

**Russell Kelfer**

# **Learning to Mourn**

**531-A**

**Series: The Beatitudes**

**dtm** DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.  
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • [www.dtm.org](http://www.dtm.org) • [dtm@dtm.org](mailto:dtm@dtm.org)

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# Learning to Mourn

Welcome to Lesson 9 of our study of the Beatitudes. This is the final lesson on the second Beatitude:

Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.  
(Matthew 5:4)

Basically this is another paradox, paraphrased,

Oh what bliss for those who weep for they shall be comforted.

We have learned in the past few lessons that Jesus Christ as He walked this earth demonstrated to us how God, in man, was supposed to behave. Jesus cried on at least four occasions. The Spirit of God in us can do no less.

1- Jesus cried was over the hurts of others. He told us to do the same. I have been moved when others have prayed for those who have been struck by natural or man-made disasters. To look in the newspapers and see the damage and destruction and know that even the reporters have wept when they have experienced these events is a touching time for me. Yet I wonder how many of us have taken time to get alone with God and simply plead with God for those who have been struck by these disasters and have been in the headlines this past week. Have we ever even stopped to imagine what it would be like to be involved in these situations? When the terrible tornado hit Wichita Falls in 1979, I looked over the casualty list in the newspaper and was relieved to see that some friends who lived there were not on the list. At that point, my mind went on to other areas with a casual hurt or a casual thought of, "Oh, that is tragic." Maybe you have done better than I when you have been struck by the gravity of some recent disaster, but I could not help but wonder, "Blessed are they that weep over the hurt of others". I could not help but realize that my heart did not break for others, and it should have.

2-Jesus cried was over the lost sheep of the house of Israel. You and I have resurrection life, but many about us at work, at home, in the neighborhood and in our families do not. Do we weep with regularity as we plead with God on their behalf?

3- Jesus cried was over what sin was doing to the world. Do we?

## Learning to Mourn

4- Jesus cried over doing the Father's perfect will in Gethsemane. I don't know about you, but my zeal to be obedient seldom approaches tears.

In the last lesson, we found at least one more basic reason God told us to cry. You and I were instructed by God to ever-increasingly learn to weep over our own sin. The last lesson dealt with The Principle and The Portrait. Today we will deal with The Practice.

The Principle was boiled down in James 4:1-10. Basically, it says that God expects us to be more sensitive to sin than we were yesterday or the day before or the day we were saved, but most of us become less sensitive as time goes on.

In The Portrait we looked at the life of Peter as found in Luke 22:31-62. We observed him, and hopefully ourselves. We walked in Peter's shoes and watched the spiritual pride emerge and realized that the end result was that he wept over his sins.

### THE PRACTICE

We come to the third part of this lesson, and that is The Practice. This is where we come to the shoe leather. How can we practically learn how to mourn? How can we become more grieved over the gravity of our sins than we were a week ago? There are seven steps.

#### Step 1- Learn the meaning of godly repentance.

If I were to ask five people to give their definition of repentance, it would be interesting. I would imagine that most of the definitions would be that repentance means to be sorry and turn around. We would find that this definition is really very superficial, and therefore our ability to repent is very superficial as well. As we dig underneath the surface to find out what it means to repent, let's turn to II Corinthians 7.

Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your

## Learning to Mourn

sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

(II Corinthians 7:6-11 NKJV)

This Scripture basically says that there are two kinds of sorrow. The first is the sorrow that is of this world. The second is a godly sorrow that leads to repentance. The world's sorrow means that we are sorry that we are not doing better, and we are sorry that we got caught. Godly sorrow means that we are sorry that we grieved God, and we are sorry that we have sinned against others. Godly sorrow leads to repentance. In verse 11 Paul gives us six characteristics of real repentance.

Characteristic 1- Paul says, "*Oh what carefulness, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what revenge*". Those words don't mean anything on the surface, but if we dig a little deeper, I think we will find the meaning. The first word he uses is "carefulness". It is the Greek word "*spalday*" which means "earnest seriousness". One translation says, "what earnestness it produces". The Phillips Translation says, "How seriously it made you think". In other words, carefulness here means that real repentance ought to jar you into serious contemplation. When you really sorrow unto repentance, you ought to be indignant and shocked over that sin.

