

Having considered the nature of, reasons for, and lessons from gospel mourning, we come this evening to the second part of our text—“for they shall be comforted...”—now I must here stress at the outset that our Savior declares his people blessed not because they mourn—but because they mourn and will be comforted—for as we learned with v3 the conjunction “for” means “because, since or, for this reason”—“blessed are they who mourn, for [because] they will be comforted...”

- I. How are they comforted?
- II. Why are they comforted?

I. How are they comforted?

A. In a present sense by His Spirit and word

1. The verb translated—“will be comforted...” literally means—“to come along side, to speak in such a way so as to comfort...”
2. It refers to a person who might come along side someone who was sorrowful or discouraged and encourage them...
3. It is elsewhere translated—“to plead, exhort, encourage, urge, and appeal”—it here refers to encouragement by way of consolation—or to comfort...
4. There has been some discussion as to when this comfort is experienced—due to the future tense of the verb [they shall be comforted] some have limited it to heaven...
5. And let me state right at the outset that I do believe in the fullest sense our Savior does refer to the comfort of paradise restored...
6. But I trust that most Christians will agree, that this comfort [like most things] is known in some degree here and now...
7. In fact I would suggest that in most cases comfort is known as soon as mourning is known—in other words, when we mourn will be comforted...
8. For example, Isa.12:1—“...though you were angry with me, your anger is turned away, and you comfort me...”
9. Having had His wrath turned away from us through Christ—having had His wrath appeased through the sufferings of Christ—“you comfort me...”
10. Let me illustrate this from Isa.61:1-3—“the Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3 To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified [cp.Lk.4:17-19]...”
11. These are the words of our Savior Himself, and describe His earthly ministry that He conducted while on earth and continues to conduct through His church...
12. Thus we read in Lk.4:17—“He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, etc...”
13. And then having read Isaiah 61:1-2, He then said in Lk.4:21—“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing...”
14. Notice a few things within this great prophecy—[a] the gospel is preached to the poor, v1—“the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor...”
15. Notice [b] the brokenhearted will be healed, v1—“He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted...v2 to comfort all who mourn...”
16. But my primary purpose in turning you to this text is to point out the present nature of this comfort, v1—“the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted...”

17. Christ came to preach, heal, and liberate—all of which obviously have reference to His earthly ministry which He continues in and through His church...
18. But to be specific—[1] He comforts us by His Spirit, Jn.14:16—“and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever...” v26—“the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name...”
19. While Christ was on earth He was the Comforter to His disciples—but now that He was to leave them He would not leave them as orphans...
20. But He would send another Comforter—the Holy Spirit, who would abide with them forever, comforting them in their afflictions and sorrows...
21. Acts 9:31—“then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied...”
22. This is a generic description of the apostolic churches—they walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit...
23. In other words—they lived in the conscious awareness of God’s awful presence and were comforted by the presence of His sweet Spirit...
24. Notice [2] He comforts us by His word, Ps.119:50—“this is my comfort in my affliction, that Thy word has revived me...”
25. It was through the Scriptures that David found comfort in his affliction—such comfort brought renewed life and vigor to his soul...
26. Rom.15:4-6—“for whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
27. Notice [3] He comforts us by His people, 1Thess.4:18—“therefore comfort one another with these words...”
28. Here we are reminded that these means or ways of comforting are interrelated—He usually comforts us by His Spirit, through His word, through His people...
29. 2Cor.1:3-4—“blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God...”
30. The word rendered “tribulation” is a broad word meaning—“affliction due to inner pressure...”—it refers to an “an inner turmoil or distress...”
31. We find the same word used in the Greek OT in Hosea 5:15 to refer to the inner affliction that accompanies the acknowledgment of our sins...
32. Hos.5:15—“I will return again to my place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek my face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek me...”
33. Notice [a] the reality of comfort, v4a—“who comforts us in all our tribulation...”—as the God of all comfort He comforts us in all our afflictions...
34. Notice [b] the purpose of comfort, v4b—“that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God...”

#### B. In a future sense by Himself at His return

1. While I do believe that our Savior had a present comfort in mind, it can hardly be denied that foremostly He had in mind a future comfort—“for they shall be comforted...”
2. Rev.21:4—“and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away...”
3. Isa.60:19-20—“the sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory. 20 Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended...”
4. Isa.65:17-19—“for behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as a*

rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying...”

