# **The Beatitudes- Part 3 - Those Who Mourn**

Pastor Carl Van Vliet

Sermon on the Mount / The Beatitudes / Matthew 5:3–16; Matthew 5:3–12

# [Matthew 5:3-16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.3-16)

This week we are in Verse #4 [Mt 5:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.4) “4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.”

This verse reads like a big Oxymoron - *a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction*

*What are some more famous Oxymorons?*

*Bittersweet, crash landing, deafening silence, deliberate speed, even odds, dull roar, clearly misunderstood, definite maybe, found missing, growing smaller, icy hot, ill health, lead balloon, the only choice, original copy, old news, paper towel, sad smile, good grief.*

How can this be? Blessed are those who mourn? These two statements do not remotely seem to go together.

For long centuries it was the custom in the East to not only mourn the lost of a loved one with great lamentations, but, if the family could afford it, **to also hire professional mourners**. They would range from a few to a great number, depending on the family’s finances. They would tear their clothes and throw ashes and dirt upon themselves. With wailing and shrill weeping these hired mourners would seek to *make a genuine lamentation among the visitors* who came to the funeral, pointing out those among them who had also suffered the lost of a loved one and the agony and suffering they felt, thus eliciting cries of true grief from those who are sorrowing.

 Hired mourners were present at the burial of good king Josiah ([2 Chronicles 35:25](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Ch35.25)), and Solomon refers to such mourners in [Ecclesiastes 12:5](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ec12.5)—“mourners go about the streets.” Amos also speaks of them: “There will be wailing in all the streets and cries of anguish in every public square. The farmers will be summoned to weep and the mourners to wail ([Amos 5:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Am5.16)). Hired mourners were present at the house of Jairus after the death of his daughter ([Matthew 9:23](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt9.23) and [Mark 5:38](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk5.38)).

Would you like a new job? Professional mourners today, also called moirologists, are hired by family members to grieve at funerals and wakes. The intention is to increase the number of funeral participants, provide new faces, show support for the deceased, and help people deal with a tragedy through other’s expressions of grief.

They are paid between $30 and $120 per funeral to mourn

Mourners in the Bible would wear Sackcloth and ashes in mourning: Sackcloth is a coarse, black cloth made from goat’s hair that was worn together with the burnt ashes of wood as a sign of mourning for personal and national disaster, as a sign of repentance and at times of prayer for deliverance.

Sackcloth and ashes worn as a sign of mourning for the dead

By Jacob for Joseph [Ge 37:34](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ge37.34) By David, Joab and the people for Abner [2Sa 3:31](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Sa3.31)

Sackcloth and ashes worn as a sign of mourning for personal or national disaster

[Job 16:15](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Job16.15); [42:6](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Job42.6) [Est 4:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Es4.1); [La 2:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.La2.10); [Joel 1:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Joe1.8)

Sackcloth and ashes worn as a sign of repentance for sin

By Ahab [1Ki 21:27](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Ki21.27)

Sackcloth and ashes worn at times of prayer for deliverance

By Hezekiah and his companions [2Ki 19:1-2](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Ki19.1-2) By Daniel [Da 9:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Da9.3)

Today mourners wouldn’t wear sackcloth and ashes but rather mourners would wear all black.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

As we did with last week’s Beatitude lets first begin with an understanding of what “those who mourn” are not, in this verse.

The dictionary definition of mourning is: **“the expression of an experience that is the consequence of an event in life involving loss, causing grief, occurring as a result of someone's death, etc.”**

› In the natural world one could find themselves mourning over unfulfilled dreams, financial hardships, the loss of a friendship, the death of a loved one.

The most common use of the word in today’s culture has predominantly to deal with grief and the expression of that grief over the death of a loved one.

Scripture has a lot to say about mourning in these natural senses and how God is a God of comfort during these losses, for example:

[2 Co 1:3-4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Co1.3-4) “3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

[1 Thes 4:18](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Th4.18) “18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

[2 Thes 2:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Th2.16)-17 “16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

Mourning in things that happen in our lives is natural, and God is with us in those grieving times to comfort us but this passage is not about a natural mourning of a loss in our lives.

› There is another kind of natural mourning that comes from the consequences of sin. It is not the mourning of sin, it is mourning of experiencing the consequences of sin.

If one goes out and gets drunk and gets in a car accident and is sentenced to prison because of that accident, and mourns the prison sentence is a natural mourning that is devoid of any comfort.

[Galatians 6:7-8](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ga6.7-8) “7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”

There is a mourning over the consequences of Sin.

› the third type of mourning is over the conviction of sin - the state in which we know of our sin, but we are brokenhearted over our sin.

Thousands acknowledge their sinful state but few mourn that sinful state. Conviction leads to Godly Sorrow.

[2 Co 7:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Co7.10) “10 **For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted**;

Mourn - Greek word πενθέω (pentheō) [pen-th -ey-o] is a verb in the present tense. It is not a past tense as in “Blessed are those who have mourned for they shall be comforted” it is a present, and continuous experience.

 This is the spiritual counterpart to poverty of spirit. “It is one thing to be spiritually poor and acknowledge it; it is another to grieve and to mourn over it. ” - John Stott. We must do more than acknowledge our spiritual bankruptcy; we must agonize over it.

 This is not the sorrow of bereavement, but of repentance. It is personal grief over personal sin ( [Rom. 7:24](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro7.24)). It is grief for particular sins, not simply sin in general. Speaking of sins in general can easily become a cover for denying sins in particular.

 James writes, “Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you” ([James 4:9–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Jas4.9-10)). This is not an indictment of joy or a demand for perpetual sadness. The context of [James 4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Jas4) indicates that he is addressing people who had become flippant, casual, and indifferent toward sin because of their “love affair” with the world. This, then, is a call for sober repentance.

The promise is that you are not left in a state of sorrow, the Holy Spirit whom Jesus calls the Comforter ([John 14](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Jn14), [15](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Jn15) & 16 KJV) turns our weeping eyes from our sin to the lamb.

[Isaiah 61:2-3](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is61.2-3) “1 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me… 2b ...To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them **beauty for ashes**, **The oil of joy for mourning**, **The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness**; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.””

*Remember the word for “Blessed”* μακάριος (makarios) - God’s happiness is joy that comes from a **heart that is alive towards God through Christ**. Joy is not found is circumstances. It is not subjective. Joy and happiness are not synonymous - Joy comes from a vibrant heart fully alive unto God regardless of the externals of life.

Mourn over sin yes, but also be comforted that Christ has removed our sin as far as the east is from the west [Psalm 103:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ps103.12)

**Matthew 5:3–16**

