

The King's People: Mourners

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[0 : 00] Father, in the name of Jesus, come. You have set everything up. Everything. I shouldn't be surprised.

But your work always amazes me. We live under the hand of your smiling providence. Nothing happens by chance. Luck and chance don't even exist.

Christ, you order all things according to your will. And one day you're going to bring all things into subjection of your Son, our Lord Jesus.

Hasten the day. Until that time, reign over us, your people. Reign in us. May we live as people of the kingdom.

May we live in hope. And faith. And love. Speak, please, through your word and use your unworthy servant.

[1 : 07] You know what's been prepared. But have your way. Thank you. That your word is life to us. And we can depend upon what you say.

May that word be preached now in the power of your spirit, for the glory of your Son, and the revealing of your kingdom and the good of your people. In Jesus' name.

Amen. I'm going to start reading in verse 1. Our text is verse 4. Our text.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. That is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God. Please be seated.

Once again, praise team. Thank you so much.

[2 : 17] Oh. Thank you so much. For leading us in worship. My wife did it to me again.

She got me watching a documentary. I'd rather watch an action movie. Documentary was on gospel music.

It was narrated by African American literary critic and historian Henry Louis Gates, Jr. He told the father, he told the story of what's called the father of gospel music, Thomas A. Dorsey.

Dorsey was a blues artist who got saved, it seems, and decided to write Christian music. So he brought some of the blues into the church.

You can imagine how that went off in the beginning. The blues, if you know the blues, kind of a mournful tone. We talk about that man singing the blues.

[3 : 30] It means he's down. Going through something. That's why so much of gospel music speaks of God's faithfulness in hard times.

In 1932, after the death of his wife and their child doing childbirth, Thomas A. Dorsey wrote one of the most loved gospel songs ever.

Precious Lord, take my hand. I wish I had talked to Karen about this. I would have asked, begged her to sing this.

Precious Lord, take my hand. Lead me on. Let me stand. I'm tired. I'm weak.

I'm alone. Through the storm. Through the storm. Through the night. Lead me on to the light. Take my hand.

[4 : 39] Precious Lord. Lead me home. That's how God comforted him. In the midst of his deep grief, God came.

And a song that has blessed millions was born. Jesus is teaching us that his people bring their deepest sorrows to God.

And you will find him most gracious. Jesus. Remember these first four beatitudes I said speak of our attitudes.

Attitudes of what we are to be because we be in Christ. These blessings are gifts of God's grace. God's not saying be this and you get something.

He's saying you are this. If you are in my kingdom, if the spirit of my son lives in you, this is who you are. Act like it. Believe him.

[5 : 50] Let him loose in you, as it were. These are the characters of Jesus, our Lord, being molded into us by the Holy Spirit. So we are to exhibit all of them.

You don't get to pick and choose here. This is not a buffet. All of these beatitudes marks, character marks of kingdom dwellers belong to you, children of God.

And yes, the kingdom, as I said last week, is an upside down kingdom. These values, these blessings will not seem like blessings to those who are not in the kingdom.

As a matter of fact, some of them are despised. So this morning we're looking at this second mark.

King's people mourn. St. Clare Ferguson talks about mourning. He says, mourning is grief and sorrow caused by profound loss.

[7 : 02] And they're blessed. A person marked by grief and sorrow and profound loss is called blessed.

That's not blessed. That doesn't make any sense. The world does not like mourners. Mourners are wet blankets.

We can take sadness for a while, but we expect you to get over it. No one wants to be around someone who's always down.

It makes us feel uncomfortable, like it might be catching. It makes us uncomfortable.

We believe. We believe blessed is the one who sees life as one big party. Blessed are the upbeat and the carefree.

[8 : 04] And we make our choices based on that criterion, don't we? Which one will make me the happy? Which way, which choice will make me the happiest?

Give me the least discomfort? Not which would honor God. The be happy attitudes is what we believe.

But is Jesus telling us to walk around miserable with downcast faces, nothing is good kind of attitude? Some people are naturally like that, aren't they?

Some of us are naturally kind of melancholy. Amen. And prone to feeling things are not right. The glass is always half empty, never half full.

But that's not what Jesus is talking about, having a melancholy spirit or walking around as if the world is coming to an end and we don't have a lifeboat.

[9 : 06] No, the second mark, and this won't be on the screen, so listen. The second mark of the king's people is sadness in loss. Sadness in loss.

You see, suffering and mourning, therefore, are part of the human experience. The Bible is real. I love the word of God is real.

