*Introduction*

We have seen over the last 3 messages of this Sermon that it is aimed at ALL Christians. People who are different from the world and who are to live differently from the world.

Last week we saw what was meant by the fist beatitude – Blessed are the *poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* We saw that this was to do with the spiritual and not the physical. We saw that the Gospel is made up of two parts, the tearing down and the building up. Conviction before conversion, emptying of self before being filled and so on.

By the way, you can find notes on these sermons on our website, if you wish to print them off and go back to them.

This morning we come to the second beatitude – ***Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.***

This beatitude, like the last, stands out as marking the Christian from the non-Christian. It shows that he is different from the world.

This, in worldly terms, is a ridiculous statement – Happy are those who mourn!

The one thing the world tries to do is shun mourning, it is interested only in having a good time. The philosophy of this world is “Forget your troubles, turn your back on them”.

But the Gospel says “Happy are they that mourn”. Indeed they are the only ones who are happy.

If you turn to the parallel passage in Luke 6 you find it is put more strikingly, because there is a negative employed.

***LK 6:25 Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.***

This saying apparently condemns the laughter and joviality of the world, and pronounces a woe on it.

This beatitude is of primary importance to us, not to be overlooked.

It is also clear, like the first one, that this is of a spiritual nature. It is not talking of physical laughing and mourning.

Jesus was not saying that those that mourn the passing of a loved one are ‘happy’ just like the poverty of spirit was not about being financially poor. So this is spiritual.

It has to be said that this is also another area that the Church has become lacking in. In its desire to reach out to others it has put on an outward show of happiness, it tries to attract those who are outside the church. But it fails.

In fact, it is only when the church goes through revival, that it starts to truly get back to being true church, because the Spirit of God has shaken it up and brought it to its knees.

The absence of the characteristic of mourning within the church is due, I believe, is because it has a defective view of sin and a defective view of the doctrine of sin along with a failure to understand the true nature of Christian joy.

The church wants conversions without repentance; it wants the experience without conviction.

This is why, when we come to this Sermon on the Mount, we have to come and start with negatives before we come to the positives.

This is why we have to be poor in spirit before we can be filled with the Spirit. Conviction must come before conversion, mourning must come before joy.

If we are to truly know the joy of what the Bible speaks, we must first be convicted of our sin.

When we see our sin for what it really is, and repent of it. Then we will know and experience joy.

**So what does Jesus mean when he says “Happy are those that mourn”?**

The Bible tells us that we are made in the image of God, therefore who best to look at and be taught by, than Jesus himself.

He is the ultimate standard of who we are to be like.

One thing we observe is that nowhere in Scripture is it recorded that Jesus laughed. We are told He was angry, we are told He suffered from hunger and thirst, but there is no actual record of laughter in his life.

I am not saying that Jesus NEVER LAUGHED, all I am saying is the Scripture is silent on the subject.

We are told that he was to be a “man of sorrows” in Isaiah 53

***ISA 53:2-4 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.***

There is also an indication in John that he looked older than he was:

***JN 8:56-57 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"***

But Jesus was only about 30 at this time, 33 at the very outside.

Jesus went and wept at the tomb of Lazarus, it was not because he was dead, because Jesus knew that he was going to live again. We are also told in Luke 14 that he wept over Jerusalem.

This is the picture we see of our Lord in the Gospels. Jesus knew the gravity and the price of sin. As He got to the garden of Gethsemane, that burden of that sin became even heavier that he sweat drops of blood.

Compare that with the Churches apparent joviality in the world today, yet we are meant to be like him.

Let us look at Paul. Here is a man that is actually grief-stricken over his sin, he hates himself:

***RO 7:14-20 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.***

He goes on to say in

***Rom 8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.***

***2CO 5:1-2 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,***

Paul knew what it meant to mourn for sin, to groan under the weight of it.

Do we mourn over our sin, do we mourn over the sins of others? Do we mourn over the moral muddle and the unhappiness and suffering of mankind?

Do we see the world in a sinful and unhappy state?

The Lord did. This is why he was a ‘man of sorrows’ and acquainted with grief. Why he wept over Jerusalem, why he wept at the grave of Lazarus, it was because he knew that it was all down to sin.

God hates sin, because He knows what it has done to his creation.

We cannot stop here, because if we do, we will only see the negative. Jesus went on to say ***“They shall be comforted”***. This is the positive.

In what respect will a person be happy? Well, they will become happy in a personal sense.

The one who mourns because of their sinful state and condition before God is a person who is going to repent; they are actually in the state of repenting at this point. The one who truly repents as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit is a person who is certain to be led to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We come to the point as the Apostle Paul did whereby we say

***ROM 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*** And then we can go on to say

***25 Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!***

Now this is something that follows, just as night follows day.

If we truly mourn, we shall rejoice, we shall be made happy, we shall be comforted.

For when we see ourselves in this unutterable hopelessness that the Holy Spirit reveals to us the Lord Jesus Christ as His perfect sacrifice, the one that God looks upon and is satisfied. We see the one who died for all our sins, and was raised on the third day and who now stands at the right hand of the Father as our advocate, the one who intercedes on our behalf.

When we see him and accept him as Saviour – we will be comforted.

This is not a once only event. Every time we sin, which is on a daily basis, and we turn to Christ for forgiveness that comfort returns. Our whole life in reality is one of mourning and joy, sorrow and happiness, the one should lead to the other immediately.

There is also another comfort. That which we often call the ‘blessed hope’.

At this time, Paul says

***RO 8:22-23 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.***

The Christian as he looks at himself/herself and looks at the state of the world and the sin that has overtaken it, groans in spirit. But he/she is ‘comforted’ in the hope we have for the future return of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

This is the hope that Paul goes on to talk about in v24

***24-25 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.***

This is that hope of which Paul encourages the Christians at Thessalonica

***1THESS 4:16-18 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.***

Friends, that day is not far away.

But what hope has a person who does not believe these things? What hope has the person who is not a Christian?

Look at the world, read your newspaper, what can you rely on?

You cannot bank on education, you cannot bank on wealth, you cannot trust the United Nations. There is NO comfort for the world.

BUT for the Christian who mourns because of sin and because of the state of the world, there is this comfort – the comfort of the blessed hope, the glory that yet remains.

So that even here, whilst we are groaning we can be happy, because of the hope that is set before us.

There is this ultimate hope in eternity.

In the eternal state we will be wholly and entirely blessed, there will be nothing to mar our lives, nothing to detract from it, nothing to spoil it. Sorrow and sighing will be no more, all tears shall be wiped away and we shall bask in the eternal sunshine of God’s presence forever and ever.

Happy are they that morn, for they will be comforted.

*Conclusion*

As we conclude, let us try and define this person who mourns. What sort of person are they?

They are sorrowful but they are not depressed, they are sorrowful but not miserable. They are serious but not solemn, sober minded but not gloomy. They are grave but not cold.

With this gravity there is warmth and an attraction.

The Christian is not someone who puts on an appearance of sadness, or for that matter joviality, but one that looks at life seriously, contemplates it spiritually and sees the effects of sin.

Yet they have a holy joy, what we might call a serious happiness.

He is like the Lord Jesus himself who groaned and wept and yet “for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising its shame”.

That is the person who mourns, that is the Christian.

Do you know that you are a sinner and mourn over your sin, have you repented of that sin and come to Christ as your saviour and Lord. This is the only way to know a real joy, a real happiness that is a comfort in this world.

May you respond to the Holy Spirit as he reveals sin in your life and as he reveals the fullness of Jesus Christ.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they will be comforted.

Amen