

# OpenTheo

## Blessed Are They That Mourn



### The Beatitudes - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg explores the meaning and significance of the phrase "Blessed are they that mourn," which appears in the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. He asserts that mourning is not simply temporary sadness or depression, but a deep emotional response to significant loss, rejection, or extended periods of suffering. Gregg argues that Christians should not ignore or dismiss mourning, as it is a normal and necessary part of the human experience. He believes that the modern church often focuses too much on having fun and overlooks the importance of facing sadness and sorrow. Throughout the talk, he emphasizes that biblical teachings offer hope and comfort for those who mourn.

## Transcript

Tonight, we are going to take the second of the Beatitudes that are found at the opening of what is usually called the Sermon on the Mount. It begins in Matthew 5, and in Matthew's Gospel goes through chapter 6 and 7 as well. It's three chapters long in Matthew.

A similar sermon, if not the same one, is found in Luke chapter 6, where it occupies only a half a chapter. And it also begins with some Beatitudes, though the Beatitudes there are worded in some cases a little differently, and there are fewer of them. In this case, in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 4, Jesus said, Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Now over in Luke's parallel, if it indeed is the parallel, in Luke chapter 6 and verse 21, Jesus said, Blessed are you, this is the middle of that verse because there are two Beatitudes in Luke 6, 21. The second half of the verse reads, Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. And then a little further down, he gives sort of the opposite side of that.

In verse 25, he says, Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Now notice mourning and weeping are equated in that latter statement. Woe unto you who laugh now, you shall mourn and weep.

Whereas in the Beatitude, Matthew has the words, Blessed are you, they who mourn. Luke has blessed are you who weep now. The meaning is slightly different and so is the blessing attached to it.

In Matthew, those who mourn will be comforted. In Luke, those who weep shall laugh. No doubt, laughter of the purest sort that could only be, could really only come after comfort has come as well.

It's not a cynical kind of laughter that he's talking about. It's not a gloating kind of laughter. You know, I'm weeping now, but he that laughs last, laughs best.

But actually it is a laughter of pure joy, I'm sure, that he's referring to, which comes from the comfort of which he speaks in Matthew. Now we are working largely from Matthew's gospel. I wanted to show you there's a slight difference in wording in the Beatitudes that correspond in Luke.

Now let's talk about this Beatitude. It is an interesting wording, is it not, that the word blessed in all of these, makarios in the Greek, is most often said to have the meaning of happy. Now that is not the only meaning of this Greek word.

It doesn't exhaust the full range of its meaning, but in a Greek English dictionary or lexicon you'll find generally speaking, the first English word that is used to render this Greek word is happy. And seen that way, this statement, happy are those who mourn, or in Luke, happier you who weep now, does not really seem to be true. Because people who mourn, generally speaking, are mourning because of an emotion of sadness rather than happiness.

Now, in Luke, it actually emphasizes you who weep now, as opposed to what will happen later. You, you are happy because although you are weeping now, you will laugh later on. In other words, you can take some comfort, you can take some joy even now in your weeping because that weeping is temporary.

Weeping lasts for a moment, but joy comes in the morning, it says in the psalm. And so Jesus is promising that those who weep now will someday rejoice. And in Matthew's gospel, which we're going to work mostly from, he speaks specifically of being comforted.

Now, mourning seems to me not the most fashionable of Christian traits in the modern church. Being sad is something that people avoid at all costs. In fact, if necessary, they'll even go to a psychiatrist and get an antidepressant drug if happiness is too elusive.

Because people want to be happy, and in our society, people seem to think that they have some innate right to be happy. Depression, which is a malady, we are told, that afflicts a great number of people. Probably, you hear different statistics, but I've heard statistics that are in excess of 50% of the population are occasionally afflicted with

depression.

This is considered to be a great crisis. Now, I must confess, I don't know what is meant by depression, and I really wonder sometimes if the psychiatrists do either. I think that if somebody is very unhappy, and their unhappiness is debilitating, and their unhappiness makes it so that they don't feel that they can function, they can't even get out of bed, they can't go to work, then that is considered to be a mental health problem.

It may well be merely a spiritual problem, though it is considered not sensitive to that. When I tell people that I suspect that their problems with anxiety and depression are very likely to have spiritual roots, and they don't need chemical solutions, usually what I'm accused of is being heartless, and insensitive, and unsympathetic. Actually, frankly, it is good news to learn that unhappiness may have a spiritual root rather than a chemical, or biological, or genetic root, which the psychiatrists are always trying to prove that it has one of those, and they've never managed to do so yet, although they affirm that it does in many cases.

The fact is, if you have a genetic or biological problem that caused you to be down and depressed all the time, then you are essentially hopeless. You just can't really cure it, you can manage it with drugs, and these drugs are uppers, really, antidepressants. These often have side effects, they can damage your health, they can also have paradoxical effects.

Some antidepressants make people more depressed. Sometimes people commit suicide on antidepressants. It does not sound like God's solution.

Certainly God has a better solution than that for sadness and for depression. If I say it is a spiritual problem, as I suspect it is in at least most cases, that is a hopeful statement, that is a hopeful diagnosis. A spiritual problem can be remedied.

