



From Tears To Joys

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On a face value, Christ’s statement appears to be contradictory for how can one be happy or blessed when he is sad or mourning.

Mourning is often associated with terrible predicament that forces people to humbly seeking the face the face of God with tears. In Esther 4:1, the signing of the decree to destroy all the Jews moved Mordecai to mourn “When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry”. Some of the circumstances that could lead to mourning include:

- 1) Bereavement
- 2) Losses (e.g. job, divorce, fortune, etc.)
- 3) Sickness
- 4) Disasters
- 5) Terrible mistakes, failures or sin
- 6) Empathy for those suffering
- 7) Burden for salvation of lost souls

In all these, one thing stands out very clearly from scriptures - that God has an ear and a heart for those who mourn. He promised that “... weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalms 30:5). God’s plan is not only to comfort the sorrowful but also make them channels of comfort to others in similar situations. “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Corinthians 1:4). The Greek word for ‘comforted’ is ‘parakaleo’ which means ‘to call to the side of’, or ‘to call near’; and implies that God through the Holy Spirit comes to the side of (i.e. walks alongside with) those mourning to comfort, sooth, succor and rescue them.

Foreseeing the future ministry of Christ, Prophet Isaiah prophesied of Him saying “The Spirit of

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted...” (Luke 4:18).

the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 ... to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

Our reactions in time of sorrow can either make things better or worse; and it is often a reflection of our understanding and relationship with God. Wrong reactions include:

- 1) Evasion i.e. running away from reality by means such as alcohol, drug, etc.
- 2) Seeking easement of their pain through engrossment in worldly pleasures
- 3) Ignoring it in the hope that time will resolve things.
- 4) Self punishment, like Judas who hanged himself after betraying Jesus.

A better reaction is responding to the open invitation by Jesus to all “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28-30). There is divine rest and restoration available today to all who turn to God during their time of mourning.

A written testimony from a dear brother in Christ reproduced below, amply illustrate this point. He wrote:

“I recently had a cause to take a matter that was very dear to us as a family to God weeping. This was not the first time, and I dare say it will not be the last time,



but it was indeed a dramatic one. Before I go into details of my testimony, let me first explain some basic principles from the Bible.

God answers prayers. The Bible makes it clear in Zechariah 2:8 that the people of God are the 'apple of His eye'. He further says that whoever touches a Christian is touching the apple of God's eyes. This means that children of God occupy a special place in God's scheme of things. God takes everything He says seriously. A practical demonstration of Zechariah 2:8 is found in John 11:35, where we have a very short verse of the scripture, indeed the shortest – "Jesus wept". Why did He weep? Can you imagine God in the nature of man weeping? John Chapter 11 starts with the story of the death of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. It was this same Mary who had anointed Jesus with oil in Matthew 26:1-13. The Bible records that Jesus loves this family as He loves us. Lazarus had been initially ill and was now dead four days before Jesus arrived. Jesus saw the grieving of his family and those with them. The Bible records that he groaned in the Spirit and finally wept. Their weeping had touched the heart of our saviour in a special kind of way. In Jeremiah 31:20 the Bible makes it clear that God remembers His children and will have mercy on them. This He did for the family of Mary and Martha, and will do the same for all those who call upon Him.

In John 20:1-18 we see this same Mary, this time at the tomb of Jesus. When she went to anoint the body of Jesus on that wonderful resurrection morning and did not find the body of our dear Saviour, she started to weep. That weeping touched the heart of Jesus who then appeared to her. We also see in I Samuel 1:1-10 how Hannah went to the Lord weeping in anguish of heart. The product of that prayer we can see in I Samuel 1:19-20. We are told that the Lord remembered her. Samuel was born who went on to become a great prophet. Those who weep and seek God

will be refreshed by rain and pools of Spiritual water - enabling them to go from strength to strength (Psalms 84:6,7; Isaiah 43:2; Isaiah 44:3; Zechariah 10:1).

... I entered in for an examination. I knew that to be successful, I needed the touch of the 'finger of God'. The burden was so huge I broke down weeping. As I prayed and wept, the weeping became increasingly uncontrollable. I phoned my wife who dutifully joined me in praying. I called on our pastor who I could sense felt the grieving in my heart and he called on God on our behalf. After a long while of praying and weeping, my peace returned and I slept. The result of the exams was released a few days later and I passed – PRAISE THE LORD!

God responds to weeping in the church. In Joel 2:12 God is calling us to turn to him in '...weeping'. As children of God purchased by the precious blood of His son Jesus Christ, we are just too special to him. Whatever touches us touches a soft spot in Him. What is the burden? What is the mountain? Why not try taking it to God weeping? Why not do it today? He never sleeps nor slumbers! With God all things are possible".

This beatitude is a message of hope as mourning has the potential of creating a desire to improve our circumstances and recover from the situation. It draws us nearer to God from whom we can tap into His inexhaustible treasures to meet our needs, thereby turning a perplexing situation into a triumphant one (i.e. like the valley of Achor becoming a door of hope - Hosea 2:15).

Truly, "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on him in truth" (Psalms 145:18). Our appropriate response to this truth part is to "Come near to God and He will come near to you" (James 4:8).