

## THOSE WHO MOURN AGAINST THE GRAIN - Part 3 Ben Rudolph

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Good morning Life Fellowship. It is good to see you all here this morning. Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew Chapter 5 as we continue our series on The Beatitudes called 'Against the Grain.' We began this series a couple of weeks ago and the whole idea is that Jesus is calling us today to live not what is natural to us, or normal in our society, but according to His kingdom and His ways.

I am not sure how many of you remember the first funeral that you ever went to. Do you have any recollections of that? I remember that I was four years old, and I was at the funeral of my great grandfather, my grandmother's dad. I don't remember how old he was when he died, but I was a young child. My great grandfather's main job was a farmer, but he was also an itinerant preacher. He would prepare one sermon a month and preach it four times at four little country churches in western New York outside of Buffalo.

My great grandfather had thirteen children so his funeral was a big funeral. I just remember there were lots of people there, and even as a four year old I remember that day and being in that moment. I remember that environment, and I could sense that something was not right. All of these people were normally happy but I saw my grandmother and other people crying. But as a young child I didn't really grasp the gravity of that moment or really have the emotions to know what to do with the reality of death.

And when it comes to mourning, the idea of mourning, I think a lot of us today are just as uncomfortable, or maybe we don't even understand it like I was at four years old. Here is what I know, when it comes to mourning, when it comes to this sadness, most of us have a very unique relationship with emotions, do we not? Some of us in this room are thinkers. Others of us in this room are feelers. And so some of us when it comes to emoting things we are good with that, while others of us are not sure really how to process those emotions. But the idea is when it comes to emotions not being bad or good; we just need to realize that we all do have emotions.

I want you to see how in this text as Jesus is teaching that He is engaging our emotions in this moment. Remember He brings His disciples up on the mountain and He is teaching them these Beatitudes, the "***Blessed are those***" who are like this and like that. The first one we looked at last week was "***Blessed are those who are poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***" And this idea of being poor in spirit carries the understanding of you and me by nature being desperately in need of God to save us. Realizing there is nothing good inside of us that make it possible for us to earn or work to receive the kingdom of heaven. Realizing we have to depend on God and that we must go to Jesus in the fullness of what He offers us to receive His grace and His goodness through His death and His resurrection that He offers on our behalf.

When it comes to being poor in spirit it engages our minds to think, '*Do I see myself, do I understand the condition of my heart, and the reality of who I am, and who*

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*God is, and my need for Him?’ It engages our minds. Now all of a sudden Jesus says, “**Blessed are those who mourn.**” And I believe that these Beatitudes are a process of one building upon the other. What Jesus is saying is, ‘*We first have to understand how poor in spirit we are.*’ That is engaging the mind. Next He is saying He wants us to engage our hearts over the brokenness of sin, over the brokenness of evil in the world. Whether it is evil that we have done or evil done to us, what God is saying is there should be an emotional response to the darkness that is in the world.*

Now that is hard for us to understand, because if we are thinkers we are just wanting the facts and we will process them and then do what we need to do. And then the others of us who are more emotional just go where our emotions lead us. But whether you are a thinker or a feeler, I think both groups of people have a hard time with mourning. Because when it comes to showing sadness or feeling something deeply about something, the thinkers are like, ‘*Do I really have to?*’ And if you are the emotional type of person, someone who lets their emotions kind of lead them, the way you think about things is, ‘*I don’t want to feel sad; I would much rather feel good.*’

So when it comes to us understanding and processing these things, we realize that mourning is not easy or fun for any of us. We would rather laugh than be sad, right? All of us know when things go viral it is usually something like sharing memes and jests, or videos of things that make us laugh, and that is because we like to be funny and laugh at things. How many of you remember the Chewbacca mom video of four years ago? If you haven’t seen it, do yourself a favor, wait till the service is over, and then go to YouTube and watch the Chewbacca mom video, and you will laugh. This woman makes a video and it goes viral within hours with tens of thousands of people watching it.

And that goes to show that we love to laugh. We want to be happy. No one is like, ‘*This is the saddest video so make sure you share it.*’ We don’t do that. That is not normal or natural for us to do that. So what we have to do is confront the part of our hearts that maybe we haven’t really processed, or we have not gone through the responding emotions when we fully realize the sin and the evil that is in this world.

