

Good Mourning

Big Idea: Death and mourning are an inevitable part of life. Our response determines the quality of our life here on earth and in the life to come. It can also affect the eternal life of those who are influenced by us.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted (Matthew 5:4). The word “blessed” (gr. Makarios) refers to a kingdom state of happiness which is not dependent on circumstances. The word “beatitude” comes from the Latin *beatitudo*, meaning “blessedness.” The phrase “blessed are” in each of the beatitudes implies a *current* state of happiness or well-being but there are also continuing and eternal benefits connected. This message of God’s kingdom seems upside-down to the way most people think but that’s because the prevailing philosophies of our world are upside-down. Our responsibility in representing God’s kingdom is to turn the world around us rightside-up!

1. In life, death and mourning are inevitable

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 (cf. Psalms 30:11; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Heb. 9:27)

How can there be happiness during times of death and mourning? Without Christ, or the hope of eternal life, there really isn’t much comfort. Those occasions are the epitome of “uncomfortable”. When we live in Christ, though, comfort is always available. While we talk a lot in the church about stepping outside of our “comfort zones” if we are following Jesus we really can’t. God’s shield of comfort will move with us!

2. In Christ, death and mourning are temporal

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live”....Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept. John 11:25,32-35

Jesus is the Creator of life so death should not bother Him. He knew that Lazarus was already dead by the time He was notified (11:11-15). He was a day’s journey from Bethany. He delayed 2 more days and then travelled the next day to Bethany. When He got there, Lazarus had been dead for 4 days. While Jesus reassured Martha that within Him there is the power of resurrection, He was still touched by their sorrow and shared in it. He showed us that mourning is the appropriate response to death. Like all the Beatitudes, it reminds us of our dependence on Him. And in Him, there is always the hope of resurrection, if not immediately then in the life to come.

3. In Christ, the result of comfort is eternal

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation.
2 Corinthians 1:3-6a

When we respond to difficulties by allowing God to comfort us we learn how to comfort others. We then establish God’s kingdom wherever we go, setting things that are upside-down

right-side up. Ultimately that process will lead to the “salvation” of others!