

HAKUNA MA-WHATA? MT.5:4, 2COR. 7:8-12

Once Upon a Time #3

◆Intro: Blessed are they that mourn? Really? These are seemingly incongruous words that Jesus is preaching here. Normally we seek to avoid any feelings of sadness because we think our happiness depends on it. What does grief have to do with joy? Certainly our fairy tales and children's stories seem to contradict the blessedness of mourning.

◆Think of Balou the Bear in the Jungle Book. What did he sing? "I've got the bear necessities, the simple bare necessities, forget about your worries and your strife. The bare necessities, that's why a bear can rest at ease. The simple bare necessities of life."

◆And then in a more recent era of animated tales Simba in the Lion King learns from his pals Pumba and Timon about "Hakuna Matata; means no worries, it's their "problem free -philosophy"!

◆That's the fairy tale world, and pretty much why we read stories or go to movies: we want to forget our worries, escape into another world for a little bit, get off the problem-strewn road of life for an hour and a half.

◆In one of Charles Schultz's Peanuts comic strips year ago, two characters are sitting outside, at night, staring at the stars. Charlie Brown says to the other, "Lets go inside and watch television. I'm beginning to feel insignificant."

◆What insight into our nature, huh? Lets do whatever we can to avoid thinking deeply about the troubled, struggling nature of being alive.

◆Jesus teaches us not to avoid it.

◆**1. What does Jesus mean by "mourning"?**

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◆A. People read his words in different ways. Lets take a look at some of the alternatives.

◆Some say Jesus is talking about grief, say, like that which we feel over the loss of a young wife to cancer, or a teen son snatched away in the prime of his life.

◆Some say Jesus is talking about conventional sorrow: desperation for a joy, struggle with a boyfriend, battles with depression. Everyone has these. Statistics say that one of every four Americans is suffering from some form of mental illness. So think of your three best friends. If they're OK, then it's you.

◆Some say Jesus is talking strictly about illicit sorrows: the sorrows of the man whose third million has eluded him; those of the couple who's all torn up over the carpeting in their new cottage not matching the paint; the woman in her fifth marriage that isn't finding satisfaction there either and feels sorry for herself.

◆These things sound a bit like what the Bible calls "worldly sorrow." Listen.

◆*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (2 Corinthians 7:10, NIV).*

◆B. But these are not what Jesus is talking about . The mourning that leads to blessing here is specifically the mourning over sin, starting with myself.

◆It is being pained over the joy that is lost by the refusal to repent. In a word, what Jesus means by mourning here is repenting. Jesus is saying, "Blessed are those who sorrow over sin and it's effects, rejecting it, for they are the ones who will find the solution."

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- ◆ The mourner here is the lad who looks within and hurts over his own fallenness and that of the world around him. It is the young adult realizing for the first time that society is at once desperately amazing, and also horrifyingly dark, and that she is as well.
- ◆ Maybe you've noticed how the beatitudes have been building on each other:
 - ◆ Last week learned the "poor in spirit" were blessed; the person who has gotten to the end of herself, who has hit bottom and begun to look up. (If you missed it, you can listen on our web page.)
 - ◆ But it's one thing to be poor in spirit -to get honest about your fallen condition. It's another to mourn over it. It's one thing to realize, for example, that because of your sin you are bound for hell. It's a whole other thing to mind that as opposed to nonchalantly welcoming it on the precept that all your friends will be in hell as well.
- ◆ **C.** So we must ask next, what does it mean to repent (or mourn our fallenness as opposed to the first step of admitting our fallenness.)?
- ◆ Paul addresses this in the following text:
 - ◆ *"I am no longer sorry that I sent that letter to you, though I was sorry for a time, for I know that it was painful to you for a little while. Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to have remorse and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in*

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death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish the wrongdoer. You showed that you have done everything you could to make things right.” 2 Corinthians 7:8-11, NLT.

- ◆ You can tell here that Godly sorrow/mourning includes
 - ◆ a deep desire for cleansing
 - ◆ a growing indignation for all that is wrong in us and in our world
 - ◆ a longing to set things better
 - ◆ a readiness for what is proper
- ◆ Now listen to the Heidelberg Catechism describing conversion:
 - ◆ **Q88: What is involved in genuine repentance or conversion?**
 - ◆ A. Two things: the dying away of the old self, and the coming to life of the new.
 - ◆ **Q89: What is the dying away of the old self?**
 - ◆ A. It is to be genuinely worry for sin, to hate it more and more, and to run away from it.
 - ◆ **Q90: What is the coming to life of the new self?**
 - ◆ A. It is wholehearted joy in God through Christ and a delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to.
- ◆ I think that is a pretty comprehensive description of the mourner Jesus is talking about in Matthew 5.
- ◆ **D. The mourner refuses to live the superficial life.** Can we pause to ask this: Are you one of those who mourn? Does your heart repent of sin in yourself and your world, run from it, hate it, and delight to replace it with

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every kind of good? Do you reject the superficial life for the deeper spiritual journey that asks such things as:

- ◆ What is it within me that *causes* my quick temper?
 - ◆ *Why* is it that I cannot control myself with it comes to...?
 - ◆ Why do I harbor jealous thoughts when consciously I don't want to?
 - ◆ How could I have hurt that person I love and feel coolly aware that I didn't mind it?
- ◆ **E.** And in the second place, the mourner refuses to ignore the fallenness around her. That is, she mourns more broadly than herself. It's a kind of corporate repentance. By the way, this is was Simba's mistake in the Lion King: running off to a place where he could ignore that fallenness of the Lion kingdom, and the presence of evil represented by Scar. The mourner who Jesus blesses is not this way.
- ◆ She reads of the children in the aftermath of the tsunami, who are raped, and sold into prostitution -and her heart mourns with a determination to step into that evil to fight it.
 - ◆ He is like the Representative Bob McDermott in Hawaii, who, discovering his elementary children were being indoctrinated into exploring alternative sexuality, and sex acts –went on a one man campaign to stop the states Education Department from teaching the curriculum.
 - ◆ He is like the Psalm writer who said, *Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed. (Psalms 119:136, NIV).*
 - ◆ She is like Jesus weeping over unbelieving Jerusalem, or Paul weeping over enemies of the Gospel.

