

Scriptures  
Jeremiah 17:5-10  
Luke 6:17-26

### **You Deserve to Weep**

I have a dear friend whose twin's passed away. Not at the same time one from cancer when she was about twenty and the other in a car accident when he was about 25. This friend is a beautiful, loving, talented, compassion, sad, broken, morning person. She has heard people say to her so many times - it's time to move on, it's time to get over it and I think of this passage. Blessed are those who weep. I have two responses - Really? Is the first. And tell me more is the other. Over the years I have worked with people living on and off the streets. I have people in my friends and family who grew up in extreme poverty. They often come to mind when I hear this passage. I have two responses - Really? And I can see that. Statistically people who have less give more. People who have less often have more grace for others when they are struggling. That's when I begin to think maybe there is something to what Jesus is saying here. A pastor tells a story of a time he was doing everything he could to get his father out of a slump. The pastor's mother was in a long term care facility with Alzheimer's. He had noticed that his dad spent every day going to visit. The pastor writes "He was going to visit her once, twice, even three times a day. He really hadn't "transitioned" yet. He had not taken a chance to get away, to break out of the daily routine of caring for my mom that had become the center of his life, to find a "new normal."<sup>1</sup> After spending a day with his Dad as they were getting ready to go his father stopped him and said. "You don't have to worry so much about me. I know that I'm going every day to the care center. I know this is becoming my routine, but it's okay. I've been married to your mother for sixty years. This terrible disease has taken her away from me. Of course, I'm sad. Give me time. I deserve to weep." "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." I want to talk to Jesus and say, "That sounds great, but when? When will my father laugh again?"<sup>2</sup>

Jesus is always turning the world upside down. That is what Jesus does.

"At the start of his ministry, when he read from Isaiah in his hometown synagogue, Jesus promised that the poor would receive good news, the captives would be released, and that the blind would see. The crowd turned pretty ugly that day. But here on the plain, it's a different crowd. The great multitude gathered around him are exactly the kind of people Jesus came to proclaim favored by God. And here is Jesus, not high on some mountain talking down to them,

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[http://day1.org/8331-mark\\_larson\\_we\\_deserve\\_to\\_weep](http://day1.org/8331-mark_larson_we_deserve_to_weep)

<sup>2</sup> IBID

as he does in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, but he is right there among them and in the midst of them.”<sup>3</sup>

When talking to the disciples in this moment Jesus seems to be making a point, asking them to take notice of what he is doing, how he is living his life. God through him is blessing those who are suffering.

"This is where we should focus our attention because it is these people who have God's attention. God sees them even when no one else does." He seems to say.

Mark Larson argues that to be blessed is to know that you have God's attention.

To know that where ever you go, you will not be alone. "To be blessed is to know that you are valued and important simply because God has made you priceless."

In that moment they are reminded that to be loved and cared for is the greatest gift one could ever have. To know that you are loved by God is indeed priceless. Sometimes we forget that when we want to rush people to heal and yet often it is in the depths that we most experience the holy. In our mourning we are transformed by the love.

Instead of trying to "fix" people in mourning it would be more healing if we were willing to weep with each other. That in itself will be a blessing.

You may or may not have noticed something different about this list of beatitudes. I find the list in Matthews gospel easier to digest. Jesus likely shared this message many times. In Luke, Jesus is blessing the real poor, hungry, grief-stricken, and outcasts of this world, not the "poor in spirit" as in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus promises a world turned upside down, from the poor lifted up and the mighty cast down in the Magnificat, to the captives released in the sermon from Isaiah, to the reviled who are blessed in the beatitudes. Luke is clear these are the people God notices and blesses. These are the people Jesus came to release.

Throughout the gospel of Luke, Jesus is also clear that wealth and privilege are real dangers that have the power to separate one from God and from the human community. This always hits me. I have noticed how much wealth and stress about wealth can divide us as people. It happens in everyday regular life and it happens in the church. Those who have little often are willing to give more. Those who have may have because they have worked hard to store it away but I have seen the truth of Jesus' message in action. There is an add that is out right that that is innocent enough but when it came on TV the other night during the hockey game my mother said "this add is offensive." It made me stop and watch it and I got her point. The Skip the dishes smart home add shows a guy who has a beautiful home and demands his smart home to do numerous things like open the curtains play something in the key of c-minor and order pad Thai - now I like the idea of having something I can speak to that makes all happens but in this ad there is a person running around doing all the things the home owner demands and watching that is what makes it offensive. Suddenly its like the person is a slave of a wealthy homeowner demanding his every thought on a whim is satisfied. I know the add is to be humorous but the entitlement of the ad hit

