

MATTHEW 5:4

9 JUNE 2024

ICE BREAKER: What do you tend to do when you are mourning or grieving?

LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read Luke 18:9-14) Addressing those who based their relationship with God according to their own efforts and good deeds, Jesus tells a parable of two individuals. They could not be more different. The one is a **Pharisee**, a religious leader of the Israelite community, serious and zealous in his religion.

The other is a **tax collector**. Tax collectors were **despised** in the community as both traitors and thieves. They collected taxes from the people to fund the Roman Empire, which in turn subjugated Israel. They were notorious for charging more than people could pay and pocketing the difference.

1. What are the **differences** between the **Pharisee** and the **tax collector** that strike you?

(Read Luke 18:13) Two men come to the temple. **Only one mourns**. Jesus said, '**Blessed** are those who mourn.' Mourning is a blessing because it **gives you sight**. Through mourning, the tax collector could see what once was hidden from him. He saw reality—the sinfulness of his soul, the pain his sins caused others, and the rightful judgment he'd receive from God.

In mourning and desperation, he cries out, 'God, have mercy on me a sinner.' **Mourning reveals what is important to you**. And for this tax collector, he mourned for God. He mourned for God not to be unjust and disregard his sins, but to be just yet merciful to him a sinner.

2. How does **mourning** and **grief reveal what is important** to a person?

(Read Luke 18:12-13) **Biblical repentance** is a turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness and a new beginning. Repentance goes before salvation. Repentance goes before forgiveness. **But what goes before repentance? Mourning** goes before repentance.

Until we recognize and mourn over the pain we cause ourselves, others, and ultimately God, we will not truly repent and we will not truly change. We will just have regrets. Mourning and broken over his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, King David wrote in Psalm 51, '¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.'

3. Why must we **feel** and **mourn the pain** of our **decisions** and **actions** before we can **truly repent**?

(Read Mark 14:27-31, 66-72) If mourning reveals what is important, what ought Jesus' followers mourn over? Arguably, Peter was the most fervent and committed of Jesus' disciples. He left all to follow Jesus (Mark 1:16). He loved Jesus. He professed publicly his unashamed love for Jesus.

Yet, when his love was tested, he failed. He failed when Jesus needed him most. How did Peter respond to failing Jesus? 'He broke down and wept.' He mourned uncontrollably.

Now notice how Jesus fulfilled **his promise**, '**Blessed** are **those who mourn**, for **they will be comforted**.' Proclaiming Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the angel commanded the women at the empty tomb these words, 'He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, **tell** the disciples and **Peter**.' (Mark 16:6-7)

4. What **area in your life** may **God** be calling you to **mourn over** that you may **find His comfort** and **favor**?

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE & USE PRAYER LIST AS BIBLE BOOK MARKER FOR THIS WEEK

PRAYER GROUP TIME

(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to share Jesus with this week or invite to Celebration.)