God doesn't hide the realities of living in this world. You see it. Read the Bible. You'll see it fleshed out in all of his rawness.

I'm going to refer us to something that our new members will hear about in our leadership class.

We'll be reading. The Westminster Shorter Catechism. What a wonderful document. It teaches us that the fall caused by Adam and Eve brought humanity into a state of sin and misery.

[10 : 07] You hear me? What happened when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit? Humanity dove into an estate of sin and misery. Now watch this.

Question 19 of the Shorter Catechism. It asks this question. What is the misery of that estate whereunto man fell? What misery are we talking about?

Here's the answer. All humanity by their fall, first, lost communion with God. Second, are under his wrath and curse. Three, and so made liable to all miseries in this life.

To death itself and to the pains of hell forever. That phrase, we are now liable to all the miseries in this life, even death.

Miseries. Miseries. That comes from living in a fallen world. A fallen creation. Those who listen to our Lord preach this sermon.

[11 : 13] They were the working class poor and also the poorest of the poor. That's who mainly listened to Jesus. Oh, there were other people coming in, few wealthy people, a few, you know, well-to-do.

But most of the folk were the working class poor. And they knew about the miseries of this life, especially under the heels of the Roman occupation of their country, which could be very brutal.

Many of them probably died young. Now, we're not them. But we understand loss. We understand misery, don't we?

We understand death. Loss of health. With all our knowledge and technology, we have not found a cure for cancer. Loss of wealth and property through theft and natural disasters.

Loss of a job or investments. Loss of loved ones, including death sometimes, way too young. Loss of relationships.

[12 : 20] You see, all of those things and more leave us in a state of grief, of mourning. Those are the miseries. This is life in the fallen world.

And the people of the king do not get a pass. I know sometimes the culture will say, if God was real, how come we're suffering?

It's because we are in a fallen creation. Children, don't be put off by that question. We remind them. Tell them. They may not believe it, but tell them.

Hold on to it yourself. Some of the miseries that we experience, because that's the world we live in that came upon us. It was not God's original creation, but our rebellion brought it.

Amen. Amen. But God, in the midst of that, promises to comfort us. And by the way, this promise of comfort is very restrictive.

[13 : 27] He promises only to comfort those who have surrendered their lives to Jesus in poverty of spirit last week.

You see, this comfort is for those who recognize their spiritual bankruptcy, that I got nothing to offer you, Lord.

I got nothing to give you. And as you come to him, as you come to Jesus, recognizing you can't save yourself, you will find in those times of great pain and suffering, you will find you have a father.

Amen. Amen. Amen. You're not an orphan anymore. Amen. Amen. You have a father, a heavenly father, that will comfort you in your pain. It's with Psalms 103, 13 and 14.

I don't think that's on the screen. I don't think so, but if it is, amen. Amen. Here's what it says. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

[14 : 35] For he knows our frame. He remembers we are dust. I love that passage. God sees how weak I am. And he calls me his child.

He's my father. And he sees me living in a fallen world. I'm subject to the miseries of this life and even death. And he comes and he says, he'll have compassion on me.

Father, the Christian name for God. Many times the Lord's comfort comes through people.

He sins. What a blessing. That's why we need the church, y'all. Amen. Weep. Weep. With those who weep.

Don't try to dissect the weeping. Just weep. Don't try to tell weeping people you shouldn't be weeping. It's possible that they've read the situation wrong and are weeping.

[15 : 45] But that's not your job at that moment. Your job, when your brother or your sister is weeping, is to come alongside them and enter into their pain.

Stop trying to be deep. Stop trying to be deep. And correct everything. Some of us love to correct folk. Swallow that pride.

And weep. And weep. And weep. Just enter in. But here's the thing. We have to be willing to receive the Lord's comfort in the way he sends it.

Some of us, we want comfort from the Lord, but we want it in the way we want it. You got to come.

It's got to. God, you can come, but you got to do it the way I want us. And we miss sometimes the comfort the Lord is sending. Reminds me of the guy.

[16 : 51] Y'all know the story, so forgive me for being redundant. Reminds me of the guy, I think it was Hurricane Katrina. And he's out there, and his house is being flooded. And he's a Christian.

He's trusting in God. You know what I'm talking about. He's trusting in God. And so he, but the floods, the water is rising in his house, so he begins to climb up. You know, he gets up on the roof, and, you know, he's, and his neighbor rolls by in a boat and says, get in, Joe.