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me hard. We live in such an on demand society and we feel like we should get whatever we want and yet this scripture says the kingdom of God belongs to those who have nothing except God. Have you been there? Have you had a time in your life where you felt like you had nothing? Maybe physically and financially, maybe emotionally, spiritually, relationally - the depths of the pain of having nothing is traumatic. And when you find solace, the spirit, the holy, or God as you might call it in that time there is a healing and a release that is inexplicable.

I have had times of need and want but I know I fall into the category of people the "woe-itudes" are addressing. I am like the disciples, somehow removed from the people Jesus is caring for. These warnings challenge me to care more about the people God cares about. But how do I bridge the gap?

Then I hear that father and my friend say, "I deserve to weep."

If you have had grief in your life, recent or long ago and someone tells you to 'move on.' I invite you to hear this blessing because God says you deserve to weep. I don't know when you will laugh again but my experience is if you rest in the holy you will likely feel relief, and if you live in loving community you will not weep alone. (in which case you might find someone to laugh with).

I often wonder if those of us who live in a ego centric, individualist society would be more honest about our own brokenness, we would know how close we are to one another and how much we need one another. "After all, we are all broken. Some of us have lost health or lost relationships or lost jobs. Our brokenness is personal, it's unique, it's truly ours, it's no one else's. And yet it connects us with one another because we are all broken in some way. But when Jesus says blessed are those who weep, he's pointing out that this sadness is also a sign of something deeper, that all of us mourn because the world is so far from God's purposes. Instead of separating us into some kind of imaginary hierarchy of need, we are brought closer in our shared weeping over this world.

We look around, we see injustice, we see exploitation, we see violence, and the faithful cannot help but mourn. I think that includes all of us, no matter who we voted for, no matter our economic status, our sexual orientation, or our ethnic background, we are all mourning. We hear of borders closed and walls being built and we know, we know this is not how God works. We hear of Hispanic and Islamic brothers and sisters living in fear, and we mourn. We listen to vitriolic words coming to us from all sides, and we wonder where is our comfort to come from? Well, here's the good news. Blessed are those who weep. God hears you. God knows you. God comes close to you. And God will not let you go. We all deserve to weep, but we are all blessed. We are not alone. How would we look at our neighbors if we saw them as both broken and blessed? Would we see our brother or sister more than a nuisance, not a threat? Would we hear Jesus say, "Come, you are blessed. Join me here on the plain."<sup>4</sup>

I wish I could find this video that I heard about but it explains this concept so well

"It begins with a businessman going about his usual day, except the day isn't going very well. It seems as each minute passes, the day gets worse and his frustration level rises. He starts to pull

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<sup>4</sup> IBID

out of the driveway, and almost runs over a child on a bike. He gets to his favorite coffee outlet, but a woman steals his parking place. The man in front of him in line places an order for his entire office building. When he finally gets to the counter, he's told that it will be a few minutes because they have to brew a fresh batch.

Sitting in a corner, seething in frustration, a man walks up and hands him a pair of sunglasses and then disappears. Confused, he puts the glasses on and all of sudden little bubbles, like in the Sunday comics, appear above everyone's head. Instead of dialog however, he can read what is really going on in everyone's life.

The woman who cut him off is distracted because her child is sick. The man who placed the huge coffee order is worried about a medical diagnosis he just received. The barista is struggling with addiction. And finally, returning home a bit shaken, he sees the child again with a bubble above his head which says, "Just need someone who cares."

The man gets out of his car and walks over to help the boy fix his bike.

How would we treat each other if we could really see what was in everyone's bubble? I believe that all the walls and all the distance we place between ourselves and others would disappear.

After all, we worship a God who was not content to look down upon us from some safe haven, light years away. We follow Jesus who gets down, right down on the same plain with those in the deepest pain, with those who have nothing left.

He looks up, at us, his disciples, and invites us to join him there. He reminds us that this is where God is looking. And by the way, we are not so different. We are broken, too. We yearn for a world turned upside down.

We all deserve to weep.

And we all are blessed.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> adaptation IBID