

Godly Sorrow and the Sorrow of the World

Matthew 5:1-12: ¹ And **seeing** the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, **his disciples came unto him:** ² And **he opened his mouth**, and **taught** them, saying, ³ **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** ⁴ **Blessed are they that mourn:** for they shall be **comforted.** ⁵ **Blessed are the meek:** for they shall **inherit the earth.** ⁶ **Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:** for they shall be **filled.** ⁷ **Blessed are the merciful:** for they shall **obtain mercy.** ⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart:** for they shall **see God.** ⁹ **Blessed are the peacemakers:** for they shall be called the **children of God.** ¹⁰ **Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:** for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven.** ¹¹ **Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.** ¹² **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:** for great is your **reward in heaven:** for so persecuted they **the prophets** which were before you.”

I. Verse 4—“Blessed are they that mourn”

- A. We have seen how the Lord Jesus had a great following from all over Israel and beyond. When He saw them, He saw the people had no shepherd.
- B. He saw the people as misled and deceived and so, His first order of business was to heal their ignorance by teaching them.
- C. The Lord started by teaching the people that before anyone could benefit from Him, that person had to see himself as poor in spirit and in great need.
 1. If a person does not see himself as in need, then God cannot help that person
- D. God is so wanting to take away the poverty in spirit that God promises to give that person the kingdom of Heaven. That was not just a promise for the spur of the moment; the Lord Jesus repeated that promise later when He said in **Luke 12:32**.
 1. The verse says, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”
 2. So, the first teaching in the Sermon on the Mount has to do with how a person evaluates himself
 - a. If he sees himself as in pretty good shape and not really needing anything, then God has no help for him.
 - b. But, if he sees himself as being poor in spirit and having nothing, and if he comes to God that way, then God promises him the kingdom of Heaven.
- E. So, the first requirement for a man is to see himself as needy and to come to God for help.
- F. The Lord said that a person who sees himself as poor in spirit is very fortunate.
 1. The person at the time does not see himself as fortunate or blessed, but that is because he cannot see that the Lord is going to make that person rich by giving him the kingdom of Heaven.
- G. Now, the Lord moves on to the second requirement which He puts in verse 4.
 1. **Matthew 5:4** states, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”
- H. Here, the Lord is saying that a person is in a great position if he is mourning.
- I. In order to understand this statement, “Blessed are they that mourn,” we need to understand the meaning of the word “mourn.”
 1. The Greek word used here for “mourn” is *Penthos*, and it means deep sorrow. It is more than a quiet cry; it is a wailing.
 2. What is the sorrow in verse 4?
- J. This sorrow is similar to the sorrow of an only son, and this sorrow is described in **Zechariah 12:10**.

1. **Zechariah 12:10** says, “*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*”
 2. That is what *Penthos* is; it is deep sorrow.
- K. When the Jewish people will see the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes the second time, they will see the nail prints in His hands and realize that they pierced Him when they turned Him over to the Romans.
1. Their mourning will be so strong that is called in **Zechariah 12:10**.
 - a. The verse says, “*Bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*”
- L. What is the Lord referring to when He uses that strong word *Penthos* for mourning in verse 5?
- M. He started out in verse 3 by stating how a person’s sin leaves him. It leaves him in a state of being poor in spirit.
- N. Now, He is stating what a person’s sin does to him; it makes him mourn.
1. It is interesting how King Solomon described two people—one a wise person and one a fool.
 2. **Ecclesiastes 7:4** says, “*The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*”
 - a. The wise person is in the house of mourning; he is sad and in deep sorrow.
 - b. But, the foolish person is at a party.
 - c. This is because the wise person is mourning his sin, but the foolish person does not care about his sin. He is just living it up.
 - d. In other words, he is rearranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic.
- O. There are examples of different persons in Scripture who were mourning like described in verse 4.
- P. This mourning in verse 4 is referring to the sorrow that the publican was feeling in **Luke 18:13**.
1. **Luke 18:13** says, “*And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*”
- Q. This mourning in verse 4 is referring to the sorrow that the prodigal son felt when he said to his father in **Luke 15:21**.
1. **Luke 15:21** says, “*And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*”
- R. This mourning in verse 4 is referring to the sorrow that a person feels when the Holy Spirit does His work on a person in **John 16:7-11**.
1. **John 16:7-11** reads, “*7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*”
 2. When the Holy Spirit does His work of convicting a person of sin, righteousness, and judgment, that person is made to know:
 - a. The **Sin** he is plagued with
 - b. The **Righteousness** he does not have
 - c. The **Judgment** of hell that awaits him