You are not just stuck with some genetic predisposition toward depression, and yet many people do not want to hear that it is a spiritual thing we are dealing with here. Why don't they? Well, because they are responsible for that. If I am not functioning well in life, emotionally or otherwise, as long as I can convince myself that it is a problem that God built into me, it is hardwired into me, it is a genetic thing, it is a chemical thing, then obviously I cannot be held responsible.

But if it is spiritual, then the solution lies really in my lap. And if I do not obtain a solution, I cannot really blame anyone but myself. Now, I realize that some people who may have studied depression more than I have, although I have studied it more than most, I would say, probably most of you in the room, because I am very interested in these things that people call mental health issues.

And I have studied them a great deal. I have studied the secular experts on them, and I

am just not at all impressed with the scientific nature of their research or of their findings. But many of those who are really into the study of depression, for example, will often tell us that, Steve, you just cannot say that is a spiritual issue, because some people just have it.

It is a family thing. It is passed down from generation to generation. They say, Steve, what you are talking about is just ordinary sadness, ordinary temporary depression, but we are talking about clinical depression here.

Now, when you add the word clinical to it, you just mean all you are saying is it is a medical problem. But that is begging the question. That is assuming what is being explored.

Is it a medical problem? Well, I cannot say for sure. I will say this, that there certainly are states of biochemistry, for instance, hormonal states. Women know of this from, you know, on a monthly basis.

Men know of it often on a rotating basis, too, maybe not every month. But the point is chemical changes can certainly change moods. The question is, is this a mental health problem? Also, we often can react wrongly to the kinds of triggers that might encourage depression, you know, a significant loss, rejection from somebody that matters to us, extended joblessness, extended health problems.

These things can be triggers that could influence us in the direction of depression. However, depression is not necessarily the only response that we can have. And I would say that those who do not know Christ, especially in our generation, are less aware of what to do about these kinds of things than maybe even unbelievers were a generation ago during the Great Depression.

There is a great trigger for depression there. And many of the people went through it, didn't get half as depressed as over half our population are said to be because they're prospering. Strange generation we have.

A strange, anemic, weak, flabby, whining generation in my judgment not to be cruel, but it is interesting how that all of a sudden a genetic or chemical disease of depression has emerged in the world, which never existed before as a clinical problem. People just had to learn to cope. People just had learned to get out of bed when they didn't feel like it.

These days, I was talking to someone the other day and they said it's not uncommon these days in the workplace for people to call in sick. They couldn't come in because their dog died and they just couldn't motivate themselves to come into work. They couldn't function.

They're having a bad day. Now, this kind of sorrow is not the kind that is blessed. Not all sorrow is blessed.

If you are mourning because you are feeling sorry for yourself or because you've suffered some loss that you would prefer not to have suffered, you know, join the human race. But to go into a spiral of self-pity and depression to the point where you can't pull yourself out without chemicals is to my mind unnecessary and also to my mind inexcusable. Now, I realize in a group this size, there's probably at least half a dozen people who are taking medications for depression or for some other thing.

I don't say anything to insult you. I say things to be hopeful. I say things to help you because I believe they're biblically true.

And you might say, Steve, why should we believe you? After all, I've got a PhD psychologist or psychiatrist who's saying I need these drugs. Yeah. And I could find half a dozen PhD psychiatrists say you don't need them to.

It's a great science when every expert can come up with a different opinion. Not very much like real science, where all the experts do the same experience, get the same results and have the same opinion. But anyway, I will not argue that point much further.

It simply is this. Our society has decided that depression and sadness is something that is intolerable. So much so that if I am suffering great sadness, I need to stay home and sleep it off.

I need to I need to I just can't function. No one should expect me to function normally when I'm feeling this low. I need it.

You know, I need maybe some volume or something, something even stronger, maybe maybe some St. John's word if I'm an organic type. Now, let me just suggest to you, sorrow is a part of life. Sorrow is something that human beings since the time of the fall have had to cope with, had to do their ordinary work, had to raise their families, had to had to be congenial, had to be mature and adult.

Even when feeling very, very badly, furthermore, the Bible indicates that God offers us resources that are not available outside of God to make sorrow not only tolerable, but constructive. Now, I don't want to get off into that in detail as I could, because I want to stick with our major subject, and that is what Jesus meant was a blessing to those who mourn. Certainly, it was indicated that being sorrowful is not the ultimate disaster.

Being sad can be extremely right-headed. It can be extremely helpful. A person who will not be sad when there's much to be sad about is out of touch with reality and is incapable of growing spiritually in the ways that God has in mind for us to do.

He does not wish for us to waste our sorrows, but he wants us to exploit our sorrows for spiritual progress. Now, there has been in the minds of some the impression that Christianity is a morose religion, that Christians are those people who never have any fun. Now, frankly, I'm not sure that, I don't think that opinion of Christians could have

arisen in the modern church, because modern church seems obsessed with nothing else but having fun.

But a generation or two ago, and for some time, probably the old Victorian trappings that still belong to most people's perception of the church, but weren't really there in the church, many people outside the church thought that Christianity teaches a morose, sad, never smile, never enjoy life, spoil sport, never have any fun kind of life, one which obviously wouldn't attract very many people. And in reaction to that, I believe that idea that misery is next to godliness, attitude that some have imagined is Christianity. There is an overreaction on the part of Christians to show the world that Christianity isn't miserable, that Christianity isn't sadness, that you can have fun as a Christian.