Come on, man, I got you. He says, no, man, don't, no, I'm good. I'm trusting God. God's going to save me. Don't worry about it. I'm trusting in God. So Joe goes, what? He just rolls away. Then here comes the rescue swimmers of the Coast Guard.

They show up in a, not one of those big boats, but a smaller boat, but big enough. And they show up and they say, this is the Coast Guard. We are here to save you. Please grab the hook when we send it down, the basket or the hook, whatever.

And he says, no, go away. I'm good. I'm good. God's going to rescue me. I am trusting in the Lord. Captain says, he crazy. Let's go find somebody who wants to be rescued.

[18 : 02] And then finally, the guy is, the waters are rising and he climbs up on the chimney and he's, the waters are coming for him. And then they send the National Guard in the helicopter and the National Guard show up.

This is a National Guard. We're sending down the hoist. Put your arms up and put them around the hoist. And the guy says, no, I don't need you. Come on, go. No, God has got me.

He's going to save me. You just go and save somebody else. Well, what happened was, you know, he's up on the chimney and the chimney was rickety and it broke.

It snapped. The bricks gave way. He falls in the water. He's not wearing any kind of vest to keep him afloat. And the man drowns. Dead as a doornail.

Well, he's a Christian. So he goes to heaven and he shows up in heaven and he's like, he's totally confused. He looks at Jesus and says, Lord, what happened?

[19 : 00] You were supposed to save me. I trusted in you. I was waiting for you to come get me. You failed me. And the Lord looks at him and says, son, what are you talking about?

I sent you two boats in the helicopter and you said no. Sometimes we don't want, we want God to come a certain way. And we miss out on the comfort he is actually sending us because we have it all figured out.

But there's more here and probably more important, actually. You see, because the first beatitude spoke of a spiritual poverty. Right?

Not just poverty, but a spiritual poverty. A knowledge of and hatred of our sin before the Lord.

It stands to reason then that the second beatitude is connected to the first. Another aspect of the second mark of the king's people, therefore, is sadness over sin.

[20 : 13] We grieve over sin. In my first point, we mourn the effects of sin. Now we mourn the commission of sin.

You see, our Lord promised that he would send the Holy Spirit. He said, who would convict the world of sin. That's John 16, 8, 9. When the Spirit reveals our sins and grants us true repentance, this is meant to lead us to a deep regret for them.

Because now we want to please the Lord. You see, that's how you know you've been born again. You want to please Jesus.

You want to hear his word because then that word guides your life and transforms you even. So you can walk in a way that is pleasing to him.

Every significant decision, you want to follow Jesus. His love for us and therefore our love for him compels us to want to honor him.

[21 : 26] We don't seek to honor him out of fear that he will stop loving us. No, because that's impossible. He does not take back his love.

And to sin against such magnificent love breaks our hearts. Don't you feel that when you fail?

Don't you feel regret? Don't you mourn a bit over your failures and moral weakness before the Lord? Have you cried out with Paul in Romans 7, 24?

Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Have you cried out like that yet? That's sorrow for our sin and it is good.

2 Corinthians 7, 10. Paul says, You see, You see, there's a type of grief that says, Oh, I got caught.

[22 : 42] There's a type of grief that says, I don't like the results. But it's not godly grief. Godly grief, he says, produces repentance.

Godly grief comes to Jesus and says, Oh, wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this, the body of this death? Oh, Lord. Thank you.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Oh, Lord. For now there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

You see, that's good grief. That's the kind of grief that our Lord Jesus says to you needs to be a part of your life deeply. The kind of grief that says, I blew it.

Doesn't make excuses and tries to give rationale and all that. No, you, I blew it. Lord. Family.

[23 : 43] Family. I blew it. Ah, I'm sorry. And you go to Jesus with that. He says, you'll be comforted.

You'll be comforted. That's why we need the body of Christ, brothers and sisters. Because sometimes we don't see our stuff. Sometimes you need your brother or sister to come around you and say, do an intervention.

And show up on your doorstep and say, we love you. But brother or sister, you're in sin. That's not right. What you're doing is going to hurt you. What you're doing dishonors the Lord.

You've got to be open to that, brothers and sisters. That's what the family does. And sometimes it gets so bad that the elders have to come see you. And the goal of the elders is not to beat up on you, but to beg you and plead with you.

Turn from this path. Turn. The Lord is calling you. Turn. Turn back. A cliff is ahead of you.

[24 : 53] We become like the people on the road in a blizzard at night. And there's been a horrible accident. And 30 cars piled up.

People bleeding and hurting. And we're like, we're on the highway trying to flag down. Stop. Stop. Don't go past us. Stop. Stop. Amen.

