TITLE: The Blessing of Mourning.

TEXT: Mt. 5:4; Mk. 1:2-4; 2nd Co. 7:10-11; 1st Jn. 1:9;

Lk. 18:10-14

INTRODUCTION: Last week we talked about Blessings, in particular, the first blessing or beatitude of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. **Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

 This morning I want to continue in these verses of Scripture that contain the promise of blessing to us.

 In this opening paragraph of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus actually tells us of 8 different things that will place us in the state of being blessed by God.

 Last week we defined beatitude as:

**Be·at·i·tude** *n.* **1.** Supreme blessedness or happiness.

From Latin**---Be·a·tif·ic** *adj.* Showing or producing exalted joy*.*

 The dictionary defines blessed as:

 **3. Bringing happiness, pleasure, or contentment.**

So when Jesus said; blessed are the poor in spirit, He was saying, Blessed, happy, content or fully satisfied are the poor in spirit.

 As we talked about last week the poor in spirit being those who have become poor, not in the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, but those who have become poor in the human spirit or the spirit of self.

 Jesus said blessed, happy, fully satisfied are those who have become poor in the spirit of self.

 This morning I want to look at the next beatitude of Christ.

 Jesus says:

**Matt 5:4 (NIV) Blessed are those who mourn,**

**for they will be comforted.**

Blessed are those who mourn!

At first glance this seems to be an oxymoron, a contraction in terms, doesn’t it? Blessed are those who mourn!

What does it mean to mourn?

 The word that Jesus used here is:

 **3996 pentheo {pen-theh'-o}**

**1) to mourn, wail, lament**

From root word…

**3997 penthos {pen'-thos}**

**AV - sorrow , mourning**

What Jesus is saying here is:

 Blessed, happy, content, fully satisfied are those who mourn, those who are sorrowful..

 Happiness and mourning seem to be a contradiction in terms, don’t they?

 I mean, how can we mourn, which means to be full of sorrow, and be blessed, which means to be happy, content, fully satisfied, at the same time?

 Actually what we find is that happiness and sorrow are but opposite sides of the same coin.

 Particularly, as a child of God, as a Christian is concerned.

 But the reality is it is necessary that we experience one in order to fully experience the other.

 If we make the claim of Christ, the claim that we are a Christian, and we have never experienced mourning, sorrow, then our claim to Christ is an empty one.

 It is impossible for us to embrace Jesus Christ for our salvation without first coming to a place of mourning.

Jesus said:

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

The fact is we cannot receive comfort if we have not first mourned.

 What does it mean to comfort?

**Comfort-- To soothe in time of affliction or distress. 2. To ease physically; relieve. 2. Solace in time of grief or fear.**

 In order for there to be comfort there must first be something in which we need comforted!

Unless we mourn we will never experience comfort!

F.F. Bruce once said:.

*"There can be no comfort where there is no grief" “Sorrow should make us look for the heart and hand of God and so find the comfort latent in the grief.”*

 So just what “mourning” is Jesus talking about here that will bring the twofold promise of God upon our life?

 First, the promise of being blessed, happy, contend and fully satisfied with and in life, and Secondly, the promise of comfort, being soothed or relieved in our times of affliction.

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted!**

First and foremost, that which Jesus is referring to here that we must mourn in order to be truly blessed and receive His comfort is our sin.

 Unless we come to the place of mourning for our sin we will never receive the comfort of His salvation.

 Unless we come to the place of mourning for our sin we can never receive salvation.

 If we never come to the place of genuine sorrow, mourning for our sin, then we will never have the desire to come to the place where we are willing to repent of it..

 And where there is no repentance there can be no forgiveness.

 John the Baptist was what? He was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. The one who God sent to come before Christ Jesus and prepare the way for Him.

**Mark 1:2 (NIV) It is written in Isaiah the prophet:**

**"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"--**

**3 "a voice of one calling in the desert, `Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"**

**4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**

What was the message that John preached that would prepare the way for Jesus?

 John’s message was the message of repentance!

 The message of repentance was necessary to prepare the way for the message of Jesus, which was the message of salvation in and through Him.

 But before salvation could be accomplished repentance was first necessary.

 It was true then and it is still true today.

 And before we will ever come to repentance we must first experience a godly sorrow for our sin. We must first come to the place of mourning our sin..

**2Cor 7:10 (NIV) Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.**

**11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.**

**Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret!**

 Do you see the layout of Gods plan here?

**Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation!**

Sorrow, mourning for our sin, must come first, and then comes repentance, and it is through our repentance that we find forgiveness and salvation.