There's a very famous, at one time in the 70s, a television evangelist, and one of his favorite sayings, he had several favorite sayings, which were kind of trademarks of his mystery. One of his favorite sayings was, it's fun to be saved. It's fun to be saved, he said.

Yeah, he had a lot of fun. Actually, he ran off from his wife with another woman. I'm not sure he was saved.

He knew he knew how to have fun. I don't know if he knew how to be saved. But the fact of the matter is there are some who want to get that message across, and that is, folks out there in the world, it's fun to follow Jesus.

Now, you know, interestingly enough, the Bible doesn't even have the word fun in it. It doesn't say fun is wrong, and it doesn't say fun is right. It doesn't say that Christians have no fun, and it doesn't say that it's fun to be a Christian.

As a matter of fact, fun seems to be a non-issue in the Bible. It seems to be the ultimate issue in our modern culture, which is one reason why the modern church doesn't know very much about the blessedness of which Jesus spoke, the blessedness of mourning. It's an unfashionable Christian trait today.

There is in the modern church, it seems to me, a desire to attract the unbeliever through entertainment, humor, joviality, shallowness, superficiality. And basically, the idea, at least in many churches, certainly not all, but some of the biggest ones in the country, appears to be that when people come to church, they should realize it's just as fun to go to church as it is to go to a concert, or to go to a drama, or to go to whatever, whatever you do for fun. Church is fun.

And actually, some of the very largest churches in the world, or I should say in this country, have adopted that as their philosophy. They make no bones about it. That is their philosophy of church.

Win the certain joviality and superficiality that offends no one and is supposed to attract



when man sins, he rebels, spits in the face, and offends, and grieves that God. That's what sin is.

Now, many modern Christians don't have a very heavy sense of sin. We're going to look at quite a few scriptures tonight that I believe are related to what Jesus said. Blessed are they who mourn, which I hope may remedy this, this defective doctrine and sense of sin in the church.

Seems to me there are some institutionalized doctrines of sin that are that sort of keep us from ever really being very sorry about it, very mournful over it. There is, of course, the grace equals license doctrine. Sometimes spoken of as the greasy grace doctrine.

The idea that if you're saved by grace, then you have license to do whatever you want. Sin is no big deal. In the Old Testament, it is thought people go to hell for sin, but now we're saved by grace so we can get away with it.

Sin is no big deal because we're saved not by works, we're saved not by keeping the law, we're saved not by avoiding sin, we're saved by grace. Well, of course, this is a true statement. It's just a wrong conclusion to draw from it.

It is true that we are saved not by obedience to God. We're not saved by obeying or by keeping his laws. We're not saved by our works and we're not saved even by avoiding sin.

We're saved by grace, but saved to what? Saved to holiness, saved to walk in that grace, which teaches us that denying worldliness and ungodly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, said Paul. That's what grace teaches us. That's a different grace than the grace is licentiousness or license to sin doctrine.

And yet there are many churches who, if they don't say it outright, some of them actually do. I've heard people say it, but those that don't even say it often convey the idea that since we're saved by grace, let's don't worry too much about whether we're behaving well. Whether we're really pleasing God in our lives.

Recently I was some some subject came up on the radio program. It was all it had to do with it had to do with divorce remarriage. Some of you, I'm sure, listened to that and heard that.

And I was suggesting that there are some cases in which a divorced and remarried couple should split up and go back to their original spouses. Now this got everyone in a tizzy, but I don't believe this is true in every case. I don't believe that all second marriages are sin.

I'm in a third marriage, by the way. My second wife was killed. My first ran off with someone else and I'm with my present wife, third, final wife.



So I mean, obviously, I don't believe that remarriage is always sin, but I believe that it sometimes is. Jesus meant something when he said, if a man divorces his wife, except for the cause of fornication and marries another, he commits adultery. That means something.

It means at least that some divorce and remarriage is certainly sin. It's adultery. And if it's adultery, then it should be repented of, it seems to me.

And if there is a wrong spouse somewhere out there waiting faithfully for their spouse who ran off from them, then restitution would require that that repenting spouse would go back to the faithful spouse that they left behind and fulfill the vows they made before God in the first place. Now, that's not really popular teaching today, and I was amazed. Well, I guess I wasn't too amazed, but I did get more negative response to that than I thought I might.

I guess I forget what the mindset of the church is out there sometimes. But people's reaction was, don't you know, we're saved by grace? You know, I mean, the church has to have grace toward these situations. Well, I agree.

We've got to have plenty of grace, grace. None of us are saved. But whatever happened to do to doing what's right in the sight of God, aren't people who are saved by grace supposed to be zealous for good works? According to Paul, isn't there something in the job description of those who have been saved by grace that we're supposed to do what is pleasing in the sight of God to do what's right in the sight of God? But we may not hear it often enough, and because of it, the impression is since we are saved by grace, sin is really more or less inconsequential.

But once we get past that saved point, once we cross over that line into what what is called saved by grace, it seems very, very important before that because it's going to send us to hell. But once we're saved, that same entity that would have sent us to hell because God found it so offensive, suddenly he doesn't find it offensive anymore. The same thing, same behavior that that he he sent his son to die for to remedy it.

