

## **Blessed are those who mourn, Blessed are the meek....**

*"Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted"*

Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount so that His Father would get the glory for the way the disciples lived (Matt 5:16) The aim was to create a radically different lifestyle that would make people think about the value of God as they see a life lived under the king of kings.

It is one thing to acknowledge our spiritual poverty before God, it is another to grieve and mourn over it. Jesus doesn't mean we should look miserable all the time, but is referring to a more encompassing sorrow than that at the death of a loved one. Mourn here refers to mourning the loss of innocence, righteousness, and self-respect.

**How do you think this beatitude reflects the heart and character of God?**

**What do you think genuine mourning over sin looks like? How is that different from self-pity? See 2 Corinthians 7:10-11. Also Is 6:1-8, Ps 51.**

**What do you think it means to be comforted when you mourn?**

**Does this beatitude also encompass a mourning for the sin we see around us, affecting others? Why or why not? How can you put into practice some of what you talk about?**

Those who are aware of their own sinfulness and are truly repentant (turn away from it and back to God and his ways) will be comforted by the only comfort that can relieve their distress; the free grace and forgiveness of God. According to the OT prophets, one of the names of the Messiah was 'consolation' or 'comforter' who would 'bind up the broken-hearted'. Jesus brings healing and speaks peace and forgiveness to our consciences. We still mourn over the pain and suffering which sin spreads through our world, but we look forward to the consummation of the kingdom - when Jesus returns, to heaven - when sin will be no more and where 'God will wipe away every tear, and there will be no more death, or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' (Rev 21:4)

**Reflect**

*On the outside most of us live lives that appear 'good'. Why do we find it hard to admit to sin? What are some of the ways you avoid 'mourning' sin or slip into self-pity? What do you need to do to remedy that?*

*'Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth'*

**What images does the word 'meek' portray to people today? Is it seen as a positive or negative character trait?**

## **Blessed are those who mourn, Blessed are the meek....**

It is one thing to acknowledge our own sinfulness and poverty of Spirit in God's sight and to mourn over that, but it is difficult to allow others to think that of us.

This is often because we lack meekness. The Greek word used for meek cannot be explained by one English word. It can mean gentle, of gentle spirit, humble, patient and longsuffering. It is also one of the fruit of the Spirit – translated gentleness in NIV. At the time of Jesus it conveyed the ideas of being balanced, controlled and the opposite of proud. It is not weakness and inaction or niceness. Edmund Burke once said "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" – this doesn't fit with the hungering and thirsting after righteousness that follows.

**There were times Jesus stood up to religious leaders etc (Matt 21:12-17, John 8:1-11, Matt 26:53-4, John 19:10-11) and certainly didn't show weakness. In all those occasions what was his concern? How does that help us understand meekness?**

Psalm 37.11 uses a virtually identical phrase to the beatitude in summing up the previous 10 verses.  
**How does Psalm 37.1-11 expand our understanding of what it means to be meek?**

**What do you think it means when it says the meek will 'inherit the earth'? How do you think that relates to the first beatitude?**

In our society it is the strong who survive, yet in the upside down kingdom we are to be meek. Meekness is a true view of yourself, expressed in attitude and conduct with respect to others. This makes us gentle, humble and patient in our dealings with others. Dietrich Bonhoeffer described the meek as "*They renounce every right of their own and live for the sake of Jesus Christ, they leave their rights to God showing they do not belong to this earth, those who renounce this earth will possess the new one*"

**Bringing it all together – what are the key characteristics of meekness and what is the significance of the promise that the meek will inherit the earth? How does this beatitude follow on from the previous two, and relate to the next?**

So in conclusion, what is Jesus saying so far in the beatitudes? To enter the kingdom you must realise your spiritual poverty and need of God, in showing true repentance you will receive the comfort of forgiveness and grace. Being amazed at the way God treats you despite the reality of your sin, and being confident of your place in the kingdom to come you can allow others to see the true you and treat them as God treats you and in so doing they will see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

**What are some of the situations we need to start showing more meekness, individually or collectively? How do we start to do it? What will it look like?**