

Rev. Janet R. Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
5th Sunday after Epiphany
Sunday, February 8, 2026
Scripture: Matthew 5: 1-12
Sermon: Finding Comfort

In our study of the Gospel of Matthew, we are looking at The Beatitudes at the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes is a section of Jesus' great Sermon that describes what it looks like to be a true disciple of His. It serves as a very important introduction to The Sermon on The Mount; because it teaches us what to "be" before the Sermon itself tells us what to "do" We are taking our time in this portion of Scripture so we can carefully consider each of the eight Beatitudes.

The first Beatitude taught us that, in order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, we must first come to God in the deep poverty of our soul, as a man or woman who realizes how truly needy we are spiritually. "Blessed are the poor in spirit", Jesus said, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). And in those words, we learn that the first aspect of being a disciple is to be someone who recognizes their spiritual bankruptcy and therefore their need for God's grace. A great illustration of this was the tax collector in Jesus' parable in Luke 18 who "standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'" (Luke 18:13). The word Beatitude literally means an inner joy that is untouchable by the world.

The second Beatitude builds upon the first. It teaches us that a true disciple starts off not only realizing how desperately needy they are in the sight of God because of their sin but also goes beyond that to express deep sorrow and mourning over their sins. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).

It's not enough to simply recognize that we are bankrupt sinners before God realizing the poverty of our soul, we must also feel God's own grief and sorrow and pain for our sins. We make a confession and repent over our sins. We acknowledge that we mourn for what happened in the

past but God will bring us comfort in the present and future. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Our reliance on God reminds us of our need for him and draws us into a deeper place of relationship with him. In such circumstances, we are blessed when we mourn our failings and sinfulness. We are sorrowful, remorseful, for the way we have hurt others, for the times we have let God down. This does not mean we are to wallow in our inadequacies and failings, but we aren’t to simply shrug them off as if they didn’t matter. The place of blessing is when our sorrow and our remorse changes our soul and heart, for what we have done and leads us to the realization that despite all of this, God loves us and forgives us and comforts us in all our times of grief and sorrow.

There is another meaning also to this beatitude: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” In times of deepest grief we struggle to find consolation. Bereaved families have an openness to finding hope in God, even when they may not necessarily have believed before. Faith is one of the few things that can make sense of grief, that can bring comfort and hope, in times of loss. So it’s important for us that we view ourselves as totally reliant on God, both for his help and his forgiveness. It is also important that we see ourselves for who we are, as loved by God.

Rev. Billy Graham wrote about this Beatitude and said, “The word “mourning” means “to feel deep sorrow, to show great concern, or to deplore some existing wrong.” It implies that if we are to live life on a higher plane, then we are to be sensitive, sympathetic, tenderhearted, and alert to the needs of others—but also aware of our own sin and lack of obedience to the Lord. Jesus did not imply that mourning is about those who have a morbid view of life; He was speaking to people who were seeking to live fuller lives with God in the center.

Before we can become strong, we must first realize that we are weak. Before we can become wise, we must realize that we are foolish. Before we can receive power, we must first confess that we are powerless. We must lament our sins before God before we can rejoice in a Savior. Mourning always comes before exultation. Blessed are those who mourn their unworthiness, their helplessness, and their inadequacy. If we have no sense of sorrow for sin, how can we know the need of repentance?

In God's economy, we must go down into the valley of grief before we can scale the heights of spiritual glory. We must become tired and weary of living without Christ before seeking and finding His salvation. We must come to the end of "self" before we can really begin to live. 'The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart and saves those who have a contrite spirit' (Psalm 34:18)."

So, although this word "mourn" can refer to grief and sorrow over death and other losses, in this context it particularly refers to sorrow over sin. This "mourning" is the agonizing realization that it was our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. When we look upon the cross and truly understand the great price our sins cost our precious Savior, how can we feel anything about our sins but great mourning, and sorrow, and deep remorse? If I'm truly a disciple of the Son of God, how could we be indifferent, or insensitive, or hard-hearted to the great price of the sins that resulted in so much of His own suffering?

Jesus mourned over sin. In Luke 19:41-44, Jesus approached the city of Jerusalem and wept over it. He wept over it because He had presented Himself to Israel as the Messiah, and they rejected Him. Jesus' mourning is over sin and its effects in the lives of people.

For as when we sin it brings grief, and grief causes us to turn to Christ and the sufficiency of His death; then we are comforted again. Whenever the Christian is conscious of our own sin we should be grieved by it. Grief leads to repentance and comfort.

We should mourn the sinfulness around us. Psalm 119:146 says, "My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law." The godly grieve ungodliness. We should not affirm the world's rebellion against God. We should not be entertained by the world's rebellion against God. We should not participate in the world's rebellion against God. We should mourn the sinfulness of the world.

The world's sexual immorality should grieve us.

The deterioration of the family should grieve us.

The corruption of true justice should grieve us.

The deceitfulness of riches should grieve us.

The persecution of the church should grieve us.

The rejection of the gospel of Christ should grieve us.

Philippians 3:18-19 says, “For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”

Christ is the central figure of history. The cross is the central factor of history. We should weep over those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. We should pray they would repent and believe before it's too late. We should share the gospel with them so that they may be saved. We should mourn the sinfulness within us.

Mourning is the proper response of the poor in spirit. Poverty of spirit is the intellectual response to your sin. Mourning is the emotional response to your sin.

When you acknowledge your spiritual bankruptcy before God, you are blessed. When spiritual bankruptcy leads to spiritual mourning, you are blessed.

James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” Sin separates us from God. But you can begin again! How do you draw near to God? James 4:8-10 says, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” To mourn sin is to humble yourself before God.

2 Corinthians 7:10 says, “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” Worldly grief produces regret. Godly grief produces repentance. Repentance is greater than regret. It is the difference between Judas and Peter. Both disciples betrayed Jesus. Judas regretted his sin, but his remorse led him to commit suicide. Peter regretted his sin, remorse over his sin, and repented of his sin and he was comforted.

The Prodigal Son regretted his decision to go to the far country, but his situation did not change until he went home to the Father. It is a blessing when mourning for sin leads us to the forgiving comfort of our heavenly Father. The father immediately ran to his Prodigal Son and forgave him. He immediately comforted him with a loving embrace, a signet ring, the best robe, new shoes, and a fatted calf.

If you run to the cross, God will comfort you immediately. When you look at the cross, know that you are blessed by the promises of God and be strengthened by God's comforting love and grace.

Come to the Lord's Table today knowing you are loved and forgiven by God.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”