Suddenly it is no longer offensive to him. Now I've stepped over some kind of invisible line into a category called saved by grace. God doesn't change.

I'm supposed to change. When I'm saved by grace, that's supposed to change me. And the principle way in which that change is seen is that I am zealous for obedience, zealous for pleasing God, and I hate sin like God does.

But the church has taught doctrines that minimize the magnitude of sin, and I think that in many cases has eliminated much of the mourning of which Jesus is speaking. Another doctrine, which I frankly believe has eliminated mourning from the church is the doctrine of unconditional security of the believer. This idea that Christians are saved

unconditionally when the Bible everywhere associates salvation with those who believe and those who repent.

Some people say, well, that can't be a condition because then you're saving yourself. No, meeting a condition is not the same thing as saving yourself. Meeting a condition is simply meeting a condition.

So that God will save you. He will not save you if those conditions are met. If you do not believe you will not be saved.

The Bible is very explicit on that. If you do not repent, you will not be saved. These are conditions.

Now, everyone who's heard me on the radio knows that there's conflict of theological camps over that issue, but my position, which I believe is abundantly documented throughout the scripture, as opposed to the other position, which has to search for ambiguous versus a handful of them at the very most, which can better be understood differently than they like to apply them. But I mean, the whole drift of scripture is those who believe are saved. There are conditions, those who stop believing, those who depart from the faith are not saved.

Now, the idea that people get that they come forward at an altar call, say a sinner's prayer and forever after they're unconditionally secure has not really encouraged the holy living that one might wish it would. Now, by the way, true Calvinism, I believe, encourages holy living. I'm not talking about Calvinism.

Calvinism is not what I'm critiquing here, although Calvinists disagree with me on this, too. But true Calvinism teaches that, you know, you're elect because you persevere in holiness. And therefore, if a man is a Calvinist, he has motivation to to avoid sin so that he can prove to himself that he's of the elect.

Otherwise, he doesn't know if he's elect or not. I'm talking about that unconditional security idea that it doesn't matter if you live in sin or live in holiness, doesn't make any difference. You're saved by grace.

You're secure. You can't can't undo what God did there. So that salvation is not really a relationship with God that has to be maintained like any relationship with anyone.

It is a transactional thing that happens one time and you're in and that's, you know, you got the goods. It's in your pocket, you put it in the safe, put it in a safe deposit box and you're secure. You don't have to have any more dealings with God at all in that theology.

You better believe that kind of theology hurts the church and certainly deprives the church of any grounds for mourning, as Jesus spoke of the blessedness of mourning. The whole idea also of a nonjudgmental God, the grandfatherly sort of God, the Bible calls

him a father, doesn't call him a grandfather. People think I think a lot of people, they think of God as the the man upstairs, you know.

This this indulgent, grandfatherly type of guy, what's the difference between a father and a grandfather? Well, grandfathers have finished raising their children, they just like to enjoy them. Even the little naughty things that children do, sometimes grandfather can chuckle because he knows it's not his problem. But God has never called a grandfather scripture, he's called a father and everywhere in scripture, a father is described as one who directs his children, disciplines their disobedience, is is is an authoritarian figure.

And God is always in scripture described as an authoritarian figure, loving, compassionate, merciful, but judgmental, too. He makes judgments about things. He judges sin.

And he judges thoughts, he judges every idle word that proceeds out of mouth, but this judgmental God has somehow been dismissed from the theology of the modern popular church. And he's been replaced with the nonjudgmental God, the indulgent, friendly God, who when we sin, he says not to just. You know, you should do better than that.

But that's all he cares about it. He says, you better go read your Bible a little more, better go to church, take communion stuff, but he doesn't ever really judge sin, at least in the believer. In fact, I have people who've talked back when I used to talk a little more about why to K as as a possible and I still think of it similarly, I just don't talk about much would be a judgment on America or on Western civilization.

I had Christians call me and say, do you really believe that God judges nations today? I thought, what a strange question that is. Can anyone read Isaiah or Jeremiah or Ezekiel and not see that God judged Israel and Judah and Moab and Ammon and Babylon and Assyria and Syria and Edom and the Philistines and just about everybody else? And they were nations and he judged them. I mean, the idea is foreign to modern Christians in many cases that God is a God of judgment, but he is a God of judgment.

He's a God of holiness who enforces holiness, but the Bible teaches that. And so I believe that some of these doctrines and maybe some others I'm not thinking of are among those that have led to a diminished and defective sense of sin and a defective doctrine of sin in the modern church, as if sin is something that we can play around with because God really isn't that offended. God isn't really that angry at the wicked every day, like the Bible says he is, that the wrath of the lamb, which the book of Revelation depicts, is really a misnomer.

Lambs don't get angry. Wrath of lamb, come on. The lamb, he's a harmless little lamb.

Yeah, well, then why are all the kings and every free man and every slave and everyone,

all the businessmen hiding under the rocks and caves and saying, hide us from the wrath of the lamb? There is a judgmental God. But the modern church has lost sight of him in many cases, and therefore there is not the sense of sin that leads to the godly sorrow of which Jesus is referring. Let's talk about happy sorrow, that's what Jesus said, happy are those who sorrow, happy are those who mourn versus unhappy sorrow.