Sometimes you need that. It's okay. It's so that you will realize, oh God, I've sinned against you.

Forgive me. I have mercy. Tears. Tears. Tears. Tears. Tears. Tears. Tears. Tears. And listen, tears are not necessarily repentance. Tears. I don't get all worked up when people cry.

I'm sorry. That's hard. I'm not trying to be hard. I'm just trying to tell you experience. I'm sensitive, I hope.

[26 : 07] But tears don't always mean repentance. Godly sorrow breaks your heart because you sinned against divine love.

You don't want that. And you grieve. We grieve. It's okay. But here's the problem.

Where we are today, we live in a culture that more and more is telling us guilt and shame are bad. Don't feel guilt.

Don't feel shame. Do you? No one can judge you. No one can tell you. We live in a culture where we've turned guilt and shame into the great evil.

I'm going somewhere. Just hang with me. By guilt, you know, you recognize, okay, guilt, I did it. Shame says you did it because you're bad.

[27 : 14] Bad to the bone. There's something wrong with you, dude. And we're told that we shouldn't experience those things.

Don't let that. No. No guilt. No shame. You know, let me just read a passage. I mean, just a strike. I mean, I got a couple, but Jeremiah 615.

He's speaking about false prophets and priests who are leading the people astray. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?

No, they were not at all ashamed. They did not know how to blush. Therefore, they shall fall among those who fall.

At the time I punish them, they shall be overthrown, says the Lord. And that's the covenant name, Yahweh, burning bush name. Family, we become a nation that does not know how to blush.

[28 : 18] We excuse and permit any depravity. And we even call some of them good. So we harden our hearts against feelings of guilt and shame.

Now listen carefully. Living in guilt and shame is bad. Feeling guilt and shame means you have a conscience.

But you don't want to live in it. It will crush you. That's why the gospel is such good news. Bring your guilt and shame to Jesus.

Feeling them is God's conviction upon you. Because there's a reality about every human being.

Jeremiah 17, 9 and 10. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind.

[29 : 36] God says at the very core of a human being's life. At the very core of our being is a heart that is desperately wicked.

You know what that means? You are bad. Deal with it.

But Jesus comes. And the good news of the gospel is that Jesus came to save bad people. And he makes them children of God.

He raises them up. And he promises that one day they'll be totally free of sin in their life. He gives us a new heart. A heart that wants to follow him.

But we're still a fallen human being. And we still fall into sin. But we don't have to live under guilt and shame. We experience it. We feel it.

[30 : 34] And then we run to Jesus. You run to Jesus. You run to Jesus.

And you keep running to Jesus. Because he will comfort you. But it isn't just our personal sin that causes sadness, is it?

We don't just mourn over our personal sin. D.A. Carson writes, Sometimes the sin of this world, the lack of integrity, the injustice, the cruelty, the cheapness, the selfishness, all pile onto the consciousness of a sensitive person and cause them to weep.

Weep. Weep. Like the prophet Isaiah, when he saw the majestic holiness and greatness of God. And you know, in Isaiah chapter 6, he said, Woe is me, for I'm lost.

I'm a man of unclean lips. Now, he's poverty of spirit, mourning over his personal sin. But then he said, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

[31 : 47] For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Now he's mourning over the sin of his community. He didn't say, Lord, those bad people, they just messed up.

I'm glad I'm not one of them. No, he says, He is mourning. Woe. Woe is the opposite of blessed. Instead of denial, mourn over the sin of our community.

Mourn over the sin of racism that still exists in our country, in our city, in our communities. Mourn over it. Mourn over the lack of affordable housing for the poor in our city.

Mourn. Mourn over the abuse of women. Mourn. Instead of always... Listen, Christians, we have an issue. We are better at condemning sin than we are at mourning over sin.

Mourn over the sin. Kevin Smith talking to himself now. We don't look like Jesus. Jesus wept.

[32 : 54] In Matthew 23, 37 and 39, he cries. Now, you've got to read this right. Read this right. Jesus is speaking. Oh, Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. The city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.

And you were not willing. See, Your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, You will not see me again Until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

That's a lament, That's a lament. A lament. He is weeping over the very people who are going to kill him.

Jesus weeps over sinners. Why will you perish, God says in the Old Testament. Why will you perish?

[34 : 05] Choose life. Jesus weeps over their sin. Listen, but he still holds them accountable for it. You saw it in John chapter 8.

Remember the woman caught in adultery? Jesus writes on the ground and stands up and looks up and everybody's gone. And Jesus says to her, Woman, has no one condemned you?

