

Handout #1 Lesson 4:

THE BEATITUDES (Matthew 5: 1-10)

Review of lessons 1-2:

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| BLESSING #1 <i>BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT</i> | We're "poor" in spirit because we acknowledge that we are not self-sufficient and that we need God in our lives. We come to Him in childlike faith, knowing that we cannot make it on our own without Him. |
| PROMISE #1 <i>FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF Heaven</i> | When we acknowledge the sovereignty of God over our lives we discover that He does not save us because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done for us. If we perseverer in faith we are promised the gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. |

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Lesson #4: "BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN"

- *True, I was born guilty, a sinner even as my mother conceived me.* Psalm 51:5
- *I acknowledge my guilt and grieve over my sin.* Psalm 38:19
- *So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of two minds. Begin to lament, to mourn, to weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.* James 4:7-10

"FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED"

I will turn their mourning into joy; I will console and gladden them after their sorrows. Jeremiah 31:13b

This is my comfort in affliction, your promise that gives me life. Psalms 119:50

The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew makes three very interesting points concerning this promise [see page 448-49]:

1. The passive tense used is a "divine passive". It is God who will comfort those who mourn.
2. The comfort God will offer is not a comfort that can be known in a worldly sense, but is instead supernatural in that this comfort will be fulfilled only by the coming of the Son of Man into His Kingdom.
3. It is not the mourning for mourning sake that will receive this divine consolation but God's grace will come to those who mourn the suffering of sin.

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Handout #2, Lesson 4:

Questions for group discussion:

Question: Does Jesus' promise of comfort mean that all our troubles will disappear?

Question: Are we to only be concerned with our own comfort or are we obliged to offer comfort to others who mourn and suffer? Read what the Apostle Paul, who had been known as Saul of Tarsus before his conversion, wrote about this subject in 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 and relate this passage to the blessing for those who mourn and the comfort they are promised.

Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ's suffering overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow. If we are afflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation; if we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement, which enables you to endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm, for we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.

Question: Can you think of any servants of Christ who were examples of this Christian call to give Christ's comfort offered in mercy and love to others?

Question: St. Paul had first hand knowledge of suffering for Christ. He also received a lesson in how Jesus viewed suffering in his first encounter with Christ. How is Christ's suffering with His Church expressed in Jesus' question to Paul when he was known as Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus? Why is Jesus' question to Paul/Saul significant? How is this encounter connected with the 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 passage? See Acts 9:1-6 for Paul/Saul's first encounter with Jesus Christ.