Not all sorrow is blessed. Not all sorrow has an attached promise of comfort to it. The apostle Paul made that very clear in a statement that could we could not wish for a better suited statement to make the point in 2nd Corinthians, chapter seven and verse 10.

And without picking up the context of the man that had been cut off from the church and Paul asking the church to take him back in and so forth, we can just pick up this one thought. It is not it does no injustice or violence to the verse to take it out of context here. 2nd Corinthians, chapter seven and verse 10, Paul says, for godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not repentance to salvation, salvation doesn't come first and then repentance.

God doesn't regenerate first and then you repent, you repent, and that leads to salvation. Salvation is the result of repenting, not vice versa. OK, so godly sorrow.

Produces repentance to salvation. Not to be regretted, and that means that that sorrow is a sorrow that you don't have any regrets about having had. That's a sorrow worth having.

OK, at least repentance, but he says, but the sorrow of the world produces death. I suppose he means spiritual death, although actually, in some cases, actual physical death, sorrow, the world can lead to suicide. But I assume he's thinking in terms of spiritual death here.

The point here is it's in contrast to salvation. You see, godly sorrow leads repentance to salvation. The other leads to death, which since salvation is on the one side, I assume spiritual death is what's intended on the other.

Now, there's two kinds of sorrow, a godly sorrow that is not to be regretted. Not to be avoided. You see, our culture does not distinguish between godly sorrow and ungodly sorrow.

All sorrows to be avoided in our culture because we're a happy people or a people always trying to be happy, desperately trying to be happy. And far be it from the church to exude anything other than a happy face to the world. I got it.

Take down the cross, you took a big, happy face behind the pulpit. That's the image. There's no cross in modern Christianity.

Many times there's big, happy face on it. Now, that is not the Christianity of the Bible. Christianity in the scriptures requires repentance and repentance is produced by a godly sorrow.

And that is the sorrow I believe that Jesus is talking about. Now, there are other kinds of sorrow. Let's talk about worldly sorrow.

Paul said worldly sorrow leads to spiritual death. You can mistake worldly sorrow for godly sorrow. And I think worldly sorrow is always one form or another of self-pity, self-pity always doesn't look just the same as other self-pity, but it's all self.

You see, what's worldly is self-centered. I'm sorry because what I have been deprived of, I'm sorry because of what I have experienced. I'm sorry because of me, me, my, my, my rights have been ignored.

My my wife doesn't satisfy me. My children don't respect me. My job doesn't promote me.

My church doesn't recognize my gifts. My, my, I, I. And that's self-centered and sorrow, most sorrow I think that people have certainly all the sorrow that unbelievers seem to have. And unfortunately, too much of the sorrow found among Christians is really self-sorrow, self-pity.

Suffering the consequences of our own sins should be accepted as a justice not to be regretted because God chastens his children whom he loves. He chastens the passage in First Corinthians that I mentioned in the notes is where Paul says, if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we're being chastened by the Lord so that we'll not be condemned with the world.

God does us a favor and judges us for our sins now so we don't have to be judged later. He chastens us now. That's the consequences that come upon us in our lives are many times simply the results of our sinning.

We go into debt because we were not content, as the Bible said, to be content, right? The Bible says having food and clothing, let us therewith be content. We aren't obedient. We go into debt.

We're not content. We have to live beyond our means. Suddenly we have financial disasters and that's very depressing.

But we brought it on ourselves. You know, we spend all of our time nurturing carnal tastes by watching. Videos and TV that cultivate carnal desires, worldly desires, lusts, desires for alcohol and drugs.

I mean, these things are affirmed violence. These things are affirmed in our

entertainment. And then and then we associate with people.

Who affirm these things in many cases, and then we wonder why it is that these things rise up in us and we find ourselves in trouble. It's because it's results of our own choices in many cases. A lot of that is just the natural upshot of things that we have done.

And it may be seen in other cases or even in those as God's chastening, allowing the consequences of our actions to fall upon us. In fact, whenever that happens, I do see it as God's chastening of me and my family. Me, at least because there are so many times when I've done wrong and I didn't suffer for it when I should have.

I have to say in those cases, God apparently did not choose to lower the boom. But it says in Ecclesiastes chapter eight, verse 13, it says, because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily. Therefore, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil because God doesn't always instantly judge.

He doesn't instantly chase them, then we get encouraged in a sinful way, but when things finally come down, we suddenly feel bummed out. You know, if there's a policeman sitting at a certain intersection every day and you go speeding by 10 miles or 20 miles above the speed limit and he never pulls you over and you just wave at him, you found out the first time because you went that fast. Not only when you saw him, you're terrified to look in the mirror, but he didn't come after you.

Next day, you forgot again, went by just as fast there was again and you shut her for a minute and then you realize you didn't come after you eventually say he doesn't come after me. So you just shoot on by there every day, 20 miles, 30 miles above the speed limit, wave at him as you go by. Then after about the 20th time, he turns on his red lights, comes out, pulls you over and gives you a big ticket.

