

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Part 4 – They shall be comforted

I. The Kingdom Economy

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents the kingdom economy – what has purchasing power in the eyes of heaven? It's not our strength, our riches or our wisdom. It's our hunger, our longing, the reach of our hearts.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted...6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled...8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

2. Just how central is longing for God to the Christian life? Jesus calls it the wineskin into which all that He desires to pour out must go.

Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?” 15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. 17 Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

II. What are we mourning?

1. Biblically, we are told to mourn over two things. In both the Old Testament and the New, God made clear that the appropriate response to sin, not only our own but its presence around us, is mourning.

1 Corinthians 5:1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Psalms 119:136 Rivers of water run down from my eyes, Because men do not keep Your law.

Ezekiel 9:4 and 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.”

2. When Jesus came, He then refined that into what our mourning is ultimately about – separation from God. We mourn because we long for His presence.

Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?” 15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

3. One of Jesus' central purposes in His first coming was to awaken longing. It takes God to make us ready for the coming of His kingdom. It also takes God to make us long for the coming of His kingdom. God could not begin to prepare humanity to dwell with Him until we had tasted and seen and *wanted* to be made ready.

Revelation 19:6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

4. The mourning that Jesus calls us to is what we feel as 'Your kingdom come' begins to really take root as the cry of our hearts and not just our lips. Mourning enters when in our hearts the breaking in of God to our world becomes an essential necessity rather than an optional luxury. **Matthew 6:10** Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread.

III. What does mourning look like?

1. The mourning Jesus is referring to is not an activity, but a consistent posture of the heart. The Greek tense could literally be rendered “blessed are the mourning ones.” It is that restlessness of heart that mirrors God's own heart.

Isaiah 62:1 For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns... 6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, 7 And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

2. Mourning in the kingdom is not a hopeless depression, but an ache of unfulfilled promise – a work not yet completed.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

3. Our mourning is set in the context of God's goodness of yesterday, and His promises for today and tomorrow. As we remember God's goodness it pushes us into that place of faith to long for fullness.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

4. Our longing for fullness requires us to be faithful in the little things, and to rejoice in the day of small beginnings.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Zechariah 4:10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.”

IV. How do we stir mourning?

1. Revelation is the birthplace of mourning. The more our eyes are opened to who God is, to the hope to which He has called us, the glory of where He's taking us, and His power to get us there, the more our hearts ache to get from here to there.

Ephesians 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe

2. To rightly position our hearts we need our eyes opened to see the riches of heaven, and to know our own lack. In love, Jesus longs to open our eyes to our need – so that we will ask for and receive His provision.

Revelation 3:15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

3. It is the gap between our current state and the holiness of God that causes us to cry out for God to move.

Isaiah 6:5 “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

V. How do we sustain mourning?

1. Sustaining longing requires faith – we have to truly believe that those who mourn shall be comforted.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

2. We have to have that confident trust that our ache does not go unnoticed.

Psalms 126:5 Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. 6 He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him.

Psalms 56:8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?

3. Sustaining a mourning heart requires a refusal to be comforted by anything but God.

Psalms 77:1 I cried out to God with my voice—To God with my voice; And He gave ear to me. 2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; My soul refused to be comforted.

4. The promise of a comfort beyond what we can ask or imagine is what empowers us to open our hearts to feel hunger, mourning and discomfort – knowing God waits to meet us on the other side of that cry.

Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

VI. Becoming a target

1. We have no way to see kingdom come other than to ask. We are beggars (lit. the helpless poor) in the spirit, but we *can* embrace a lifestyle of persistent and effective asking.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

2. The comparison is a 'how much more' (like the persistent widow in **Luke 18**) as we don't ask as beggars, but as sons. Still, Jesus makes us ask, and sometimes ask again and again.

Matthew 9:27 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" 28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." 30 And their eyes were opened.

3. As we cultivate a heart of mourning, 'Your kingdom come' becomes the cry of our lives (**Mt 5-7**) as well as our lips (**Mt 6:9-13**).

James 2:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

4. To those who mourn His absence Jesus gives two promises of hope: He will send the Comforter (Christ within our hope of glory), and He will return to us one day (our blessed hope).

John 16:5 "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'" 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

John 16:20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

5. The world is deliberately in every place and at every turn saying they want God out. It's time for an equally deliberate cry to rise from the Bride of Christ at every moment in every place – "Lord, come!"

Psalms 2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"