

Handout 1: The Beatitudes Lesson 4

Summary

<p>BLESSING #2 <i>BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN</i></p>	<p>When we yield to spiritual childhood, admitting poverty of spirit and kneeling in God’s presence, the more clearly we see God. The more clearly we see God the more we become aware of our imperfections. We become humbled in His presence and we feel the burden of our sins. The result is that we mourn our sins. Repentance and genuine sorrow for our sin purifies us. To mourn sin is a natural outflow of surrender to God through “poverty of spirit”.</p>
<p>PROMISE #2 <i>FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED</i></p>	<p>Not only does the Holy Spirit comfort us in our sorrow and repentance, but through living the Sacraments of our faith He gives us the strength to resist sin and the strength to stand against sin in our community and in the world. We bear our suffering with a spirit of atonement, reconciliation and love. The result is comfort and strength.</p>
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Lesson #3: “BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN”

- *True, I was born guilty, a sinner even as my mother conceived me (Ps 51:5).*
- *I acknowledge my guilt and grieve over my sin (Ps 38:19).*
- *So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of two minds. Begin to lament, to mourn, to weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you (Jam 4:7-10).*

“FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED”

I will turn their mourning into joy, I will console and gladden them after their sorrows. Jeremiah 31:13b

This is my comfort in affliction, your promise that gives me life. Psalms 119:50

The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew makes three interesting points concerning this promise (page 448-49):

1. The passive tense used is a “divine passive.” It is God who will comfort those who mourn.
2. The comfort God will offer is not a comfort that can be known in a worldly sense, but it is instead a supernatural comfort in that it will be fulfilled only by the coming of the Son of God into His Kingdom.
3. It is not mourning for mourning’s sake that will receive this divine consolation, but it is instead God’s divine grace that will come to those who mourn the suffering that sin causes in their lives and in the collective force of mankind’s sin in world.

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Questions for group discussion:

Question: Does Jesus' promise to comfort us mean that all our troubles will disappear when we confess and mourn our sins?

Question: Are we to only be concerned with our own comfort or are we obliged to offer comfort to others who mourn and suffer? Read what St. Paul wrote about this subject in 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, and relate this passage to the blessings for those who sincerely mourn sins and the comfort they are promised.

Question: Can you think of any servants of Jesus Christ who lived as examples of the Christian call to give Christ's comfort in mercy and love to others who suffered under the burden of sin—whether from personal sin or from the suffering mankind's collective sins bring to humanity?

During his many years of service to the Church, St. Paul had first hand knowledge of suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ (i.e., 2 Cor 11:24-29). He also received a lesson in how Jesus viewed the suffering of His followers in the first encounter Paul had with Christ on the road to Damascus in the days when he was known as Saul of Taurus, deputy of the Sanhedrin and persecutor of Christians.

Question: Read Acts 9:1-9. What question did Jesus ask Saul/Paul about his persecution of Christians in verse 5? What is the significance of the way Jesus phrased His question to St. Paul, and what did Jesus' question imply?

We must mourn our sins and the sins of the world like the prophet Isaiah as he knelt before the throne of God and cried out in shame in the presence of the pure and holy God: *Then I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh Sabaoth'* (Isaiah 6:5).

Question: What was the comfort God offered Isaiah? See Isaiah 6:6-7.

Question: What will happen if we refuse to mourn our sins? What is the promise God makes to us if we sincerely mourn our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? What role does penance play in mourning our sins? Was there a purifying penance for Isaiah in connection with his forgiveness? See Isaiah 6:6-7; 1 John 1:8-2:2 and CCC 827, 1425, 1457, 1461-62, 1847.

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