Characteristic 2- In verse 11 Paul says, "*What clearing of yourself*". The Greek word is "*apologeia*." We can all guess what that means. Literally it means a verbal defense or apology. Paul says how seriously this ought to make you think about sin. It ought to cause you to apologize. It ought to bring you to a place where you say to God, "I'm sorry." You say to anyone you have wronged, "I'm sorry, will you forgive me?" Now that sounds simple enough on the surface, but how many times have you felt like you repented of something and thought that God understood, so you never personally went before God and named the sin and said, "Lord, I'm sorry. This grieves my heart, and I know

## Learning to Mourn

it breaks Yours. Please forgive me.” How many times have you sinned against others and asked God to forgive you but then been unwilling to go to the person you have offended and say, “I’ve offended you, will you please forgive me.” Godly repentance works, and the “clearing of yourself” is apologizing before God and man.

Characteristic 3- Paul says, “*what indignation*”. The Greek word is very long and literally means vexation or annoyance. Beck translates it to say, “How disgusted you became with sin”. It literally means that real repentance makes you sick to your stomach over sin and its consequences. When you really repent, you are really sorry over what you have done. You are grieved over the sin in your life. Down deep in the pit of your stomach you ought to be sick over what you have done, and what it has cost God.

Characteristic 4- Paul says, “*oh what fear*”. The word “fear” in Greek is “*fabas*” which means terror, fright and awe. It means that there ought to be an awesome respect for God. There ought to be a healthy fear of having offended Him and of the possible consequences of offending Him. Fear is a healthy thing when it is proper.

Characteristic 5- Paul says, “*what vehement desire*”. “Vehement” in Greek is “*epipothosis*” which means an intense and earnest longing or desire. It means longing for fellowship to be restored. Here Paul is saying, “It is good that you are ready for me to come back to you and our relationship is in tact.” Real repentance literally means a longing to restore fellowship.

Characteristic 6- Paul says, “*what revenge*”. “Revenge” in the Greek is “*exdecasis*”. It literally means the exacting of punishment or the exercising of judgment or the maintaining of a right behavior. It means that when you really repent you set new guidelines for your life. Those guidelines mean that you move the fence posts of your life in some areas so that you give no place to Satan. You make strict plans at whatever the cost to see that it doesn’t happen again.

Now let’s very quickly review what Paul has said. The last time you said you repented, did it produce these qualities? Godly sorrow ought to produce this kind of repentance. First, you ought to be jarred out of your complacency into a serious frame of reference. Secondly, you ought to be jarred to the point of

## Learning to Mourn

apologizing to God and to man. Thirdly, it ought to make you sick to your stomach over what you have done. Fourthly, you ought to become fearful of grieving God and of the consequences of your sin. Fifthly, you ought to long to be restored to that sweetness of fellowship. Lastly, you ought to construct new boundaries in your life to see that it doesn't happen again. That is repentance. You and I need to study the concept and learn what it means to repent.

### Step 2- Learn to see sin as God sees sin.

This has four parts.

View 1- Learn to visualize postponed repentance as sin. This is very simple. Suppose you have a thought in your head that doesn't belong there. All of a sudden you become aware that it is there, and it is sin. Each of you can imagine your own wrong thought patterns. At the very instant you realize it is sin, from that point until the time that you ask God's forgiveness and repent of it, from that interim period, you compound the gravity of the sin. In other words, now by an act of the will, you know it to be sin, and by an act of your will you are rejecting the grace of God. You are saying to God, "I don't want your grace. Go away." The minute you know it is sin and do not confess it, you compound the sin. You don't just add to it, you multiply it. Until you see it from that frame of reference, you have a problem. Immediate confession of sin is what you need.

