

ST. ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
SARASOTA, FL.

STUDY NOTES FOR ~~SAKLC CONVERSATIONS~~
JANUARY 28, 2016

INITIAL RESPONSIVE WORDS OF ANCIENT CONFESSION: PSALM 51

(..but, using the modern Message translation)

WOMEN: ¹⁻³ Generous in love—God, give me grace!
Huge in mercy—wipe out my bad record.
Scrub away my guilt,
soak out my sins in your laundry.
I know how bad I've been;
my sins are staring me down.

MEN: ⁴⁻⁶ *You're the One I've violated, and you've seen
it all, seen the full extent of my evil.
You have all the facts before you;
whatever you decide about me is fair.
I've been out of step with you for a long time,
in the wrong since before I was born.
What you're after is truth from the inside out.
Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.*

WOMEN: ⁷⁻¹⁵ O God, soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,
scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.
Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,
set these once-broken bones to dancing.
Don't look too close for blemishes,
give me a clean bill of health.
God, make a fresh start in me,
shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.
Don't throw me out with the trash,
or fail to breathe holiness in me.
Bring me back from gray exile,
put a fresh wind in my sails!

Give me a job teaching rebels your ways
so the lost can find their way home.
Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God,
and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.
Unbutton my lips, dear God;
I'll let loose with your praise.

MEN: ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ *Going through the motions doesn't please you,
a flawless performance is nothing to you.
I learned God-worship
when my pride was shattered.
Heart-shattered lives ready for love
don't for a moment escape God's notice.*

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ *Make Zion the place you delight in,
repair Jerusalem's broken-down walls.
Then you'll get real worship from us,
acts of worship small and large,
Including all the bulls
they can heave onto your altar!*

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison)

THE BLESSEDNESS OF MOURNING – JESUS' 2nd BEATITUDE

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4 NRSV)

"Blessed [forgiven, refreshed by God's grace] ***are those who mourn*** [over their sins and repent], ***for they will be comforted*** [when the burden of sin is lifted]. (Amplified Bible)

"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you." (The Message)

"Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them" (Good News Bible)

"Happy are people who grieve, because they will be made glad." (Common English Bible)

SEVERAL INITIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What situations and events do we mourn?
2. Why do we mourn?
3. How do our mourning customs differ from those of other cultures?
4. How does our mourning in 2016 differ from other times in history?
5. Do you agree/disagree that in these modern times mourners are pressured to get it over with and get on with their lives?

Brief Review: Last week, as we examined the *first* Beatitude, we observed that there needs to be an *emptying* of our lives, before there can be a *filling* – we must become **poor in spirit** prior to becoming rich in God’s blessings:

- First, there must be a recognition of our unworthiness before God, prior to any acceptance of His salvation.
- Only as human pride and self-assurance are removed from our lives, can we bow before God and humbly submit to His Will.
- In the first Beatitude the promise was that those who are poor in spirit already **have** the Kingdom. In the second Beatitude the promise is for the future, for those who mourn **will be** comforted.
- Thus, this *second* Beatitude begins that filling process and allows us to begin to fill our lives with God’s blessings.

How often has our experience been parallel to that of David? (Psalm 55:6-8)

*⁶And I say, “O that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest;
⁷truly, I would flee far away;
I would lodge in the wilderness;
⁸I would hurry to find a shelter for myself
from the raging wind and tempest.”*

1. David's cry for comfort is a universal and ancient one; he wanted to be able to fly away from his troubles, pain and anguish.
2. This same cry has often been expressed by us and by all those, even today, who yearn for comfort.
3. Fortunately, David did find a source of comfort (Psalm 55:16) ¹⁶ ***But I call upon God, and the LORD will save me.***
4. David recommended this source of comfort to others (Psalm 55:22) ²² ***Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.***
5. David's expression sounds a lot like the prophet Isaiah when he wrote these words concerning the sad plight of the Jews during the Babylonian exile (Isaiah 40:31) ***“but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”***
6. The second Beatitude really expresses the same lesson that both David and Isaiah learned, namely – ***Blessed/Happy is the person whom the God of Heaven blesses!***

A) WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO “MOURN?”

