of sin brings blessing.

A person who truly mourns over their sin will eventually live in Heaven. In Heaven, there will be no sin. In Heaven, every tear will be wiped away. In Heaven, we have eternal comfort!

Do you experience sorrow over your sin or do you just try to hide it? Only those who admit their sins and seek Jesus will find inner peace and comfort.