- S. But, the person in verse 4 who is in this state of *Penthos* mourning or sorrow is called, “Blessed.”
 - 1. This means that the sorrow in verse 4 is different from the sorrow that is hopeless and leads to death. That sorrow has a bad outcome.

II. **2 Corinthians 7:10**—“*Godly Sorrow...Sorrow of the world*”

- A. The sorrow that the Lord is referring to in verse 4 has a good outcome. There are two types of sorrow, and those two types of sorrow are described in **2 Corinthians**.
 - 1. **2 Corinthians 7:9-10** says, “⁹ *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made **sorry**, but that ye **sorrowed to repentance**: for ye were made sorry after a **godly manner**, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.* ¹⁰ *For **godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation** not to be repented of: but **the sorrow of the world worketh death**.*”
- B. Godly sorrow comes from the realization that the world with all its possessions and pleasures is no longer able to **satisfy** and no longer able to make a person **happy** and no longer able to **comfort the heart** and no longer able to give a person a sense of **security**.
- C. This sorrow is deep mourning over what his sin has done to him.
 - 1. When a person is in that state of mind of being sorry for his sin, the Lord says that he is blessed. He will be comforted with the greatest comfort a person can know which is the comfort of being saved from his sins.
- D. But, there are two types of sorrow, and only one type leads to being comforted by God and being saved from sin.
 - 1. Just because a person is mourning or feels sorry, that does not mean that he has the right sorrow and will be comforted with salvation from his sins.
 - 2. Those 2 sorrows are called “godly sorrow” and “sorrow of the world.” They are different in **what a person is sorry for**, and they are different as to what each sorrow leads to.
- E. Actually, God has two goals for the life of every person.
- F. God wants every person on earth to come to what Paul was preaching as described in **Acts 20:21**—“*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
 - 1. The 2 goals that God has for every person are repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- G. This is what verse 4 is all about.
 - 1. “Blessed are they that mourn”—that is repentance towards God or sorrow over sin.
 - 2. “They shall be comforted”—that is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- H. Just as you cannot separate the mourning part of verse 4 from the comfort part of verse 4, you cannot separate repentance towards God from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1. You cannot have repentance towards God without having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. You cannot have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ without having repentance toward God.
 - 3. Repentance and faith are inseparable.
 - 4. True faith cannot exist without true repentance, and true repentance cannot exist without true faith.
- I. These are the two conditions that are necessary for salvation.
 - 1. There must be repentance towards God for salvation (the great comfort).
 - 2. There must be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