Here is what we know; the reason why Jesus is inviting us into mourning is because He wants us to be comforted. Let’s look at the Beatitude in Chapter 5 and verse 4. “***Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.***” What is Jesus saying? He is saying that there is a correlation and a relationship between mourning and comfort. Comfort is one of those desires that our soul craves. All of us want comfort. All of us will do whatever we can to comfort ourselves, whether it is, ‘*I will eat a half gallon of ice cream tonight because it comforts me,*’ or it is, ‘*I will binge watch this show for the next seventeen hours because I just need some time to comfort myself.*’ *I need to escape the hardship and trials of this world and I am just looking for something to comfort me.*’

Comfort is something we all crave. But what Jesus is saying here is that there are no shortcuts to comfort. Genuine comfort, true comfort, comfort that really satisfies our

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soul comes only from Him. Remember the phrase here is “*Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted,*” and that word ‘blessed’ which we looked at two weeks ago means ‘to be satisfied.’ If your soul is craving comfort today it is because it needs to process through something that is leading you to sadness or mourning inside of you.

So we have to confront these things, and here is the main idea - there are no shortcuts to comfort. There are no shortcuts to comfort. The idea that Jesus is giving here is that there is a way in which He will help us to feel better, because the idea of comfort is this - when you are comforted, you feel better. And here is what I love about Jesus. Jesus is not just giving us the intellectual realities by which we have to believe in; He is also inviting us to believe in the emotional satisfaction that He can give us. Both of those take faith. Whether it is engaging our minds, or our hearts, He is confronting us on our level of faith to say, ‘*Can you trust me with this?*’

All of us are looking for comfort, but will we go to God for it? This idea of taking shortcuts is normal, this is natural for us. We will quickly say, ‘*Just give me the pill.*’ A year or so ago I got a frozen shoulder and I think I shared an illustration or two about that, but a frozen shoulder means you can barely move your arm. I went to the doctor and got a prescription for rehab. I had to go for twenty-four sessions of rehab two times a week. Now listen, I like doing everything quickly. I am like just get it done, and hurry up about it.

So I go to rehab for two sessions and they told me what I had to do. They gave me exercise homework to do every single day to help get my shoulder back to normal. And I was like, ‘*Can’t you just give me a pill, please?*’ I didn’t want to do all that exercise and work; I didn’t want to go through the process of 24 sessions of rehab. And I was just praying, ‘*God, please can’t you just zap my shoulder.*’ Have any of you ever prayed and asked God to zap you for whatever it might be? I just wanted God to zap my shoulder and make me happy again. And we just want God to zap our lives.

Now God can zap us, okay? He is fully capable and powerful to give us in the moment a miraculous work. I am not saying He can’t do that, but I think for the most part that most of our lives look like this – God takes us through the valley, as the song says. He takes us through the darkness. He helps us through the process and the journey of the hurt and the evil so that we discover how good and wonderful He is. And there are no shortcuts to comfort.

Many times I think we like to think that there are some kinds of shortcuts to get what we want. Like if I come to church, and I do this or that, then God is going to help me feel better. And we just want this uplifting feeling. The songs this morning were kind of heavy, did you notice that? They were heavier because this text this morning is heavier. We don’t know what to do sometimes with that because we go to church to feel uplifted. ‘*That was such an uplifting song. That was such an uplifting sermon. I just want to be uplifted.*’ But God sometimes wants us to come down because that is the

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reality of life. And the last thing we want to be in this room is to be fake. Let's not pretend that we can just sing and clap, when sometimes we may just hate our lives. Is there a song about hating my life right now? 'Jason, can you find a song about hating our lives because that is how I feel.' ***"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted."***

So what we are going to do is first of all look at the necessity of mourning, because we cannot receive comfort until we learn how to mourn. And secondly we are going to look at the nature of comfort, so the necessity of mourning and the nature of comfort. It says, ***"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted."***

If we could put ourselves on that hillside as a first century Jew, we would find that it is interesting when we heard those phrases: ***"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,"*** and ***"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted,"*** because we would have thought of an Old Testament passage like that. Our mind would have gone to a passage of Scripture in the Old Testament that literally said these same words. And it is found in Isaiah Chapter 61 so let's turn there to see this just briefly.

