

Happiness Through Mourning?

Ponder: Aren't happiness and mourning opposites?

Scripture: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4, NKJV).

"Paradox: A statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory, but in reality expresses a possible truth" (dictionary.com).

Surely the second beatitude qualifies as a paradox. "Blessed" is frequently and correctly rendered as "happy." Happiness and mourning are opposites. Happy are those who mourn? On the surface, that sounds bizarre. But really, it isn't. Here's why:

First, happiness (blessedness) doesn't refer to superficial happiness such as children experience with new toys or adults when they receive a promotion at work. Biblical blessedness depends not on outward physical circumstances, but on our relationship with God. The blessed person enjoys tranquility and calmness because he is in fellowship with God, regardless of earthly conditions.

The mourning of which Jesus spoke also differs from what one might usually think. People commonly mourn the death of loved ones. Job wrote of mourning over severe illness: "his flesh will be in pain over it, and his soul will mourn over it" (Job 14:22). But such mourning, appropriate though it is, doesn't fit the context of the beatitudes. There, the Lord began by saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3).

Jesus wasn't placing a premium on being gloomy and negative! Rather, one who is poor in spirit recognizes his own sinfulness and understands he has nothing of worth to offer to God. Worldly people typically care little or nothing about their sins. "So what? I sin, you sin, he sins, she sins, they sin . . . everybody sins! What's the big deal?"

But the blessed person mourns over his sins. Those who mourn over their sins will then seek and receive God's forgiveness, which results in genuine happiness. Paul wrote of godly sorrow that produces repentance, leading to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10).

Are you happy? I don't mean superficially happy due to outward circumstances, but Biblically blessed because you are in fellowship with God. Spiritual happiness requires that you mourn over your sins – a godly sorrow that produces repentance and motivates you to seek and receive God's forgiveness on His terms.

Happiness through mourning – it may sound odd, but it's right!

Song: "I Bring My Sins To Thee"

Prayer: God our Father, we confess that we have nothing of worth to offer to You. Break our hearts to genuinely mourn over our sins, and forgive us as we comply with Your holy will. In Jesus' name, Amen.