 So what does it mean to repent?

 Ilion T. Jones said it this way:

*“Repentance is not a fatal day when tears are shed, but a natal day when, as a result of tears, a new life begins.“*

 Repentance is not basically a religious word. It comes from a culture where people were essentially nomadic and lived in a world with no maps or street signs.

 It's easy to get lost walking through the desert. You become aware that the countryside is strange. You finally say to yourself, I'm going in the wrong direction.

 That's the first act of repentance, to admit to ourselves that we are going in the wrong direction.

 The second act of repentance is to go in an alternate direction.

 Repentance, first, is recognizing that we are going in a wrong direction, and then, after we have come to that realization, to then turn in the right direction..

**1Joh 1:9 (NIV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Do you realize that in the language and in the culture in which Scripture was written that confession of sin and repentance of sin where synonymous? One went with the other! You couldn’t have one without the other! The words would actually interchange for each other!

 The Greek word for confess is:

**3670 homologeo {hom-ol-og-eh'-o}**

**1) to say the same thing as another, i.e. to agree with, assent**

**2b3) to confess, i.e. to admit or declare one's self guilty of what one is accused of.**

 With regards to our sin against God the word confess, hom-ol-og-eh-o, literally means to come into agreement with God about our sin..

 In order for us to come into agreement with God about our sin it will require us to come to see our sin as God does.

 That it is our sin that separates us from Him, that our sin is destructive and has the potential to destroy, not just these physical bodies of ours, but has the potential to condemn body and soul to an eternity in hell.

 If we truly come to see sin the way that God does then our only response will be to mourn for it. Mourn; grieve for ever having done it. To fall on our knees before Him who we have sinned against and weep and pray for His forgiveness as we come to the realization that it was our sin that became the nails that held Jesus to the cross. That is was your and my sin that became the sword that pierced His side.

 That is was your and my sin that so tormented the Lord that at one point in His becoming the bearer of our sin that He lifts His head toward heaven and cried out My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me.

**Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation..**

 If you have never shed a tear for your sin then you have never experienced a Godly sorrow for your sin and you have never come to a place of true repentance.

 There is a story from the middle Ages about a young woman who was expelled from heaven and told that she would be readmitted if she would bring back the one gift God valued the most.

 She brought back drops of blood from a dying patriot. She collected coins given by a destitute widow for the poor. She brought back a remnant of a Bible used by an eminent preacher.

 She even brought back the dust from the shoes of missionaries who served many years in a distant land. Although she brought back all these things and more, she was turned back repeatedly.

 One day as she watched a small boy playing by a fountain, she saw a man ride up on horseback and dismount to take a drink. When he saw the boy playing, he thought of his own childhood innocence.

 But he looked into the water of the fountain and saw a reflection of his hardened face. He was overcome by the sin in his life, and in that moment, he wept tears of repentance. The young woman took one of those tears back to heaven, where she was received with joy.

 The most valuable thing in the kingdom of God is, I believe, the tears of the repentant heart.

 The most valuable thing in God Kingdom is you and I as we come before Him genuinely mourning for our sin.

 Mourning it to the place that our hearts desire is to turn from it and turn toward God.

 **Luke 18:10 (NIV) "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.**

**11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: `God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector.**

**12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'**

**13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, `God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'**

**14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

-- John Wycliffe

 *“There is no greater heresy for a man than to believe that he is absolved from sin if he gives money, or because a priest lays his hand on his head and says: 'I absolve you;' for you must be sorrowful in your heart, else God does not absolve you. “*

 This is what Jesus was talking about when He said:

**Matt 5:4 (NIV) Blessed are those who mourn,**

**for they will be comforted.**

 The mourning Jesus was referring to was the mourning of our sin, and the comfort He speaks of is the comfort of His salvation.

 The comfort of knowing that we have been forgiven our sin and now stand before God forgiven..

 Blessed, happy, content, fully satisfied are those who mourn for they will be comforted..

 This morning, have you received this promise of God’s comfort in your life?

 Has your soul been comforted with the assurance of His salvation?

 Do you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that your sins have all been forgiven because you have mourned them and have come to God with a repentant heart and now stand before Him as one who has been forgiven?

 Have you, like the tax collector, mourned for your sin as one might mourn for the loss of a loved one, come to the place of standing before God, beating your breast and simply crying out, **God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'**

 The promise of Jesus: **Blessed, (**happy, fully satisfied) **are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

Have you received this comfort of the Lord this morning?

 If not, is it your desire to receive His comfort today?