5. Lk.16:25—“but Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented...”

## II. Why are they comforted?

### A. Because the purpose of mourning is comfort

1. I trust it is obvious that mourning was never intended as an end itself—but as a means to an end—a means to comfort...
2. Why are they who mourn blessed?—“because they shall be comforted”—the blessing lies in being comforted not mourning...
3. Thus the entirety of Scripture testifies that the way up is down, the last will be first, and they who mourn will be comforted...
4. Let me put it this way—God does not wound His people for the purpose of wounding but He wounds them for the purpose of healing...
5. Job 5:17-18—“behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole...”
6. Jas.4:9—“lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom...[v10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up...”
7. Here I want to digress for a few minutes and suggest a couple of reasons why Christians mourn but fail to be comforted...
8. Notice [1] we fail to trace our sin back to God—we mourn more for the consequences of our sins more than the nature of them...
9. We fail to have our soul deeply affected and wounded—remember what I said, to the degree we mourn will be the degree we are comforted...
10. It may be possible for a Christian to feel his sins only in a surface way—and thus feels a measure of sorrow but it soon wears off on its own...
11. Let me put it this way—we have to think Biblically about our sins—we have to have our hearts affected with the nature and severity of sin...
12. But what can happen is that we begin to feel the consequences of our sins and loose sight of the nature of sin...
13. You see sin brings with it consequences [for example, a bad conscience]—but we must not become overly preoccupied by the consequences...
14. Let me illustrate—it is possible that a sickness manifest itself by various symptoms—there may be certain consequences as a result of this sickness...
15. How unwise it would be for a man to put all of his focus upon the symptoms to the extent that he loses sight of the sickness...
16. And so it possible, to complain more for the symptoms of our sins [the consequences], then the actual sickness or sin...
17. Let me put it this way—it is only gospel mourning that is met with gospel comfort—thus if we fail to mourn over sin as sin we will know very little comfort...
18. God nowhere promises comfort for those who complain over the consequences of their sins but for those who mourn over the nature of their sins...
19. Thus this may be a reason why you are experiencing so little comfort—because your mourning is not gospel mourning...
20. You fail to trace your sins back to God—you fail to look upon your sins as a transgression of God’s law, an affront against God’s person, and a murderer of God’s Son...
21. Notice [2] we fail to take our sins back to Christ—by this I mean, having mourned and confessed our sins we fail to look to Christ...
22. Brethren to put it plainly—we must take our sorrowed soul to Christ for comfort—we must trace our sins to God, yes, but we must then get to Christ for comfort...

23. Rom.7:24—"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death..."—here is a man who is truly affected with his sins...
24. He painfully understood that his sins were against God—he felt the heavy load of remaining corruption—but brethren he did not end there...
25. V25—"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord..."—to know our sins without the Savior only leads to despair...
26. Thomas Watson—"The mourner is without comfort for want of applying the promises. He looks at sin which may humble him, but not at that Word which may comfort him. The mourner's eyes are so full of tears that he cannot see the promise. The virtue and comfort of a medicine is in the applying. When the promises are applied by faith, they bring comfort..."
27. Notice [3] we fail to wait upon God in granting comfort—by this I simply want to remind you that God comforts us to the degree that He knows best...
28. Ps.119:82—"my eyes fail from searching your word, saying, when will you comfort me..."—David sought a comfort that he at least for a time lacked...
29. The Lord will sooner or later comfort His mourning people, but when, and to the degree this comfort comes is up to Him...
30. Thus it might be, my dear mourning friend, that you mourn for your sins, and yet know precious little comfort...
31. What must you do in the mean while?—cast yourself upon the mercy of God in submission to His sovereign and good purposes...
32. Take courage in this, that God knows what is best for His children, and He will bring comfort to you before long...
33. Thus if you have comfort or not, trust Him—say with Job—"though He slay me, yet, I will trust Him..."—wait upon and trust His promise—"blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted..."

B. Because only mourners can know comfort

1. I suggest that no person is capable of comfort outside of sorrow or affliction—no one can know gospel comfort without gospel mourning...
2. In fact I go one step further and assert—the deeper the sorrow the greater the comfort—these two necessarily go together...
3. Now this of course is contrary to the way native man thinks—what does the world teach, but, blessed are they who laugh and are happy...
4. Thus we do all that's within our ability to ensure that we don't mourn—how many millions of dollars are spent each year for anti-depressants...
5. Some people refer to them as "Happy pills"—pills designed to alleviate or at least cover over any discomfort or distress...
6. What we want is comfort without discomfort—we want healing without wounding—but this is not the gospel way...
7. Thus what attempts to divert his sorrow, to remove it from his conscience—he doesn't want to face his fears and his sins...
8. But my friend, as long as he refuses to own his sins he will never know comfort—for without mourning there can be no comfort...
9. Now this is not to deny a counterfeit comfort that can be had without mourning—a comfort whose author is not the Holy Spirit...
10. But this kind of comfort is artificial and fleeting—it fails to bring comfort to the soul but is only surface deep...
11. Barns—"...the gospel only can give true comfort to those in affliction. Other sources of consolation do not reach the deep sorrows of the soul..."
12. Oh my dear friends, would you know the comfort of the Holy Spirit—would you know that kind of consolation that brings peace to the troubled soul...
13. Then you must know and own your sins before God—you must mourn for sin as against God's law, person, and a murderer of His Son...

C. Because the Lord is near the brokenhearted

1. Here is the foremost reason behind our comfort—because God is the “God of all comfort” it is in His very nature to comfort His mourning people...
2. Ps.34:18—“the LORD is near to those who have a broken heart...”—He is close by—He draws near them in comfort...
3. Isa.66:2—“on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit...”—He will look upon them with acceptance and comfort...
4. Ps.51:17—“the sacrifices of God are broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, you will not despise...”
5. Isa.40:1-2—“comfort, yes, comfort my people! Says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned...”