

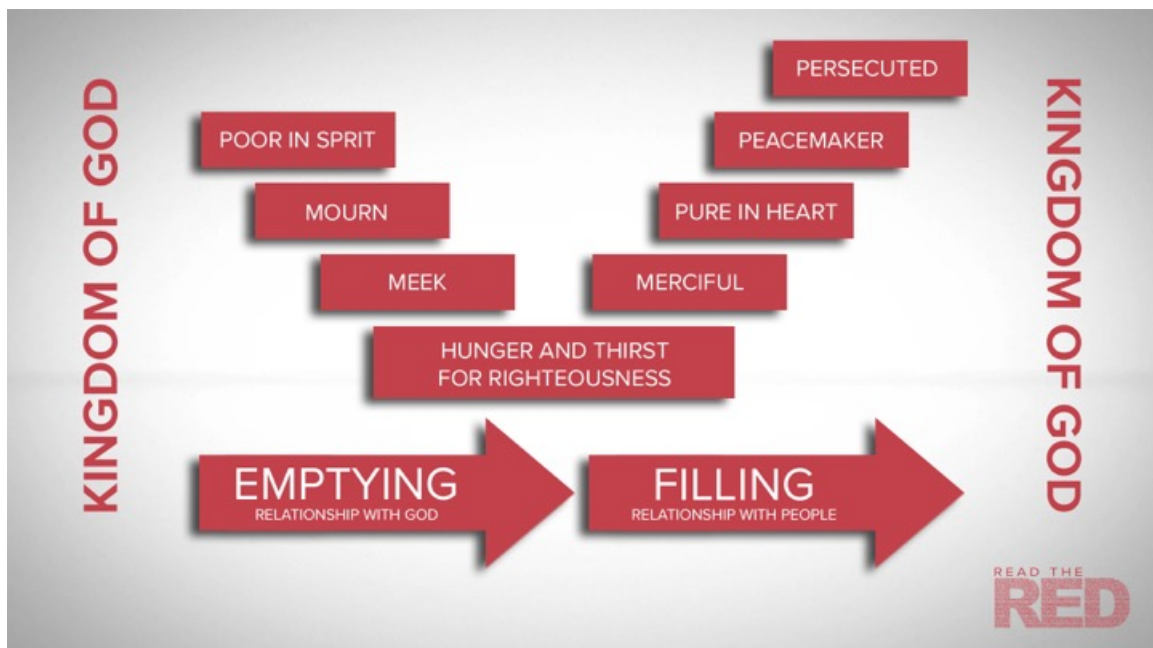


The Privilege of True Repentance – Matthew 5:4/Romans 7:21-8:1

I. INTRO

- A. This is the **second week** of a series looking at the Beatitudes found in Mat 5:3-12 (p. 802).
1. Last week I provided an introduction to understanding the **present reality** of the KOG, as well as the **significance of the SOTM**—and then we looked at the first Beatitude—*“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*
 2. What I said about the KOG is that when Jesus came the first time, He **established** the KOG and when He comes the next time, He will **consummate** the KOG—and we have both the privilege and the responsibility of living in the in-between period of time.
 - a. A few, if not many, of us were (implicitly?) taught that the KOG was a synonym for dying and going to heaven.
 - b. **What’s the big deal about the KOG?** It’s the in-breaking of heaven upon the earth here and now. Another way to say it is, the **KOG is the first fruits of the reconciliation and redemption of all things**, available now to the people of God.
 - c. We can think of it this way: When Jesus came the first time and established the KOG it was as if He reached into heaven and pulled it into the present and staked it into the ground with the cross.
 - d. We live in what the theologians call **“the already and the not yet.”**
 - e. We now have access to the presence and power of God in a way we never had before.
 - 1) Acts 1:3: *“To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.”*
 - 2) Acts 1:8: *“But you will receive power [dunamis] when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.”*

- 3) John 14:12: *“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in Me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.”*
- 4) When you and I pray the **Lord’s Prayer** (*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*), we are asking for the in-breaking of the KOG here and now.
 - a) “Lord, we ask for the in-breaking of Your kingdom here and now to break the power of addiction in this person’s life.”
 - b) “Lord, we ask for the in-breaking of Your kingdom to heal this marriage.” Or, to heal a person’s illness.
 - c) “Lord, we ask for the in-breaking of Your kingdom to grant us a refreshed passion and vision for Community Covenant Church!”
3. Last week I said that Jesus was **the most revolutionary person** who has ever lived—and He came to earth to initiate a revolution that is seen only through the eyes of faith.
4. We also said that Matthew, chapters 5-7, are referred to as the SOTM. The SOTM is the Kingdom Manifesto of Jesus and the Beatitudes tell us how we **enter** into the KOG...



5. And finally, by way of review, being **poor in spirit is a desperateness of soul that is weary of living in its own strength and longs for God's mercy and grace to come and refresh the soul.** In a word, it is SURRENDER.