If you were here about a month ago when I preached on the Christmas series and the gift of grace you remember that I preached on Isaiah Chapter 61 because this was the text that Jesus preached from in the synagogue in Nazareth. And so here is what I know, Jesus must love Isaiah Chapter 61. And if Jesus loves Isaiah Chapter 61 then I think I should love Isaiah Chapter 61 also. Because if you hear what He says in the first two verses of Isaiah Chapter 61, you are going to realize that much of what Jesus' life and ministry was about fulfilling what Isaiah Chapter 61 is all about.

So let's look at what it says in verse 1: ***"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor."*** Okay, there is the poor we see in the ***"Blessed is the poor in spirit."*** ***"He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn."*** To comfort all who - what? To comfort all who mourn. That is the exact wording that Jesus gives in The Beatitudes: ***"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted."***

Those Jews are going to say, 'Wow that is Isaiah Chapter 61.' Here is what Jesus is saying - in order for us to really understand, to receive the kingdom, we have to be people who know how to mourn. Mourning is always related to loss. It is related to something that in our minds and in our souls feels like something that could have happened that should have been true is no longer true. The pain, the disappointment, the betrayal, and the brokenness happen because of the sin and evil that has evaded our lives and left a mark. It leaves a scar. And God's heart is broken when evil comes into the

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world, when evil is here. And if God's heart is broken over evil, our hearts must be broken over evil as well.

Here is what it means to mourn. This is the definition I came up with. To mourn is to become fully aware of the brokenness of our world and the work of evil in me and toward me. Let me say that again. To mourn is to become fully aware of the brokenness of our world and the work of evil in me and toward me.

So what we have to do is to mourn the evil, the sin that not only we have done, but that has been done to us. We are going to look at both of those together because we have to learn how to do both. Maybe we are good at one and not the other, but we need to look at both of them because the reality is if we do not learn how to mourn over our own sin, if we do not have an emotional response to our rebellion against God, it will be hard for us to receive the fullness of the comfort that God offers.

There are a lot of passages in the Scriptures that deal with this, and we are not going to read all of them. I am just going to read a couple of them to you because there is a lot in Scripture about this. Like in Psalms 51 when David is responding to his adultery and he says, ***"Restore to me the joy of my salvation."*** His joy was broken inside of him. But there is one passage in particular I want us to turn to and that is in James Chapter 4 and verses 8 through 10. Now the first part of verse 8 and verse 10 are verses that we love, but it is the middle part that is really hard for us.

***"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."*** *'I love that. I am going to put that on my refrigerator on Monday.'* ***"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."*** *'Yeah.'* Let's keep reading: ***"Cleanse your hands, you sinners."*** *'I don't think I want to write that on my refrigerator.'* ***Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom."*** Do you want to put that on your mirror in the morning to reflect on? James Chapter 4 and verse 9: ***"Be wretched and mourn and weep."*** Write that in calligraphy and put it on your mirror or refrigerator, okay? I don't think that is going to be on a coffee mug people, but it's Scripture. It is God's Word to us.

And I find it fascinating that James says, ***"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you,"*** but when you draw near to God, when you become honest with who you are and honest with God about your sin, the response will be mourning. It is repentance. Verse 10: ***"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you."*** There is a process that God takes us through and if we do not honestly look at our sin and respond to sin in the way God wants us to, we will miss out on the comfort that God wants to give to us.

Here is what we know - when we sin, when we do evil there is something that it does to us and it should make us feel bad. God has given us a conscience and the Holy Spirit convicts us and makes us feel something when we sin. But here is what we have to

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be careful of, when we say mourn and weep and be wretched, this is not self-pity. This is not self-loathing that James is talking about, because we can do that. We can feel bad about our sin, but we really just feel bad for ourselves. That is not repentance and that is not godly sorrow.

In fact the next verse I want to read to you helps us to understand the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. In II Corinthians Chapter 7 and verse 10 it says this. ***“For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.”*** Listen, it is one thing to feel bad about our sin, that is normal, that is natural. We can weep, but do we weep because we got caught? Are we sad because of what it makes us look like? Because if our weeping and our sadness is all about what it has done to us, that is selfish, and that is pride. Self-loathing and condemnation and contempt and pity parties are not repentance.

