

The Rock: 03-20-2022

A year with the master

Title: Blessed are..

Scripture: Matthew 5:4 / Luke 22:54-62
(black bible Pg. 759/ ESV)

Theme:

Mourning is such a part of life, but many of us have a hard time with it. Jesus says those who mourn are comforted, but is it just loss and physical death that we mourn?

Introduction:

In the mid 1950's folk singer Pete Seeger sat down with his pen and eventually banjo, I am sure and took three words, added them to a few thousand-year-old text.

Turning them into lyrics, the song eventually flooded the mid 60's airways and anyone who listened sang the song by the Byrds.

To everything, turn, turn, turn, there is a season, turn turn, turn...

I don't know that the song has anything to do with the message today, but I

really like the song. Yet, I think it actually does.

Because in the melody of the song, it helps when one learns that there is indeed a season for everything under heaven.

There is a time to weep, a time to laugh. A time to mourn and a time to dance. If nothing else, this wisdom of Solomon brought to us by way of Pete Seeger and the Byrds, we are taught that there is to be a proper balance in our lives.

A time for everything under heaven, and this week we learn what mourning is and means. It is another very short, but very deep and rich statement Jesus makes:

-Matthew 5:4 (ESV)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The Story:

Continuing this week, it seems that journeying with our friend Peter again makes sense. There are many passages we could have gone, Ecclesiastes even, that we could settle on.

One of the questions Pastor Marty and I wrestled with these past weeks was: "What

does mourning mean as Jesus lays it out here?"

Ultimately, mourning comes from suffering loss. By definition in the Oxford Dictionary, it is: "The expression of deep sorrow for someone who has died."

But the word that Jesus used, 'pentheo' is defined as: A passionate lament or the anguish felt because of some sorrowful event, condition, or circumstance, such as death."

But not only physical death, and that is what we are going to unpack today. Because the one certain thing Jesus promises here is that all who mourn, will find comfort.

Again, so many places to go to see this. The woman who lost her son, and in the middle of the procession, Jesus steps in and raises her boy. Turning a funeral procession into a party line.

Or Lazarus, the friend of Jesus who had been dead four days, and two very angry sisters who felt Jesus lallygagged just a little too much in his efforts to get to them.

Peter, however, continued to draw my attention, the one we learned from last week. Pride always gets in the way of being poor in spirit.

He just couldn't get the whole servant-leadership piece of getting his feet washed. Until that is, he did get it. So much later so, that later in life he wrote about humility before God, about leading through serving, doing so with humility as the character of a pastor.

Again, as any honest person knows, that transformation didn't happen overnight. It was a life-time of faithfulness -with events along the way that helped Peter see himself more clearly in light of Jesus and Peter's own short-comings.

For thismorning, it is another lesson that came once again at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, the passion week we call it. Those days between Palm Sunday and Easter.

In the upper room we get the back story which will play out in real time in the temple courtyard. Peter once again. Along with his friends are still trying to figure out what Jesus is doing.

He's finished with the washing of their feet, and he goes right into telling them that one of them is going to betray Him to the authorities. A great conversation starter just before dinner, right?

I'm showing you true, genuine servant-leadership. I've taken the time to wash

all of your feet (Judas included), and now I want you to know, clean feet and all, one of you has a dark and dirty heart, as it were.

Not only did you miss what I have done, but you have missed who I AM!

They discover it's Judas, I'll leave him be as that will be Pastor Marty's task to look at that sad story. If we think otherwise let's examine our own hearts with a humble thankfulness before God that he keeps us.

As my Gramma always said: "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

It is here, in typical fashion where Peter in his own strength, flesh and boastfulness, once again gets himself in trouble with his mouth. Looking again at a text we visited last week:

-John 13:36-38 (ESV)

"Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times."

A very haunting statement! This is why we need to be slower in tossing Judas by the way. They all betrayed Jesus and abandoned Him.

Peter, as we see in Luke's telling of the gospel, was so very boastful:

-Luke 22:33 (ESV)

"Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."

He just didn't understand yet that he still had some dying to do in his flesh, and mourning the facts of his failures, so public as they will be.

As painful as this story is, we should remember a few things:

- 1- All scripture is given for our benefit and growth. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- 2- At any time, any one of us, in our actions are just like Peter. If we aren't careful to walk in genuine humility, knowing that it is Jesus who makes us stand, most especially in our weaknesses. (2 Corinthians 12:10)
- 3- God's grace is abundant. The difference between Judas and his sin, and Peter and his, is their hearts! It's their repentance or lack thereof.

There is a sorrow for doing something wrong, and then there is a sorrow which brings about genuine conviction ultimately leading to repentance.

No matter how painful it is for us, we must all come face to face with it and with Jesus. Judas did not. Peter, well, let's see:

-Luke 22:54-60 (ESV)

"Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed."