- B. This brings us to the **second Beatitude**. I would like to read Matthew 5:1-12, then I'll pray, and we'll dive into v. 4, the second Beatitude. Here is what I'd like for you to notice as we read: the first Beatitude and the last Beatitude are present tense while all the ones in between are future tense. What does this mean? It's a picture the "already and not yet tension." The first and the last Beatitudes are like anchors securing the Beatitudes in the present. (p. 802)
- C. *"One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ² and he began to teach them. ³ God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ⁴ God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. ⁶ God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied. ⁷ God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. ⁸ God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. ⁹ God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God. ¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ¹¹ God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way."*

II. BODY

- A. Today, we will look at the 2nd Beatitude from v. 4: *"God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted."* The sermon is titled The Privilege of True Repentance.
- B. *I'd like to expand the scope of this sermon to address the concept of true repentance and that it's a privilege. And we'll let that lead us into a time of celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- C. To mourn means, "to grieve or to wail." It describes both the feeling and the activity. There are 10 different words used in the NT for *mourn* and this one is, by far, the **most intense**.
1. *To mourn means to know a Godly and transforming sorrow for sin, evil, injustice and perversion, first of all in our own lives, and then in the Church, and then in the world-system.* [*cosmos*—the injustice, greed, corruption, lust, and idolatry of this world]
 - a. I.e., we begin to see things from God's perspective
 - b. Sample prayer: Lord, as much as I'm able to stand, I want to see what You see and feel what You feel. [Don't pray this prayer unless you mean it.]
 2. *The word comfort in the original language is the same word we get the word for "Holy Spirit" (parakaleō).* John 14:16 describes the Holy Spirit as The Comforter, who is sent to **comfort, encourage, impassion, and empower** those who have become desperate for God.

- D. Somebody has said that Jesus came to comfort the afflicted—AND to afflict the comfortable!
- E. So, when v. 4 says, *“God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted”* it is saying, **We will know exalted joy, true happiness, and we will be comforted by the Holy Spirit as we learn to mourn and repent over sin promptly and thoroughly.**
- F. Acts 3:19 (Peter’s Second Sermon): *“Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”*
- G. I’d like to extend our look at what it means to mourn and move toward considering the privilege of true repentance...
- H. I’ve found it particularly helpful to consider the difference between RELENTANCE and REPENTANCE
1. **“Relentance” is the despair of our wounded pride. It is being sorry that we got caught. To feel badly over sin is one thing, it’s quite another thing to repent.**
 2. Christian psychologist, Dr. Dan Allender in his book *The Wounded Heart. True Repentance is...*
 - a. **an about face movement from denial and rebellion to truth and surrender...**
 - b. **Repentance involves the response of humble hunger, bold movement, and wild celebration when faced with the reality of our fallen state and the grace of God...**
 - c. **a shift in perspective as to where [real] life is found...**
 - d. **melting into the warm arms of God, received when it would be so understandable to be spurned.**
 3. If you’re like me, repentance is the thing we turn to when nothing else works!
 - a. We can be like the **captain of a ship in a storm** who prays, “God, You get me out of this one and I won’t bother You until the next one!”
 - b. But true repentance is a great privilege—to turn to God quickly and mourn over our sinful condition and confess our sins promptly.
- I. As an example of prompt repentance, I’d like for us to consider Paul’s words in Romans 7:21-8:1. Context: This was written toward the end of his life. He’s a seasoned and mature Apostle and churchplanter. Listen to what he says: *“I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ*

our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. ^{8:1} Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...” –Romans 7:21-8:1

- J. When we confess our sinfulness and surrender afresh to the work of Jesus on the cross and through the resurrection, as Paul is doing in vs. 24-25, the Comforter, the HS, comes and does IN us and THROUGH us what we cannot do for ourselves.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Here’s a heavy quote regarding revival. It’s from a book written in the very early 20th century and it asks the question, “Do we want revival, do we really?”

“To the church, a revival means humiliation, a bitter knowledge of unworthiness and an open humiliating confession of sin on the part of her [pastors] and people. It is not the easy and glorious thing many think it to be, who imagine it filled the pews and reinstated the church in power and authority. It comes to scorch before it heals; it comes to [convict] people for their unfaithful witness, for their selfish living, for their neglect of the cross, and to call them to daily renunciation and to a deep and daily consecration. That is why a revival has ever been unpopular with large numbers within the church. Because it says nothing to them of power, or of ease, or of success; it accuses them of sin; it tells them they are dead; it calls them to awake, to renounce the world [system] and to follow Christ.”¹

- B. True revival is not “happy clappy” or prosperity driven Christianity is it? Some have described parts of the contemporary church as a “rock concert with a Ted talk.” That’s not going to cut it, is it?
- C. To enter into the Kingdom of God, as the Beatitudes are instructing us, there is an **emptying** and then there is a **filling**. And it’s actually the unlikely route to a profound and residential joy.
1. The emptying begins as we surrender, acknowledging that, left to ourselves, we don’t have the resources to become the people that God has called us to be.
 2. And then, as God prompts us, we are to weep and mourn over sin. Our own sin, the sin of the Church, and the sin that has corrupted the world system.

¹ James Burns. *Revival, Their Laws and Leaders*, Baker Book House, Rev. 1960.