When James says to be wretched and mourn and weep, what he is saying is we need to understand how our sin, how our evil has affected others, has hurt others. Do we sense and feel the pain that we have brought to others? And then even greater, do we sense and feel the pain that we have brought to the heart of God? Can we understand the pain that we have brought to our Savior? See, that is the difference in godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.

Godly sorrow is this idea of understanding the sin that we have committed, the sin we have violated the love and truth of God, and our heart breaks over what we have done. Not because of how it makes us look, or how it makes us feel, but because we understand that we have hurt other people and that we have hurt God. That is godly grief. And that is the grief that we have to ask ourselves when is the last time we have shed tears over our sins? When is the last time we have done that? And again this is not pity parties, and this is not us staying in that state. This is understanding fully what we have done.

Now not only do we have to look honestly about our own sin, and hopefully that should lead us to an emotional response, but we also have to look at the sin done to us. Maybe we are sitting here this morning and maybe the darkness that we feel, the brokenness that we feel around us and in us, this evil that is done to us we have never really processed. We take the abuse that happened to us. We take the rejection that has happened to us. We take the betrayal that has happened to us. We take all the bad things that we have experienced, we put them in a nice little box and we put it in a closet in our heart. Then we shut the door and we don't want to talk about that anymore. We don't want to deal with that again.

And when we do that we hijack God's ability to give us true comfort. And those wounds, that pain is brought into our life because we never processed it with our Lord and Savior. It just becomes something that is underlying and we are constantly looking for something to satisfy the soul's desire for comfort. We can't get it because we have never mourned the hurt that has happened to us. So what we need to do is to diagnose

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those things that we have buried, things that have been ignored for a long time, that need to be brought into the light and in the presence of a holy, loving and gentle Savior.

A few months ago my daughter went through some health issues. It was big enough that my wife and I were sitting there thinking, *'Ibuprofen is not helping. Something is going on and we need to take her to the hospital.'* So we rushed her to the ER and when you are at the ER and you don't know what is wrong, the people there ask you a million questions. *'Where does it hurt? How long has it hurt? How bad is the pain?'* And it seems like a hundred diagnostic questions have to be answered. But what they are doing is this - they are trying to eliminate what isn't and find out what it is.

*'Does it hurt here? Does it hurt there? When did it start? What other symptoms do you have?'* And what they are doing is crossing off things that it isn't, crossing things off or a list to eliminate certain things so it can be narrowed down to what they think is really the problem. And what we have to do with our pain and hurts is to do this ourselves. Not for God, because God already knows where our pain is. Sometimes we know we are hurting inside and we realize we need to do some digging and ask some diagnostic questions for ourselves to know where the pain is coming from. What is the hurt and wound that maybe I have ignored for a long time? And then we need to stop ignoring, burying, numbing, medicating, disregarding or making light of the evil that has been done to us and by us.

I think one of the most beautiful passages of Scripture is Psalms 56 and verse 8 where it says that God collects all of our tears in a bottle. Think about that for a moment. Do you realize your tears are sacred? Every time you weep over the evil that has impacted your life, God knows it. He collects them, He doesn't disregard them, or make light of them, and we shouldn't either.

Now this is difficult for many of us because we are thinkers and not feelers, and we don't like having to process our emotions. But we need to name them and go through the process of mourning. I think one of the most beautiful books of the Bible ever written is the book of Lamentations. The entire book is filled with the raw honesty of pain. Lamentations was written by Jeremiah, and he is called 'the weeping prophet.' In every chapter he is overlooking the city of Jerusalem that has been burnt and razed to the ground by King Nebuchadnezzar. He has seen the temple destroyed. He has seen people abused and pillaged and it is a horrible and horrendous scene. Not because of anything Jeremiah has done, but the people and the city that he loves has been completely destroyed.

And I love this line that Jeremiah says in Lamentations Chapter 1 and verse 12: ***"Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?"*** He is saying that with what is going on they do not understand what he was feeling. They don't understand. And sometimes there are things that happen that you go through that no one else can feel. Jeremiah goes on and says: ***"Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow."*** That is a very profound

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phrase because there are things by which you feel because of evil done to you that you need to feel. No one can feel that sorrow for you. No one can process that pain for you. It is sorrow like no other sorrow; it is just your sorrow. And we need to learn how to bring it to the Lord.

