

SERMON STUDY NOTES

21st July 2019

Speaker: Martin Armstrong

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"

There is a progression in these beatitudes. The **first step** of a blessed life is the recognition that we are poor in spirit...that we have a deep need for God's help in our lives. **The second step**, is to the place where we can find comfort in our time of need.

1. There are different reasons to mourn. Many of us know what it is to mourn over some personal loss. Perhaps we've grieved at the death of a parent, a child, or a close friend. Others have grieved over the loss of a job, or a personal rejection, or a loss of health. Can you share with the group the most difficult time of mourning you have experienced?
2. The good news is that Jesus has come to *heal the broken hearted*. Psalm 147:3. Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1 which says "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor; He has **sent Me to heal the broken hearted**....*" How has your Christian faith and your Christian friends be a help to you during times of grief?

3. Another source of mourning can be over things that are out of our control. A problem today is that we've become desensitized to the problems of the world. We see bloated stomachs of starving children in Africa and are desensitized by violence on TV. Do you think that you have been desensitized in these ways?
4. Brian Zahnd interprets this verse as *Blessed are the depressed who mourn and grieve, for they create space to encounter comfort from another*. Sorrow and grief is a necessary consequence of loving others and being close to people. Are you able to share your hurt with others?
5. Our society tends to go through life minimizing our pain and avoiding sorrow as much as possible. How does it do this?
6. Compassion means shared suffering. It's through grief & compassion that we carve depth into our souls and create a space that can be filled with comfort from another. Without it, we become a shallow self-serving people.
Discuss
7. Culture is what we learn when we don't know we're learning. We can cultivate a culture of denial – whereby everything has to be good for us. In what ways is this happening in our society today? Does it happen in the church? What about prosperity teaching?
8. Happiness seems to be humanity's highest goal; so many want to avoid the sorrow of grief. It likes instead to be anesthetized with entertainment. In what ways is society avoiding the sorrow of grief?

9. Do you think that our Maori and Polynesian people deal with sorrow and grief better European origin people? What do that is different?

10. When we enter into the Kingdom of God. God sends us the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter; darkness, gloom & despair can flee in the light of His presence. Crying out to God in prayer, can bring comfort in times of sorrow. Pray for each other