View 2- Learn to visualize the root attitudes that cause chronic disobedience. I think that there are four basic root attitudes. These attitudes are insecurity, greed, bitterness and impurity. Insecurity comes from a lack of belief in the sovereignty of God. Greed stems from unbelief in the priorities of God in your life. Bitterness means that you don't believe in the love of God. Impurity means that you don't believe in the holiness of God. You don't really believe it down to the fiber of your being so that it changes your life. Lust, anger, and jealousy along with the sins of the tongue, the mind and the body such as lying, stealing and adultery all stem forth from these four basic attitudes. You can confess the sins when they come, deal with them, and repent of them, but they will keep coming, unless you go deeper into your motives, examine the cause, and do surgery at the point where the bad cells are being produced.

View 3- Visualize where sin is leading, both from the Word

## Learning to Mourn

and from experience. Most of us think that we can toy with different problems for a while, because we believe we have that much latitude and leeway. We forget what happened to David. We forget what happened to Peter. We forget what happened to us the last time that we allowed sin a foothold.

View 4- I think this is the most important part of this section. You need to visualize the sins of the mind as though they had already taken place in the flesh. Now that is tough. But as an example, the next time lust becomes a part of your life, you need to approach God with the same grief as if you had been taken in the act of adultery. You may say to yourself, "I don't think I like that idea." Well, you aren't supposed to like it, but Jesus looks at it from that point of view. So you ought to approach sin from Jesus' perspective. The next time hatred wells up in your heart, and you think you just can't stand that person, you need to go before God and confess that sin. You need to approach it from the same perspective as though you had just been apprehended for murder and were being taken down to be locked in jail. You may think it is not the same, but in God's eyes it is the same. That is what Jesus said in Matthew 6.

### Step 3- Learn to see our sins as a personal affront to God at Calvary.

We need to learn to relate our sins to the cross. A member of this class shared with me a few weeks ago that every time a sin was bothering him and beginning to plague his mind, he would visualize the crown of thorns that were on the head of Jesus. Every time that he began to yield to that sin, he would visualize that crown of thorns being pressed down even more on the head of Jesus. Others have said that they have been able to visualize the nails penetrating the hands and feet of Jesus every time they would yield to the same sin again. The gravity of what they were doing began to make sense. Still others have said that if they would visualize the crowd cursing and spitting upon Jesus when they were being tempted by a besetting sin, they would realize that they were in that crowd. You may think that this sounds gross, but my friend, Calvary was gross. You and I recreate it every time we willfully disobey the will of God.

### Step 4- Learn to ask for a breakable heart.

We look for unbreakable merchandise today. Even the bumpers on cars these days are made out of plastic, so that we



## Learning to Mourn

can hit something without harming our bumpers. Unbreakable products are being made, and we are swarming to buy them. While these products are unbreakable, we are not. James told us that we have not because we ask not. Any way we slice it, God is not obligated to break our hearts unless we ask Him to. When was the last time you asked Him to? Don't tell Him how to do it, our responsibility is to pray. His responsibility is the process.

### Step 5- Learn to become increasingly honest.

This is tough. It takes a lifetime to become honest. We are basically phonies in a phony world. We look at television and think if we just used this kind of toothpaste and that kind of deodorant and the other kind of mouthwash, everybody will look at us and every thing they see will make them delight in us. But the Scripture says that out of the heart proceeds a lot of stuff that is just not worth anything. So we need to learn like David and Elijah and others to be disarmingly honest with God. The prodigal son had the right idea when he said, "I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am not worthy to be called your son." This is being disarmingly honest with God. This is repentance.

We also need to learn to be discerningly honest with others. This is harder. It was Paul who said, "Oh wretched man that I am." He called himself the chief of sinners. He said, "Woe is me. What I would do, I do not. What I do not, I do. I am really mixed-up." He didn't paint himself as a paper saint. He admitted who he was, but he didn't spell out his sins for the world to see. He didn't say, "Woe is me, I have been lusting after Lydia. Woe is me, I hate Peter's guts." You won't find him saying that. People sometimes get into groups and think that it is fashionable to spill their heart out and tell everybody what is going on inside of them. Be careful. Confession may be good for the soul, but it is not good for the body of Christ. Be careful when you confess a weakness in your life. You don't need to confess sins that would be a stumbling block to other people. So learn to be disarmingly honest with God and discerningly honest with each other.

