**Blessed are those who Mourn**

Matthew 5:4

Important to hear the beatitudes in context ...

**Matthew 4:12-5:4**

12When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. 13Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— 14to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

15“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—16the people living in darkness  
have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

17From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

* Jesus was hit by mourning ... knew what was coming for John
* see him leaving for Galilee: 'ok, that's it. gloves off. darkness will not prevail. loss will not be the final shaping reality of their life.'

18As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 20At once they left their nets and followed him.

21Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

23Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. 25Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2and he began to teach them.

He said:3“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
    for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
4Blessed are those who mourn,  
    for they will be comforted.

1. 'blessed are those who mourn' - the result of the gospel transforming us

* more exactly: 'blessed are those who are mourning' (present participle)
* blessed are those who are in a state of mourning

This is jarring

* does not make sense
* can you imagine me saying these words in South Sudan? Nigeria? Ukraine? Moncton?

Nicholas Walterstorf - after the death of this 25 year old son: 'how strange: 'cheers to those who weep, hail to those who eyes are filled with tears, hats off to those who suffer ... how incredibly strange'

Verb translated 'mourn' is the strongest word for grief in the Greek language

* used of those who are grieving the loss of someone they love
* from deep within your soul, piercing sorrow

The qualities Jesus blesses are not natural human qualities

* rather they are the result of the gospel transforming us
* the result of hearing and responding to the good news that Jesus kingdom has invaded the earth

Jesus did not look for beatitude people to follow him

* he called people to follow him
* then the beatitudes began to emerge in their lives

Picture is not of Jesus spotting those who are mourning and then bringing the comfort

* he does do that (widow in Nain)
* those events are not what he is teaching here

Picture is Jesus calling you and me to follow him

* we rejoice
* but we also begin to mourn deeply

Why is 'piercing sorrow' a sign that people have been gripped by Jesus' gospel?

* before we wrestle with this question, I'd like to make some further observations

2. Jesus invites us to mourn as he does

* many parts of the world need to hear this - we are not free to grieve
  + seen as spiritual weakness
* Jesus would never think that
* left Jerusalem beginning to mourn for John
* He mourned over the city
* He mourned over his friend Lazarus

We will not know the comfort He brings unless we allow ourselves to grieve

* those who walk through the valley will be comforted
* grief does not kill - it is the hiding of grief that might kill
* comfort is not found in insulating your heart, it is found in opening your heart

Jesus is letting us know that living in His kingdom is going to involve some sorrow

* does not promise unbroken happiness
* rejoice, the kingdom of God has comes
* rejoice, the Redeemer is here
* rejoice, our God reigns
* rejoice, the Holy Spirit has come
  + yet Jesus says, sorrow will also come
  + heart piercing sorrow

3. we learn to listen to the Spirit in the midst of our sorrow and pain

* why is mourning a sign that we have been gripped by the gospel?

1. *as we get closer to Jesus, we get closer to his heart, and we discover that it is a broken heart*

* He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
* Psalmist is correct: 'in his presence is the fullness of joy'
* but there is also in his heart this brokeness over the world and over the church
  + how often do we find this phrase: 'and it grieved the holy one'

When Jesus saw multitudes bringing the sick ... 'he felt compassion for them'

* word means 'guts'
* feels it deep within
  + feels the brokenness of the world as it's Creator
* Luke tells us as Jesus entered the city he wept
* literally his chest heaved
* why? 'because you do not know the things that make for peace'

1. *as we see the in breaking kingdom of Jesus, we also see the disintegration of the world around us*

* see signs of the kingdom ... rejoice
* yet, the more we see what can be, the more we grieve over what is
* the poor do not have to be poor - systems of distribution are so unjust
* world does not have to spend 1.8M a minute on building weapons
* racial / tribal suspicion leading to hatred does not have to continue
* women & children do not have to continue being sexually exploited
  + those profiting from pornography have made 3X more than Google, Microsoft, and Apple combined

All of this is symptomatic of a deeper crisis

* the crisis of not knowing God
* 2B unaware of Jesus and his kingdom
* every person ought to know the good news

Who are the mourners God blesses?

* those who have seen the new day
* and long for that day to break out
* you ache because you are in sync with my heart

At Daniel's funeral, his grandpa (Jeff's dad read this passage which really impacted me)

**Ecclesiastes 7:1-4**

A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. 2It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart. 3Frustration is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart. 4The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.

* we want the heart of the wise
* that includes mourning - not just laughter

**Rev.21:3-5**

3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

We shall also be comforted before the end

* word for comfort means to exhort, encourage, impart
* word used for soldiers going to battle who encourage one another

From the verb 'paracaleo' (comfort) comes the noun paraclete (comforter)

* word for the Holy Spirit
* 'wait, until you are clothed with power from on high'
* nothing will separate you from my love

**Hebrews 11:35-40**

Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. 39These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

**Psalm 116:1-7**

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. 2Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. 3The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. 4Then I called on the name of the Lord: “Lord, save me!” 5The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. 6The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. 7Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.