

Influence Ministries

THE END OF ME

LESSON 2

TITLE: BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus continues to take what we thought we knew about happiness, and He turns it upside down.

The second Beatitude goes like this: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Blessed are those who mourn; isn’t that like another way saying, “Happy are the sad”? It doesn’t seem to make a lot of sense because, from our perspective, happiness comes from our dreams come true. We think we will be happy when life is good, and we get everything we want.

If the Beatitudes were written to describe how we feel about blessings from the cultural perspective, it would go something like this: “Blessed are you when everything goes your way.” Or maybe, “Blessed are you when all of your dreams come true.”

When we read “Blessed are those who mourn,” there’s a tendency to squint at it just right so we can dismiss it as poetic language.

But the poetry falls apart when you start to give some specifics. So instead of saying, “Blessed are those who mourn,” what if you said:

“Blessed is the young widow raising four small children.”

“Blessed is the person who loses a job.”

“Blessed is the recovering alcoholic who has nothing left.”

“Blessed is the woman whose husband leaves her for someone else.”

Then it doesn’t seem to make much sense.

Jesus promises there is a blessing for us in those moments when life just falls apart, moments of heartbreak, moments of loss, those moments of deep disappointment, the moments when it feels like you’ve come to the end of yourself.

The word that Jesus uses for ‘mourn’ is the strongest word for mourning in the Greek language.

A commentator, William Barkley, says that the mourning that Jesus talks about is not only the sorrow which brings an ache to the heart, but it’s a sorrow that brings unrestrainable tears to the eyes.

So, it’s surprising that suffering would make room for us to know joy, that in suffering we could actually come to a deeper understanding of God’s presence and His peace. We can find a blessing. We typically can’t know that blessing without weeping and without mourning. There’s a blessing that comes when life gets hard.

In the Old Testament there is an example of the blessing that comes in mourning. We find it in the life of Job. Satan was looking forward to Job coming to the end of himself and also to the end of his faith, but that’s not what happened. When we meet up with Job, he is living a good life. He’s rich, he’s happily married, everything seems to be going well for him. He has 7 sons, 3 daughters, 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys, not to mention a small army of servants and life is good. But then, life begins to fall apart.

Influence Ministries

Job begins to experience some suffering. His dream life comes to an end. And he loses, literally, everything. A strong wind knocks down his house and kills his children. But that's just the beginning.

In the second chapter of Job, he lost his health. He was infested with sores, literally, over every inch of his body. He lost all of his livestock, his wealth, and Satan was betting on the fact that as Job lost everything, he would lose his faith in God as well.

Even Job's wife said to him, "Just curse God and die." Because what good is God if life doesn't work out the way that you want it to? But it turns out that Job experienced blessing. He knew God in a way that he had never known God before. Job said in the middle of all of his loss, he said to God, "My ears have heard of You before, but now my eyes have seen You."

And here's what we find. In our suffering, the deep void that used to be filled by whatever it is we lost, it could be stuff or a job or a relationship, none of those things are bad things, but when those things are gone it leaves this aching cavity. And God is there to fill it up with Himself.

So, when we suffer, we mourn. When we mourn, we are comforted by God's presence. So blessed are those who mourn.

Of course, we do everything we can to avoid suffering. Of course, we want to stay away from any kind of personal difficulty or disappointment, but inevitably we are going to experience our share of it.

When we do experience it, we tend to want to stay away from mourning. So, when we catch ourselves mourning, we do everything in our power to just make it go away. We numb ourselves with entertainment. We medicate the pain away with drinking or shopping or working or partying. We may have to suffer but nobody's going to make us mourn. So, we try to shift our efforts, by just 'getting over it.' We want to get past it. We want to get around it. We want to just move on from the broken heart, the wrecked relationship, the debilitating regret of a disastrous decision, or the impossible options of a serious illness.

Living in denial and blaming others or basking in the guilt is no way to live. Instead, when we turn to God, we find a blessing in those difficult moments.

So, at the end of yourself, you have an opportunity to experience the presence of God in a way that you never have before.