### Step 6- Learn to spend time with sensitive Christians.

The pastor shared with us a few weeks ago the passage in I Thessalonians where Paul said that he was gentle among the children even as a mother cared for her children. We can learn about love and about care from watching mothers. We can learn

## Learning to Mourn

about responding to sin by being around people who are sensitive to sin. We all know a few people who are disarmed when they see sin in their lives and fall immediately to their knees. We know other people who are just like we are who have a callused approach. Spend some time around people who are sensitive to sin.

### Step 7- Learn to spend more time with the Holy One.

We had taken a quick trip to two parts of the country. We visited some friends in Tennessee. I teased my wife that when we were around people with a different accent she seemed to talk like they did. After a few hours, I noticed she was drawling like they were. We then went to Minnesota and visited some friends with a very crisp, clear accent. I noticed that both of us began to talk like they did. We basically become like whomever we are with. We know that is true from prior studies and from what the Scripture teaches. In I Peter 1 says:

but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

(I Peter 1:15,16 NKJV)

You become holy by spending time with the Holy One. God hates sin. So will we, if we spend enough time with Him. The Scripture says,

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

(James 4:7,8a NKJV)

How do you resist the devil? You draw close to God and spend time with Him. It is the solution to so many of our problems. If it doesn't come up with regularity, we are simply not being faithful.

So here are seven ways, at least, that we can learn to mourn over our sins and develop a more sensitive spirit toward sin in our lives.

### III - THE JOY THAT COMES IN THE MORNING

You and I are told to mourn over the hurts of others, over the lost, over what sin has done in the world, over doing the will of God and over the gravity of our own sins. But if we are at all honest, we realize that there are other things even in the

## Learning to Mourn

past months, that have made us cry. These things relate to the presence of sin in the world. We cry at funerals because death is a reality. We cry when loved ones leave us because separation is a reality. We cry in hospitals because disease and pain are a reality. We cry sometimes at the end of the day because weariness is a reality. We cry over misunderstandings. We weep inwardly and outwardly over disappointments when our expectations are dashed and our hopes are gone. The world delivers them airmail to the Christian and God comes right along behind with a care package of comfort for every Satanic delivery.

I want to remind you that the world piles grief on the shoulders of the Christian. God turns right around and uses it for three purposes.

Grief:

1- Repentance. We can look at II Corinthians 7, which says, *“Godly sorrow worketh repentance”*.

2- Comfort. We see this in Matthew 5:4 - *“Blessed are they that mourn, they are the ones who will receive comfort”*. We are also reminded of this in II Corinthians 1:3-4.

3- Joy. Believe it or not, tears are the primary ingredient in God’s formula for joy.

Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.

A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.  
(John 16:20-22 NKJV)

Perhaps some of you have been mourning and grieving over many things. I don’t believe there is a better time than now to climb up and look from God’s vantage point at the most vital fact in Scripture about tears. Tears are necessary. Tears are even fruitful. But friends in Christ, I want to remind you that tears are temporary. Now for the unbeliever the Scripture says that there are hours of laughter that will be turned into an eternity of mourning. But the most vital fact about all of our tears, if you know Christ as your personal Savior, is that they cannot last. In

## Learning to Mourn

this life, most of them will give way to repentance, comfort and joy. But in the eternity that awaits us, the eternity that Easter made a reality, tears will be forever a part of history.

I want us to look at three passages of Scripture in closing. The first is Psalm 126.

When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad.

Bring back our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the South.

Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

(Psalm 126:1-6 NKJV)

What a beautiful passage. Look at the process of God's faithfulness. Ministering spiritual things is hard. It makes you vulnerable. He lets your heart break. The soil is sometimes rocky. The sun is hot. Most of us falter and say, "Is it worth it? Is it worth it to become so vulnerable? Is it worth it to have my life exposed? Is it worth it to be up against pressures that are so intense?" My friend, when the seeds come up, the seeds of changed lives, of external and internal transformation, it is worth it. The seeds that were sown and watered with your tears bring forth a joy no man can take from you when God brings them to fruition. That is why Paul says in I Corinthians:

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

(I Corinthians 15:58 NKJV)

The second passage we will look at to see the principle of God's mercy is found in Psalm 30. These would be good passages to memorize.