Sometimes if we don't know how to feel, we need to invite Jesus into that. Jesus was someone who wept. He mourned in John Chapter 11 over the death of his friend, Lazarus. He wept over the city of Jerusalem as he approached it one time. He longed to care for us like a hen cares for their chicks. Jesus felt sorrow because of sin. And if you don't know how to feel it, invite Jesus to show you how. We cannot disregard this. We have to understand the necessity of mourning. There is no shortcut to comfort, and if we don't go through the process of mourning we will not receive what God wants to give us.

And that leads us to second part which is the nature of comfort. In going back to Matthew Chapter 5 He says, "***Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.***" There are two details about that last phrase that I think we need to pay attention to. The first one is "***for they shall be comforted.***" That verb is in the future tense, that means it is going to happen. When it comes to comfort we have to believe that it is in the future, it is a hope that we will receive.

So we can't get it in our timing and in our way. *'I want comfort and I want it now, and that is why I will eat that half gallon of ice cream tonight.'* Not only is it a future hope that we will receive, but the verb is in a passive tense. In the Greek there is active, middle and passive. And if something is in the active tense it means it is an action that you yourself are doing or should be doing. But passive verbs are actions that are done to you. And that is very profound, because if we are going to receive comfort we have to confront the control freak inside of all of us and say, *'I will get comfort and I will be the one that tells you when I get it and how I get it.'* That is what we do. We are masters at believing that we can comfort ourselves.

And what Jesus is saying is if we want to receive true comfort, there are no shortcuts. We have to go through the valley of mourning and we cannot get it on our own. We have to get it from Him. There is something that only God can give us when we mourn and when we go through the process of feeling the pain of the brokenness inside of us. It is only when we invite Him into it that we will find the comfort that He alone can give us.

And again, that confronts our faith. Can we trust God that He is going to give to us exactly what we crave? If comfort is what we crave and we are not getting the comfort in the way that we want, or in the timing that we want, we can end up wondering if God really cares. And that is not normal. In fact I was reading this week and there is a story in the book of Mark where Jesus gets in a boat with His disciples and they are crossing the Sea of Galilee. A storm comes up and the disciples who are fishermen and good with boats still think they are about to drown. So they are freaked out. And Jesus is

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sleeping even though I don't quite understand how you could sleep when it is raining and storming, but He was obviously tired and he was asleep.

And the disciples wake Him up and the first thing they say to Him is: *'Don't you care about us?'* I want us to be in that moment because to say something like that to someone is like saying, *'You don't really understand what we are feeling right now, because if you understood what we are feeling you would do something about it.'* And what we need to learn is that we have to yield and submit to the things which we are feeling and then trusting God with those feelings. Maybe you have never trusted anyone with those feelings, but can you trust God?

I want to tell you why you can trust Jesus. Let's go back to Isaiah Chapter 61 because we read the end of verse 2 which said, ***"To comfort all who mourn."*** What does the comfort of God look like? When it says He will comfort us in theory we would say, *'I believe that because the Bible says it.'* But how do we know it is true? God tells us what He gives to us. Look again in verse 2. ***"To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn."***

Look at verse 3: ***"To grant to those who mourn in Zion – to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He may be glorified."*** See, what God does with us is He takes the pain after we unbury it, after we unpack it and look at it, whether it is the evil that we have committed or the evil done to us, and we have to be honest about it, and we have to give it to God. And we have to let Him exchange it for us, because He can take the pain, and He can take the brokenness, and He can take the evil, the betrayal, the sorrow and the grief and He can give us something different.

That is what it said. ***"To give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes."*** In those days when they mourned they put ashes on their heads. And God said He was going to give them a beautiful ornate turban instead of ashes. People in those days to show mourning wore sackcloth. They didn't bathe or do anything to keep themselves looking good. And God said He would give them the oil of gladness. After the people refreshed themselves they would put oil on their body to cleanse themselves.