1. In original Greek, the word is **“PENTHEO”** – it is the strongest of nine such words used to describe “mourning” in the N.T.
2. Basic translation: ***“to bewail, lament, mourn for...”***
3. An example: In O.T., this word is used to describe Jacob's grief when he thought that his son, Joseph was dead. (Genesis 37:34)

B) MOURNING FOR WHAT?

1. Various suggested interpretations:
 - a mourning over one's own bitter experiences in life...
 - a mourning over the sad circumstances that exist in the world (poverty, war, disease, unemployment)
 - a mourning over sin and our unworthiness before God
 - Humanly speaking, we seek to avoid any feelings of sadness, because our happiness depends on it. But happiness is not circumstantial, material, or emotional. It's spiritual; for it follows on the heels of mourning our sin.
2. Jesus' message was one of repentance (Matthew 4:17) ***“From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”***

- ...but, we cannot truly repent without godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) ***“For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.”***
- The blessing is not upon all who mourn, but upon those who mourn in reference to sin. They shall be comforted by the discovery and appropriation of God’s pardon.

C) **MOURNING OVER SIN**

1. **Jesus** was filled with sorrow over sins – not His own, but of others. Matthew sees him as the fulfillment to Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. 53:3-4)

***³ He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.***

***⁴ Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.***

2. **Jesus** wept with Mary and her gathered friends following the death of Lazarus, but not *for* Lazarus, himself. (John 11:35)
3. **Jesus** wept over the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44) ***⁴¹ As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”***
4. **Paul**, the apostle, speaking of his former life said: (Romans 7:24) ***“Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”***
5. Mourning over sin and its consequences is something that naturally follows one being “poor in spirit.”

How do we mourn our sin without giving into despair?

D) WHERE IS THE COMFORT?

- 1) Mourning ends in comfort only when it leads one to Christ.
- 2) The Gospel of Christ is the only real source of true comfort for those who are afflicted by sin (Luke 14:16-21)

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

- 3) Religion, according to the Bible, is neither a set of intellectual convictions nor a bundle of emotional feelings, but a combination of both; the former giving birth to the latter. Thus, the first two beatitudes cohere – first an intellectual acceptance of sin - being "poor in spirit" – followed by receiving comfort for that mourning.
- 4) Mourners are blessed/happy because they are the only ones who are forgiven. The happiness does not come from the mourning, it comes from God's response to it.

Someone has wisely written: *"Keep sin in your life and bottle it up, you'll see how ruinous it becomes. Confess it and see the freedom and the joy that comes in forgiveness!"*

E) HOW DO WE APPLY ALL THIS?

- 1) Mourning for sin drives us to God, just as St. Paul's infirmities made him realize how much he needed the Lord (2 Cor. 9-10) – *"but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong."*

- 2) David's mourning over his sin with Bathsheba drove him to seek God with a **"broken and a contrite heart."** (Psalm 51:1-19)

What is your only comfort in life and in death?

That I am not my own but belong to Jesus Christ!

What must you know to live and die in this comfort?

Three things:

- 1. Acknowledge that I am a sinner!**
- 2. Know that I have been set free from my sins through Jesus death and resurrection!**
- 3. Repeatedly give my praise and thankfulness to God for that deliverance!**

F) SOME FINAL CONCLUSIONS:

- 1) Parallel to this 2nd Beatitude is the invitation of Matthew 11:28 – ***"Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*** There is no difference between the 'mourning' of the Beatitude and the 'heavy laden' of the invitation; and there is no difference between the 'comfort' and the 'rest.' Both passages refer to remission of sins by the Gospel of Christ.
- 2) The 2nd Beatitude anticipated the good news of the Gospel as the means of comfort for the sin-laden world by removing the cause of mourning – 'the sin of the world.' Nothing else could alleviate that kind of mourning, or weaken the potency of sorrowing for sin, than the comfort provided by the Gospel upon which rests the hope of all human kind.
- 3) In Christ, alone, the weary soul can find peace! (John 14:27) ***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."***

*Compiled and published in 2016 by Rehemo Press (copyright pending)
...for SAKLC CONVERSATIONS_2016.01.28*