That doesn't seem fair. You know, you never did this before. I've always done it this way and you never punished me before.

Well, it's that way with God sometimes. We live in disobedience and disobedience and disobedience. This means then God doesn't execute judgment against the evil work speedily.

And we think we're getting away with it. In fact, we think we're going to endlessly get away with it. And when it finally comes down on us, it's in a very depressing form when our circumstances come crashing in.

And if we would just look and say, you know, this could not have happened if I hadn't made that wrong choice and that wrong choice and that wrong choice. And I'm here because of my own sins and there's nothing for me to be sorry about here. I should be glad that God, whom he loves, he chases.

I should be glad that God doesn't let me get away with this forever. That's not I mean, any sorrow that I feel about things that have been brought on myself is certainly a worldly sorrow. And to get bitter against such things happening shows that you are not broken in the sense that we need to be, and we shall see what that means.

I think to a large extent, the worldly sorrow that many of us feel is the sorrow of a spoiled brat, not accustomed to hearing the word no. There are things that happen to people on a daily basis in certain in the third world, and they don't complain because that never occurs to them to complain. That's all they've ever known.

You know, they've never had running water in their houses. They've never had lights on. They've never you know, they never had the power go out because they never had the power go on.

They've never had clean water to drink. They've never had an easy life. And yet, if if we were forced to be in their circumstances for a single day, we'd find much to complain about, not because any rights of ours have been violated, but because we're spoiled, we're soft.

We've had everything handed to us on a silver platter. And then let something be denied us. Let something be just beyond our reach and we can't get it.

And we go into deep depression, we go into self-pity. Instead of doing what what should people do in that case of self-pity ever heard of being thankful? Ever heard of being grateful? A person said, I complained that I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet. If I don't have shoes and it's cold out, certainly I've got grounds for being upset.

Unless I meet a man who has no shoes nor feet. Then I got nothing to be upset about. We are spoiled and a spoiled child cannot be placated.

A spoiled child has come to feel that he not only gets everything he wants, but deserves everything he wants. And let something be withheld from him and he feels an injustice has been done, he spirals into deep bitterness of sorrow. That is sorrow of the world.

I think of Amnon in 2 Samuel 13. He was the king's son, a pampered young brat, to be sure. And he had a half sister that he was infatuated with and he couldn't have her.

It's about the only thing in the kingdom he couldn't have that he wanted. And it says he became sick with depression because he couldn't have this girl because she was too closely related. He couldn't marry his half sister.

There's a guy who had been pampered so much, he didn't know that sometimes no is the right answer. And David was a, this Amnon was a son of David, David was a very indulgent father, too much so. He had another son named Adonijah that he never said no to him, never even questioned him, never even said, why have you done this to him?

That son turned out bad, too.

Anyway, there is that sorrow that comes from not accepting the righteous discipline of the Lord. There's that sorrow that comes from just being plain spoiled. And and become wimpy, whiny and incapable of enduring any kind of deprivation at all, any kind of denials.

Now, there is, of course, a sorrow that Christians feel that is probably not what Jesus has in mind here, which is associated with their hardships brought on by persecution. When Jesus said in the Luke passage, Bless are you who weep now, you shall laugh. It may be construed that he was speaking to those who are socially downcast, those who those who are in an underdog position, perhaps those who are persecuted or exploited by their richer counterparts in society.

But I but I don't believe that's what Jesus is talking about here, nor probably in Luke, because there's a separate beatitude for those who are persecuted. And it's a different kind of comfort that's given to them, a different kind of promise. But I don't think that's what's in mind here.

I believe that the sorrow that he speaks of here is his blesser. They that mourn is mourning over our own sin and the sins of the world. It is a sorrow that enters into God's own grief over sin.

God experiences grief once in a while, people get sensitive enough to sense how grieved God is and how guilty they are of bringing that grief upon him and it breaks their heart. This broken spirit, this broken heart, I believe, is the kind of mourning that is blessed and which is promised a comfort not only over my own sin, but over the sins of the world in general. I've given you in the.

In the notes here, several things that God has grieved over that we should be grieved over, too, and the sorrow that is. Blessed is the sorrow that God himself has, because he's the blessed God, any sorrow he has is certainly not sorrow of the world, it's not self-pity, it's not whining. It's not mere depression, it is sorrow over that which is legitimately sad.

Now, God does have grief, you know, some people don't realize that God is an emotional God. With many people, God is merely a theological construct. He's just so many doctrines strung together that they've learned in theology and he's not really a person in their thinking.

I mean, they would acknowledge that he's a person because that's part of their theology. The theology of learning is God is in three persons, in fact, not just a person, he's three persons. But it's one thing to be able to acknowledge as a theological proposition that there is a personal God.



It's another thing to apprehend God personally as a person, which is exactly the norm of Christian experience in the Bible, to become acquainted with God. And to know that God is a person who is not like us in many respects, but is very much like us in some. We were made in his image after all.

And part of that image is that we are emotional beings and rational beings. We're not just rational, we're emotional, too. Animals, I suspect, are neither rational nor emotional at the level that could in any sense approach being called the image of God.

I do believe animals have some, you know, they think a little. I don't know how much I know they feel things have they seem to have emotions, but I think man is on a plane in terms of rationality and emotion so far above the animals that he's he's in a category by himself as one made in the image of God in this way. And God is a rational and emotional God throughout the scripture of God's emotions.