There was an exchange that happened here. ***"The oil of gladness instead of mourning. The garment of praise instead of a faint spirit."*** There was an exchange that happened when God took their pain. And the reason why God does this is amazing. Look at the last phrase in verse 3 where it says: ***"That He may be glorified."*** Now there are two different words for glory. The number one way that the word glory is used is to mean 'weight,' meaning the weight of glory, the heaviness of God. The word glory is also the same word that means beautiful. It is almost the same word when it says, ***"To give them a beautiful headdress."*** What He was saying was that God was beautiful. He wants us to see how beautiful and wonderful He is when He can take what is broken,

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hurting, painful and sorrowful in us and give us something different, something great and something wonderful.

Now how does God do this? How in the world does the God of the universe exchange this? What transpired to allow this exchange to happen? And that leads us to another passage in Isaiah Chapter 53. And Isaiah Chapter 53 is a prophecy of the life and the person of Jesus Christ. And Isaiah Chapter 53 explains why Jesus can say, “***Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted,***” because he is the one who knows how to exchange the mourning for comfort. And that is because He has done it Himself; He has accomplished it and He can identify with it.

Listen to what it says in verse 3: “***He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.***” Isn’t it amazing that we have a God that we worship that has not resided merely in Heaven, though that is enough for us to garner all the praise and worship of our life; but we have a God who chose to be acquainted with sorrow and grief, which was our sorrow and grief.

“***And as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.***” There it is right there. See, Jesus is the only one who is able to carry every sin that we have committed, every evil that we have chosen to do against God and against humanity. Jesus alone carries it and He carried it with Him to the cross where He bore it for you and me. The reason why we can mourn and why our mourning can change to gladness and joy is because He is the one who carried it.

The reason why we can take our pain for the sin we have done, and the evil that has invaded our lives by others, is because Jesus is the one who carried that sin on the cross. He has felt it more than we have. He can identify with our pain more than anyone else because the very sin committed against us, and the very sin committed by us, the fullness of that pain was felt in His own body. That is our Savior. That is our Lord.

Look what it says in verse 5: “***But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.***” The healing that takes place between the mourning and the comforting is something that only Jesus can do. And there are no shortcuts, there are no therapists, there are no drugs, there are no drinks, there are no foods, and there is no process that can heal anything like Jesus. And we must learn to trust Him with our sorrow and our pain.

You know when we have a child who falls down and scrapes their knee, as a parent we want to love and comfort them. My wife was so good at loving and comforting our children when they scraped their knees. And I was kind of a dad who would say, ‘*Are you really going to cry over this?*’ And as a parent we know when our children fall down and scrap something or bump something our job is to kiss it. We kiss that boo-boo and then say, ‘*Now doesn’t that feel better?*’ We know that there is no antiseptic coming

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from our lips; the actual physical pain is not going away. It is still there, but they kind of feel better after the kiss.

The word comfort as used in “*Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted,*” is the word *Paraclete*, meaning ‘to come along side of.’ As a parent we can get down to our children’s level, put our arms around them, kiss that boo-boo, and give them words of encouragement. Jesus offers that to us, but He also offers more than that to us. He not only puts His arms around us and comforts us, but He also will take that pain from us. That is how good our God is, and that is why He is the only one that can truly bring comfort to our soul.

All the disappointments, all the discouragements, all the sorrows and the mourning that we carry have to be felt by us, and then when we feel it we have to learn how to invite Jesus into that pain so He can give us comfort. What are the shortcuts that you have tried to get comfort this morning? I have a couple of questions and then we are done this morning.

Number one – what is the brokenness in your story that you need to mourn? What is it that God is telling you to unpack and deal with? We need to name it; we need to feel something that we haven’t felt because He wants to comfort us. He wants to give us the comfort that our soul craves.

Number two – what is this false comfort that you are turning to? You know when it comes to comforting, are you taking it upon yourself to be in control of that comfort, or are you allowing God to give you the true comfort? Are you managing your comfort or are you letting God manage it? What is the thing you keep going to for that false comfort?

Number three – will you receive what Jesus is offering you this morning? He is offering you the opportunity for healing. He is offering you the opportunity to be made whole. When evil comes into our world and it affects us in ways that we can’t even fully grasp, there is a brokenness, a fracturing, that happens in our soul that only Jesus can put back together again. And that is what I want to invite you to this morning.

*The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.*