Where are they? And Jesus, she says, They're not here. They left. They're gone. No, no. He says, Neither do I condemn you.

Go now. Sin no more. Sin no more. He's sensitive. He's compassionate.

But firm. Go now. You see, if our attitude towards our cultures, culture's sin leads us to sound just like conservatives or liberals, are we really functioning as the king's people?

[35 : 13] Hard on crime. Hard on it. Or, well, you know, he didn't have a father in the home. He didn't have a mother in it. We, the liberals and conservatives, hard on sin, we're speaking in general here, try to understand it.

Maybe even excuse it. Jesus is neither. He doesn't fit with the liberals or the conservatives, but some of you do. Jesus is the third way.

He weeps over their sin. Have you, have you, have you, do you have the ability to weep anymore? We don't have, we don't know how to weep, saints.

I've come to my, I, I, I tend to be, I tend to lean more to that conservative side. Firm on Christ. Yeah, that's good. That's law. But then I also have the other side where I'm saying, okay, but you gotta understand.

But weeping? Mourning? I don't, I don't think I mourn a lot. I want to. Because that's the way of the Lord.

[36 : 24] Where is our weeping? Psalm 119, 136. David said, my eyes shed streams of tears because people do not keep your law. Are you listening?

He's weeping over people who don't obey God. He's weeping over the lost. We find them inconvenient. We find the criminal or the person who's not walking with Jesus, who's living in a way that we think is unbiblical.

We find such people inconvenient. They get in the way. We're offended by them. We're not mourning.

How can we mourn? Remember, you are spiritually poor.

Go back. If you're not mourning, go back. Step back a minute. Remember where he found you. Remember that you have, you don't have a leg to stand on before the Lord.

[37 : 35] You have no goodness in and of yourself that will make him say, wow, I've got to save Becky. Wow, I've got to save David.

Wow, I've got to save. No, nothing. You got nothing. And when you allow that reality that without Christ, without his righteousness being given to you, the Bible says, imputed to your account.

Without that righteousness, you stand before God condemned to you nowhere. if and when you start weeping and mourning, maybe you can mourn over the sin around you because you know where it ends.

You know where sin ends. And it's not good. Let God break your heart.

You see, you only get comfort if you're mourning. You don't need comfort if you're not mourning. Mourning is a part of our life.

[38 : 50] It's not our whole life. God gives us joy. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. Here's the thing.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. We get, we have it all, saints. It's, the joy comes because I know I've wept before the Lord.

I've wept for my life. I've wept for my family. I've wept for my community. I've mourned over their sin. I've said, Lord, I'm no better than my ancestors. I've cried out for mercy for those around me who know not Jesus.

And, and, and God says, I got you. Hallelujah. I want to, I want to fill his arms around me. But he says, I will comfort you when you mourn.

In my arrogance and self-righteousness, I don't mourn. Are we crying out for the lost who are perishing? Spurgeon, oh my gosh, Spurgeon said it so wild.

[39 : 57] I got, I got, I got to end this now. He says, listen, if sinners will be damned, at least let them step to hell over our bodies. If they perish, let them perish with our arms around their knees, imploring them to stay.

If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions. And let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.

Are you willing to mourn, saints? He's the, 2 Corinthians says he's the God of all comfort. He's the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. He comforts us in our affliction and our sins afflict us.

He, he promises that you can bring your sins to him. You can bring your pain, your mourning to him and he will comfort you. He's the Father of all compassion. He will not turn you away.

Don't be ashamed to go to him. Flee! And if you haven't met Jesus today, if you've still been walking and doing life your way, let me, let me plead with you this morning.

[41 : 16] Flee for your life. Here, Jesus is real. He lived. He died. He's real. He has come to save messed up people like Kevin Smith and everyone else in this room.

Flee! Flee! Run to him! He will not turn you away. Father, Father, help us.

Teach us to mourn. Deliver us from our self-righteousness and our arrogance. We're such law-abiding people and we want to excuse too much.

We want people to like us. We think we're being sensitive and sometimes, Lord, sometimes we're actually encouraging people away from you.

Lord, help us to weep over them. Help us to weep in the presence of the lost. Help us to weep with one another. Help us to mourn in knowing that you will comfort us.

[42 : 31] Deliver us, Lord, from excuses of our own sins. You promised to comfort us if we'll mourn, so help us to do it. It's our birthright.

You said we're blessed. We're already blessed of you. Teach us to mourn over our sin. In Jesus' name.