I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my foes rejoice over me.

O Lord my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me.

O Lord, You brought my soul up from the grave; You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

## Learning to Mourn

Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.

For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.  
(Psalm 30:1-5 NKJV)

God's anger is real. He hates sin, but God's goal is change. He doesn't dwell on the sin, but He views His anger as a means to an end. We read that in His favor there is life. That is what He is looking for - growth and life. He says that our weeping may endure for a night. In some cases that night represents this life. But there is joy, there is a brief interlude, and we will one day awaken when morning comes and joy will be there. In this life weeping produces character and fruit. Sometimes comfort and joy come through repentance, but this life is not where our comfort and joy are.

Lastly, let's look at the perfection of God's plan found in Revelation.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."  
(Revelation 21:1-4 NKJV)

The songwriter said, "But out there beyond the horizon there is more, there's more." Another song put it, "Some golden daybreak, Jesus will come." I want us to look at three factors in this passage.

1- Look at what God is going to do. In verses 1-3 He is physically and personally going to come and make His home with us forever.

2- He is physically and personally going to come to you as an individual, bend down and personally wipe away every tear you

## Learning to Mourn

have ever shed. I don't know what that does for you, but I think that is comforting. He will personally come and wipe away every tear from your eyes.

3- In verse 4, we see what life will be like. There will be no more death. There will be no cemeteries in heaven, nothing but life. There will be no more sorrow or cause for grief. Now you mourn, but then there will be joy. Those who are now filled with laughter about the wrong things will then have weeping. There will be no more crying for the righteous. God is going to perform instant surgery. I don't know if He will use a laser beam or some other method, but He is going to close your tear ducts, because you will never need to use them again. There will be no more pain. He is going to take away your hospital insurance cards. You will never need them again.

I want to ask you what your concept of heaven is. On a scale of 1 to 10, how excited do you get when you think about heaven? Now think of how excited you get over a filet mignon or a Wendy's double burger. Think about how excited you get over a new car, a new house or a new dress. Think about how excited you get over a basketball game, a baseball game or a football game. Think about how excited you get over something your child does, or your dog does, or something a friend does. I think, if you are honest with yourself, you will be disarmed and amazed at how insensitive you and I are to the reality of eternity in heaven. If you want to really know what heaven means to you, ask your children to give you their concept of heaven. Whatever you have imparted to them is pretty much what is important to you.

Unfortunately, Easter and eternity are not a reality to everybody. If you have never personally transferred the control of your life to Jesus Christ, you may be dressed for Easter and bound for a special dinner party, but Easter can't be that exciting to you. In fact, heaven can't be very exciting to you. This must sound like a fairy tale to you, an escape of the grim realities of life. Without Jesus Christ, funerals are permanent grief. Sunsets bring terror for there may be no tomorrow. Tornadoes and acts of destruction can bring nothing but fear and depression. My friend, if you are without Christ today, that is no way to live, and it is no way to die. Eternity is real. Life is real. Your choices are life or death. The choices are a life where there are no more tears or a life where that is all you will have. One step of faith on your part can roll away that stone of unbelief, and you can invite Jesus Christ to be your

## Learning to Mourn

Lord. All you have to do is to tell Him that you are grieved, that you repent of your sins, and invite Him to forgive you and change your life. What an Easter that would be for you.

I want to remind all of us that God has placed us for a season in a world that is filled with sin and filled with needs. He has told us to enter into that world with mind, emotion, and will. He has told us to learn to experience and express grief to the point of weeping. That, my friends, is Calvary. He has assured us that if we know Him, tears are temporary. Joy is eternal. Heaven is real. That, my friends, is Easter.

**dtm** DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230  
210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778  
[www.dtm.org](http://www.dtm.org) • [dtm@dtm.org](mailto:dtm@dtm.org) • © Russell Kelfer

(11.22.13)