Wow! The detail Luke gives here about this complete collapse under pressure can

have come from only one source - Peter himself.

Luke, at some point, had to have sat down with Peter and asked the question: "What exactly happened that night in the temple courtyard?"

Peter, a much different man now, had to go back in his mind's eye to the place of his biggest failure. The night he failed Jesus.

John Piper once said that a thousand sorrows teach a man to preach, and Peter had his share of sorrows. But none so painful as this- the very thing he made clear to Jesus that he would not do, he did!

Luke grabs onto something Peter says and writes it here:

-Luke 22:61 (ESV)

"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times."

"The LORD turned and looked at Peter..."

Can you imagine? I can! The sickness in your gut and the unsettled pain in your spirit that screams: "I've been caught!"

We have all been there, in some way, at some point for some reason. But GOD...

This becomes a God moment in time. What are we going to do with that? Are we going to dig in our heels in our pride and power through, all the while gathering up excuses as to why it really wasn't my fault?

Or-will we be like Peter, and mourn?

-Luke 22:62 (ESV)

"And he went out and wept bitterly."

Weeping bitterly over our failure and miscalculation regarding our very selves.

Mourning ourselves and dying to ourselves, drives us to live for Christ. It is there where we understand God's grace and His goodness.

I wonder because at this point that is all I can do, but I wonder when Jesus looked at Peter, did Peter feel both conviction and compassion from the LORD?

I believe so. I say that because of all the evidence of the rest of Peter's recorded life. He was not a perfect man, none of us are. But he was a forgiven man who understood God's grace.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones again, is so helpful to me. He says regarding mourning:

"...we should approach it all in terms of this Sermon on the Mount, which starts with negatives. We have to be poor in spirit before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Negative before positive. And here again is another example of exactly the same thing -conviction must of necessity precede conversion, a real sense of sin must come before there can be true joy of salvation."

-Studies in the Sermon on the Mount Pg.

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This is what happened to Peter -that eye contact moment with Jesus caused Peter to see himself for just who he really was -a sinful man, who in his own strength falls on his face.

But, once again, Jesus is there to comfort and lift back up. Not because of anything Peter did, but because of what Jesus was about to do- bear it all upon the cross.

And the authorities thought they were actually in control of all these events. They weren't!

Comfort and joy come from knowing this and the fact that Jesus has paid for our sins. Elvina Hall wrote the great hymn in 1865:

"I hear the savior say, thy strength indeed is small, child of weakness, watch and pray, find in me thine all in all.

Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe. Sin had left its crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."

-Elvina M. Hall

Peter was being perfected in Christ, he was comforted by Him in the fact that no matter what you do, even publicly denying Jesus because of fear -even that does not leave you lost and alone, out in the cold of this world.

Repentance requires mourning -mourning over the sin that violated and violates God's goodness, and it is God's goodness which picks us up, because of His great love for us: We live.

Peter recognized this, and I am convinced that even in the pain of that look -he found comfort in compassion, because he knew Jesus -and even more important, Jesus knew Peter!

Can we mourn? Not just because of physical death and the loss of a loved one?

But, can we mourn because of conviction that when we miss the mark, we grieve the

heart of God. Not because He is some divine dictator looking to punish us.

Rather, because He is our heavenly Father who desires the absolute best for His creation. Knowing that, can we be driven to our knees and "die to ourselves and our pride and self-reliance"?

When we get to that place, as painful and unsettling as it is, we can and should remember that even as we feel like we are dying and becoming "weak", we are comforted by Him who took the penalty for us upon the cross.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

I close with a look at John's gospel and a quote, because we simply can't leave it here, as though Peter is weeping out in the cold and darkness without and comfort.

We are not left without hope, in fact we are promised a blessed hope because of what Christ has done, one which will turn our mourning into joy.

John's gospel shares with us that moment on the beach when Jesus asks Peter three times (no accident): "Do you love me?"

We see a different Peter here- revealed to us in verse 17:

-John 21:17 a-b (ESV)

"He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

You know everything...

There is great comfort in that statement. Why? Because He knows everything -and He still loves us and calls us friend.

Lloyd-Jones :

"You cannot bank on education; you cannot bank on the United Nations any more than you could the league of nations. All that has been tried and failed. But for the Christian man (and woman) who mourns because of sin and because of the state of the world, there is comfort - the comfort of the blessed hope [Fund. Truth #13] the glory that yet remains." The return of our king.

-Studies on the Sermon on the Mount

This is such a beautiful promise of God for us. In all my wrongs, in all of the world's wrongs, God, in Jesus, will make it all right -and in that is great comfort and great hope, for those who trust in Christ.

What are you going to do with this Jesus?
I say again this week, if you have never
considered Him, or asked that He forgive
you and become Lord and master of your
life, today is the day, now is the hour.
He loves you.

Come to Him, trust in Him and He will
give you rest.