He will rejoice over thee with joy, the Bible says of God. It also talks about God's anger, that's an emotion, talks about his love. Love is not only an emotion, but it certainly is an emotion as well.

And the Bible speaks also of his grief. Very early on, it speaks of his grief. In Genesis six, six, just before the flood, it says God saw that man was corrupted in the earth and it said it grieved him at his heart.

It says he repented that he made man and it grieved him at his heart. It grieved God's heart to see sin like that. Jesus also knew grief.

He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The Bible says he was God in human form. The scripture also talks about entering into a fellowship with Christ through his sufferings.

Christ suffers and the griefs that he suffers. We can fellowship with him in them. The sorrow that is a blessedness is a sorrow that that draws us into an experience of God himself, where we fellowship with him in his own grief over sin.

Now, grief is the inevitable accompaniment of spiritual sensitivity. If you don't have grief, sometimes you are not spiritually sensitive as you need to be. You are spiritually numb.

If you can sin and sin and sin and feel no grief, you are spiritually numb. If you can be entertained by movies that depict sin again and again and not be grieved, then you're spiritually numb. And spiritual numbness is a very common thing.

All you have to do is you can you can develop spiritual calluses just like you can develop physical calluses. How is a physical callus? The reason I rub my fingers because when you you play the guitar, when you start playing the guitar, it hurts the ends of your fingers. But if you keep it up, the skin gets very thick and hard and eventually you can't

feel a thing.

Now, when it comes to playing guitar and having calluses on your fingers, not feeling a thing is the desirable result. But the same thing can happen spiritually. The Bible says he that being oft reprov'd, hardeneth his neck.

That means he does not bow. He does not surrender. He does not repent.

Shall suddenly be destroyed in that without remedy. Now, when God reproves and reproves and reproves, he stands at the door, he knocks, he knocks and he knocks and the door doesn't open. The door doesn't just stay the same.

It builds calluses, spiritual calluses. We become numb. And spiritual numbness is one of the scariest things that can happen to a person.

You read Romans chapter one about those who started out just not really delighting in the truth, but suppressing the truth in their unrighteousness. And so God begins to turn them over to their own lust. Then they they go in those lustful, he turns them over to perversion and they continue in perversion so much that he turns them over to a reprobate mind.

A reprobate mind is a mind that can no longer feel any sensitivity about good and evil. It is totally calloused conscience. It's what psychologists, who I seldom quote authoritatively.

Call a sociopath, a sociopath is a person has no conscience that is a spiritual condition. We don't need to give it a psychological name. It is called a reprobate mind in Scripture.

You don't want to get there. You don't want to go there. You need your heart softened.

If you begin to feel less conviction about sin as time goes by, less inclination to repent, less eagerness to say you're sorry, less sadness and sorrow over your sin, then you are developing calluses. Those calluses can get impenetrable. You can become reprobate.

And I certainly recommend that you avoid that at all costs. A soft heart is a tremendous asset. If you have spiritual sensitivity, then grief is going to be an inevitable accompaniment.

Why? Over a number of things, sin in your own life, your own sin, James said in James chapter four. I can't read all the scriptures that are in your notes in the time that we have here, but I can read a few of them in James chapter four, verses eight and nine, he says, draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded lament and mourn and weep.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Is that a Christian attitude? Gloom? Apparently so. If you're a sinner, you sinners, cleanse your hands, you

sinners.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, lament, mourn, weep. I'll tell you what, if if I had a sin in my life that was habitual, that I could not overcome and I couldn't weep either, I'd start crying out, I'd stop crying out to God, help me stop sinning. I'd start crying.

He helped me to weep. It helped me to at least feel conviction about it again. You can't stop for the right reasons unless you're convicted.

And if you're beyond conviction, then cry out to God for the mercy of grief. For a spirit of supplication and repentance to be poured out upon you, that you can be sorry, that you can feel the reality of the weightiness of your own crimes against God. James certainly urges that.

Paul felt that well enough in Romans 7, 24, he says, wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? What is he talking about? He's talking about, I know what's right to do, but I keep doing the wrong thing. I'm wretched.

But, in the next chapter, when he talks about, in this body, we're groaning. We're groaning because our sin in our members has not been fully conquered. There should be mourning over our own sin.

There's a story in Luke 7, 36 and following about a woman who came in to a feast where Jesus was eating and started weeping and washing his feet with her hair, or washing his feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. She was a sinful woman, notoriously sinful in the town. The Pharisee, who was the host, was critical of Jesus for allowing such a sinful woman to touch him.

But Jesus said, you know, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, and therefore she loves much. You don't love much. You have no sensitivity about your sins.

She's weeping. She knows her sinful state. Blessed are those who mourn.

There is a comforting word for them, but not for the one who is not sensitive about his own sins, or about the sins of others, the sins of the society. God actually expects us to share in his own grief over the sins of society in general, not just our own. Once we have, you know, straightened out our own accounts with God, and drawn near to him, we draw near enough to find out that he's sad about a lot of things going on in the world.