- J. The Lord Jesus Christ also used a seed as the starting point in His most important parable of the sower and the seed.
1. **Luke 8:5** says, “*A sower went out to sow his seed.*”
 2. **Luke 8:11** says, “*Now the parable is this: the seed is the Word of God.*”
- K. When anyone hears the Word of God, a seed has been sown to him, and in some cases, the seed just bounces off the stoniness of his heart. He does not allow it to penetrate into the soil of his heart.
1. But, there was a type of ground—the stony ground where the seed did manage to get into some soil, but not enough soil for a strong root to take hold. That described a particular type of person that was like a plant that did not have the holding or withstanding ability that the root gives to hold against strong winds.
 - a. The winds of temptation or persecution blew on that person, and he does not stand. He falls because there is no root in him.
 - b. **Matthew 13:20-21** says, “*²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹ Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*”
 2. The issue for this person is that there is no root. It is the root that holds the person against the forces of persecution and temptation. Without the root, the person just falls.
 3. This stony ground hearer is all about the root: no root—no standing.
 4. So, that is the first step—the root.
 - a. The root is that one word.
 - 1) **Matthew 5:4** says, “*Blessed are they that mourn.*”
 5. Mourning is the root. The root is sorrow. This is deep sorrow in the heart—a sorrow over his own sin.
 - a. Mourning or sorrow is like a training course—like a boot camp of tough times.
 - b. There is a right kind of sorrow called in **2 Corinthians 7:10**—“*godly sorrow.*”
 - c. And there is a wrong kind of sorrow called in **2 Corinthians 7:10**—“*the sorrow of the world.*”
 - d. If there is godly sorrow, then the root will progress to the second stage.
 6. The second stage is the stem. It is the stem that breaks through the ground. The stem represents repentance.
 - a. Not all of the seeds germinated and ended up producing a stem that broke the ground. Some seeds made stems, and some did not.
 - b. That was the only way I knew that a seed had resulted in a root.
 - c. You know whether or not there is a stem that represents repentance or a changed life
 - 1) **2 Corinthians 7:10** says, “*For godly sorrow worketh repentance.*”
 - 2) This is like saying the root of godly sorrow will produce the stem of repentance.
 - d. Godly sorrow produces repentance whereas the sorrow of this world produces nothing but death.
 - 1) **2 Corinthians 7:10** says, “*The sorrow of the world worketh death.*”

III. Acts 20:21—“Repentance toward God”

- A. When **2 Corinthians 7:10** states, “*Godly sorrow worketh repentance.*”
1. That repentance is also a certain type of repentance which is described in **Acts 20:21**.
- B. The Bible has examples of repentance that are **NOT** toward God.
- C. After Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord Jesus, he had repentance, but not repentance toward God. Judas Iscariot had the sorrow of this world which produced nothing, but death.
1. **Matthew 27:3-5** says, “*3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, **repented himself**, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*”
 - a. **Matthew 27:3** says, “*Judas...repented himself.*”
 - b. That was not repentance towards God; that was repentance towards himself.
 - c. Judas said to himself, “Why did I do that? I should never have done that.”
 - d. Judas felt terrible for doing that, but, his repentance was only to himself and not to God.
- D. Repentance to self is like the statement in Hamlet—“This above all: **to thine own self be true**, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.”
1. God is missing from that statement.
 2. That statement is talking about being true to yourself and not doing anything false or wrong to any man.
 3. There is nothing in that statement about God, and that is the way the world sees right and wrong.
 4. God is not in that statement, and God is not in the thinking of the world.
 5. The believer’s statement would be “**To God be true**, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.”
 - a. **Matthew 22:37-40** says, “*37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*”
- E. The world only sees the horizontal of self and others; the world does not see the vertical of God.
- F. Judas did not repent toward God. God was not at all in Judas’ mind when he repented. Judas’ sorrow was totally devoid of God. He just felt awful in himself. Judas just hated himself because he hurt himself. It was his conscience of Judas that made him feel miserable.
1. That misery is what is called in **2 Corinthians 7:10**.
 - a. **2 Corinthians 7:10** says, “*The sorrow of the world worketh death.*”
 2. The sorrow of the world has no thought of God at all.
 3. Judas did not say, “I have sinned against God. God, be merciful to me a sinner.”
 4. God was not in the mind of Judas at all. Judas is described in **Psalms 10:4**.
 - a. The verse says, “*The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*”
- G. The world does not think of God, and the world does not want to keep God in its mind as it says in **Romans 1:28**.

1. **Romans 1:28** says, *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.”*
- H. There is a difference between “wrong” and “sin.” “Wrong” does not have God in view, but “sin” has God in view. Sin sees God, and wrong does not see God.
- I. The atheist will say that he has done wrong, but the atheist will not say that he has sinned.
1. “Wrong” looks horizontally and says it was unethical or it harmed another human.
 2. “Sin” looks vertically and says what I did was against God and what I did was a personal offense to God.
 3. David did plenty of wrongs. David did wrong to Bathsheba, and David did wrong to her husband.
 4. After that, what was paramount in David’s heart was not that he had not been true to himself, but, he had not been true to God.
 5. That is why David used the word “sin” when David was repenting toward God.
 - a. **Psalm 51:4** says, *“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.”*
 - b. David said that what he did was a sin because it was personally against God.
 - c. David said that what he did was a sin because it was evil in the sight of God.
 6. In Psalm 51, David was not looking at Bathsheba and said, “I was wrong.” David looked at God and said, “I sinned against you and you only.”
 7. That is a very important clarification that David made because it shows that true sin is only against God.
 8. People do wrong against other people, but sin is against God. True repentance is repentance towards God which means that it is repentance over sin and how God has been offended and wronged.
 9. I used to go every month to visit prisoners at the Donovan Correction Center in Otay, and what I saw there was how a criminal can be sorry for his crime and not be sorry to God.
 - a. It is because crime is the transgression of man’s law.
 - b. Wrong is the transgression of conscience’s law.
 - c. Sin is the transgression of God’s law, and crime is the transgression against man’s law.
 10. When God’s law is broken, it is more than a crime.
 11. When God’s law is broken, it is more than wrong.
 12. When God’s law is broken, it is sin.
- J. When there is godly sorrow, then the goodness of God comes in which is **Romans 2:4**.
1. **Romans 2:4** says, *“The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”*
- K. When a person has the root of being sorry for his sin, then God in His goodness leads that person to the stem of repentance which is a change in attitude toward sin. It is a hatred that causes a person to turn away from sin.
1. Repentance does not mean that a person never sins again. It is simply a new hatred of sin. It is a deeper sorrow for sin.
 - a. Repentance is a change of attitude towards sin.
 - b. Repentance is a change from facing sin to facing away from sin
 2. What is the use of godly sorrow if it does not go on to lead to **“faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ?”**

- L. First comes repentance, and then comes faith in the Lord Jesus. If there is no repentance, there is no faith.
 - 1. That explains why the Lord Jesus preached in **Matthew 4:17**.
 - a. **Matthew 4:17** says, *“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
- M. When a person has repentance towards God, then God leads that person to “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- N. Repentance is not just being sorry for sin.
 - 1. Repentance is a change in purpose.
 - 2. Before we were saved, our purpose was to enjoy sin.
- O. After we were saved, our purpose changed to saying, “No” to sin.
 - 1. **Romans 6:12**—*“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”*
 - 2. **Romans 6:14**—*“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”*
- P. Seeing repentance as a change in purpose explains what God meant when God said that He repented.
 - 1. For example, there was the time when God said that He repented in the case of Nineveh when they put on sackcloth and ashes. The Ninevites were sorry for their sin, and when God saw that, God said in **John 3:10**, *“God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”*
- Q. How could God repent? God can repent when God changes His purpose which He did with Nineveh.
 - 1. Repentance just means a change in purpose.
 - 2. At first, God’s purpose was to destroy Nineveh for their sin, but after Nineveh cried out with sorrow for their sin, God changed his purpose. God repented for what He was going to do. He changed His purpose.
 - a. The **root** is godly sorrow, or as it is called in verse 4, mourning.
 - b. The **stem** is repentance; repentance is not sorrow for sin (that is the root). Repentance is a change in purpose that comes from godly sorrow.
 - c. Repentance is not crying or regret; repentance towards God is a determination to turn away from sin and turn to God.

IV. 2 Corinthians 5:14—*“The love of Christ constraineth us”*

- A. Repentance is turning to God for help, and for a person to do that, he must be convinced of the love of God.
 - 1. If God is not seen as love, a person will not turn to God.
 - 2. **2 Corinthians 5:14** says, *“For the love of Christ constraineth us.”*
- B. The greatest display of the love of God is seen at the cross.
 - 1. **John 3:16**—*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*
 - 2. **Romans 5:8**—*“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*
 - 3. **John 15:13**—*“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*
 - 4. **1 John 3:16**—*“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.”*
 - 5. **1 John 4:10**—*“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*
- C. All of those verses on love spoke of the cross. That is where the love of God is seen.