And so will you be, if you're spiritually sensitive. There's a vision that Ezekiel had in Ezekiel chapter 9. He saw six slaughter angels with weapons in their hands, and another one with an ink horn. And the one with the ink horn was told to go throughout Jerusalem and put a mark on the forehead with ink of everyone who mourned and sighed and cried over the sins and the abominations done in Jerusalem.

And after that, the six angels with slaughter weapons in their hands were sent through to kill everyone who didn't have the mark on their head. Obviously, God sided with those who mourned in that case. And what were they mourning over? Not just their own sins, the sins of the nation.

In that chapter, Ezekiel 9, the whole chapter is taken up with that vision. In verse 4, it says, The Lord said to him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it. That's those who mourn with God.

God sighs and cries over it. Lot, as compromised as we usually regard him to have been. According to 2 Peter 2, at least had the spiritual sensitivity to be grieved over the sins of his fellow citizens of Sodom.

In 2 Peter 2, in verse 8, it says, That righteous man vexed his righteous soul from day to day, seeing and hearing the unlawful deeds of those people. His soul was vexed. Have you ceased to be vexed? Can you watch television and see sexual immorality, rebellion against God, hear blasphemies against God, see people living a life totally devoid of any concern for God, and you're not vexed anymore? You've gotten numb.

You're beyond mourning. You've got to get back there again. You've got to become shocked again.

You've got to become vexed again, or else you do not have the heart of God anywhere near to yours. And you need it there. In Mark chapter 3, in verse 5, it says, In one of the synagogues, speaking of Jesus looking on the Pharisees, He said He looked upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts.

Jesus had grief over the sins of the Pharisees there. We should have grief over the sins of our nation, the sins of the world. God is grieved every day.

If we aren't, then we're not on the same page with Him at all. We should also be grieved, by the way, over the afflictions that come on people because of sin. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 9, 1, Oh, that my eyes were a fountain, that I might weep day and night for the things that have come upon my people, because of their sins, of course.

Jesus wept also at the tomb of Lazarus. What is death? It is the wages of sin. Jesus saw the misery that came to Lazarus' sisters and his loved ones.

He saw them weeping and mourning, it says, and Jesus Himself wept when He saw that. He saw the misery that sin had brought upon the world, and it caused Him to break His heart too. He also wept over Jerusalem in Luke 19, 41.

He looked at the city and he wept over Jerusalem, not because they were rejecting Him. It wasn't self-pity He had. He wept over them because He said, Your enemies are going

to come and they're going to cast a bank around you and drop your city down.

Not one stone is going to be standing on another, and they're going to wipe out you and your children that are within you. He said, If only you had known, this your day you could have avoided all that. But once we have been broken, then we have a sense of sobriety.

It doesn't mean we never laugh. I don't much like humorless Christians. I don't like people who don't see the humor in a situation very much.

There is humor in the world. God made a world full of things that are amusing. Newborn baby goats prancing around the field.

I mean, there's all kinds of things that are funny. The faces of certain animals are hilarious. I think God enjoys them.

I think God intends us to laugh at certain things. But the predominant attitude of the believer is not one of laughter now. Jesus said, Bless you who weep now, you'll laugh later.

It is of mourning because we live in a fallen world in rebellion against God, and we have taken the side of God in the matter. And He is mourning, and we mourn with Him. There should be a sobriety and a gravity in us.

Jesus, Isaiah 53, 2 and 3 said, He was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. We never read of Jesus ever laughing in the Scripture, though He must have done so some in His lifetime. It never bothers to record it, but it records several times that He weep.

Christians also are commanded to be sober. In 1 Peter, three times Peter commands us to be sober. In 1 Peter 1, 13, 1 Peter 4, 7, and 1 Peter 5, 8, he says we should be sober.

Paul tells old men and young men, old women and young women to be sober and grave. In Titus 2, verses 2 through 7, Jesus said, Those who mourn in this sense shall be comforted. And there is a comfort from God worth having.

So much so that having mourned and been comforted is more valuable than never having mourned and never needed the comfort. The comfort of God comes from forgiveness of sins, certainly. The man who is lowered through the roof, paralyzed, lowered by his four friends, the first words out of Jesus' mouth to him were, Son, be of good cheer.

Your sins are forgiven you. I've got good news for you. Cheer up.

Be comforted. Your sins are forgiven. The guy's still laying there paralyzed from the neck down.

Cheer up. There's great cheer and forgiveness. Read Psalm 32 where David talks about

how happy is the man whose sins are forgiven against whom God does not impute sin.

There's that comfort of forgiveness. There's also the comfort of communion with God. The Bible says in Psalms 34 and verse 18 that God is near unto the brokenhearted and saves such as have a contrite spirit.

And of course, Paul talked about fellowshiping with Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings. There's also the comfort of hope, because although we're weeping now, there is that hope that comes from the promise of God that we will be delivered. There is a new world coming.

There is a new time when Jesus will come and we will, this corruptible put on incorruption, we will not know sin in our members, nor will the world have any left in it either. The new Jerusalem, there'll be no sin, no weeping. And that is the comfort of hope.

Those who mourn over sin will be comforted and laugh later. But we can immediately know, if we are mourning over our sin, we can know the comfort of forgiveness. We can know the comfort of communion with God.