- D. The Law of God and the fear of hell may **startle a person to sorrow**. I have a friend that is frightened by dying and frightened by facing judgment and hell, but my friend is not turning to God. Why?
- E. Because my friend does not see the love of God, and therefore, does not have repentance toward God.
1. Only by seeing the love of God will the heart be melted to repentance toward God.
 2. If a person is frightened or startled at dying, that is like taking a large piece of ice and breaking it with a hammer.
- F. You can take a piece of ice and hammer it into pieces, but the pieces are still ice.
- G. It is only when heat comes that the pieces are no longer ice, and they melt to water.
- H. In the same way, a person can be afraid, and even sorry for the mess, he has made of his life. Only when he sees the warmth of the love of God, then the hard-hearted ice melts.
- I. You can see this with the prodigal son. He realizes that he is in the swine's trough and starving in **Luke 15:15-16**.
1. **Luke 15:15-16** says, *"¹⁵ And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.¹⁶ And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."*
 2. The prodigal son was sorry for how his life turned out. He had sorrow for turning away from his father. But, he did repent and turn to his father until he saw in **Luke 15:17-19**.
 - a. **Luke 15:17-19**—*"¹⁷ And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,¹⁹ And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."*
 - b. It was only after the prodigal son thought of the care and love of his father that he said to himself in verse 17, *"How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare?"*
 - c. Only when he thought of the love and care of his father to make sure that all of his father's hired servants had plenty of bread.
 - 1) That was the point. When he thought of the love of his father and changed his direction from away from his father to towards his father, that was repentance. That was his change of direction regarding sin and God.
 - 2) The prodigal son turned away from the sin that he was facing and turned toward his father.
 - 3) That is the same with us—we turn away from sin and towards God.
 3. We do not change our direction toward sin and our direction toward God, until we consider the love and care of God displayed at the cross.
 4. You can break up a piece of ice, but the pieces remain ice until the heat of the love of God is applied. That is what makes the broken pieces of ice disappear.
 - a. **Isaiah 55:7** says, *"Let the wicked **forsake his way**, and the unrighteous man **his thoughts**: and let him **return** unto the LORD, and he will have **mercy** upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."*
 - 1) Man must turn away from wicked ways and thoughts in order to turn to God. He will only do that when he sees that the love of God is merciful with him and abundantly pardon him.

5. The Thessalonian believers did the following in their city that was filled with idols:
 - a. **1 Thessalonians 1:9** says, *“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”*
 - b. Those Thessalonian believers knew that they could not have idols and God, so they chose God.
 6. Jacob knew that if he was going to get closer to God that he had to put his foot down and get rid of the idols in his house. He told his household in **Genesis 35:2-3**.
 - a. The verses say, *“² Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: ³ And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.”*
 - b. Jacob knew there was no going to Bethel to make an altar to God, and there was going to be no worship of God until the strange gods were removed from his house.
 - 1) There had to be a turning from idols before there could be a turning to God.
 - 2) There has got to be a turning from sin before there can be a turning to God.
- D. In verse 4, the mourning is the godly sorrow or root which gives rise to the stem which is repentance.
- E. The third stage is the fruit which is salvation.
- F. Salvation is a gift. Salvation is not gained by being sorry for sin. Salvation is not gained by repenting of sin; salvation is a gift from God.
 1. **Ephesians 2:8** says, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”*
 2. That verse means that we are saved by grace, and we are not saved from ourselves. We are saved as a gift from God—just like the hymn Rock of Ages puts it.

***Not the labor of my hands
 Could fulfill Thy law’s demands;
 Could my zeal no respite know,
 Could my tears forever flow,
 All for sin could not atone,
 Thou must save, and thou alone.***

- G. The mourning that is talked about in verse 4 is godly sorrow; that is the root and the stem is repentance towards God.
- H. The third stage is the production of fruit which is salvation, and God makes that happen when there is the root in verse 4 of mourning or godly sorrow. This results in the stem of repentance toward God, and God makes the fruit of salvation for that person