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◆ This kind of person, says Jesus, will be blessed and comforted.

◆ Now, as we are asking with each of the beatitudes...

◆ 2. Why should mourning/repenting be the path of blessing?

◆ Again, it seems at first glance counterintuitive, doesn't it? Isn't repenting a damage to our self-esteem? The last thing we want to do is to get ourselves in trouble! I love Pastor John Ortbergs humorous story along these lines.

◆ Many years ago, early on in our marriage, my wife and I sold our Volkswagen Beetle to buy our first really nice piece of furniture. It was a sofa. It was a pink sofa, but for that kind of money, it was called a mauve sofa. The man at the sofa store told us all about how to take care of it, and we took it home.

◆ We had very small children in those days, and does anybody want to guess what was the Number One Rule in our house from that day on? "Don't sit on the mauve sofa! Don't play near the mauve sofa! Don't eat around the mauve sofa! Don't touch the mauve sofa! Don't breathe on the mauve sofa! Don't think about the mauve sofa! On every other chair in the house, you may freely sit, but on this sofa—the mauve sofa—you may not sit, for on the day you sit thereon, you will surely die!"

◆ And then one day came the "Fall." There appeared on the mauve sofa a stain...a red stain...a red jelly stain. My wife called the man at the sofa factory, and he told her how bad that was. So she assembled our three children to look at the stain on the sofa: Laura, who then was about 4, and Mallory, who was about 2 1/2, and Johnny, who was

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maybe 6 months. She said, "Children, do you see that? That's a stain. That's a red stain. That's a red jelly stain. And the man at the sofa store says it's not coming out, not for all eternity. Do you know how long eternity is, children? Eternity is how long we're all going to sit here until one of you tells me which one of you put the red jelly stain on the mauve sofa."

◆ For a long time they all just sat there until finally Mallory cracked. I knew she would. She said, "Laura did it." Laura said, "No I didn't." Then it was dead silence for the longest time. And I knew that none of them would confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they had never seen their mom that mad in their lives. I knew none of them was going to confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they knew if they did, they would spend all of eternity in the "Time Out Chair." I knew that none of them would confess putting the stain on the sofa, because in fact, I was the one who put the stain on the sofa, and I wasn't sayin' nuthin'! Not a word! (The Me I Want to Be)

◆ A. Friends, it is a myth that love is more likely in the face of the flawless. It is a myth that people, and God, will accept us if we can convince them we are really pretty darn good. Biblical teaching says exactly the opposite. Blessed are those who mourn. They shall be comforted.

◆ *For this is what the high and lofty One says--he who lives for ever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. (Isaiah 57:15, NIV).*

◆ Know what "contrite" means? Sorry.

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◆ Mourning sin is blessed because it enters through salvations door. Being honest/poor in spirit put us on the path to the door. Repentance walks us through.

◆ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ac 2:38

◆ B. Mourning is blessed because repentance heals relationships It’s a spiritual law! Repentance heals relationships with God, and also with people.

◆ *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, Ac 3:19*

◆ People don’t forget the pains and hurts we cause them when we sin against them. Even if they do manage to forget the event, or the exact words –the emotional weight goes into their spiritual backpack. Counseling offices are full of people like me and you working through these weights of rejection, guilt, abuse, rape, disregard, belittling, etc.

◆ It’s simply amazing the power of an apology in restoring a relationship. “Oh well” means you don’t mean much to him. But “I’m sorry” spells “I care about having hurt you.”

◆ When I’m sorry, I enable people to unload their backpacks. I boost their spiritual hope in the possibility of a good and righteous world. All because we are able to lower our head and repent. It is pride that will not repent. It is pride that divides and separates me from you.

◆ **Conclusion:**

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◆ Contrary to our fairy tales, the “problem free philosophy” of Hakuna Matata just doesn’t really lead to happiness. We can’t ignore away the brokenness of the world, as Simba did come to realize in spite of his friends Timon and Pumba.

◆ If sin does not bother you, holiness will not delight you. If holiness does not delight you, you cannot find happiness, for happiness (or blessedness) is the state in which all is as it “ought” to be, or the state of holiness.

◆ This is what we need to pray: God break my heart over sin. Teach me to hate it and love the good more and more.

◆ When I mourn/repent of sin, my heart gets tunes to the frequency of happiness. Do not doubt it, folks. Mourning leads to the end of mourning.

◆ *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:4, NIV).*

◆ Pray with me:

◆ Holy God, you see my heart. You see more than my careful behavior around other people. So then, you know my secret guilt. I am a sinner, in need of a savior. Forgive me Jesus. You save me. You alone have the right and the merit to do so. Give me the goft of sorrow for those things I should repent of, but do not. Give me the heart of repentance for the sins of my world. And place in my heart a true delight in everything good. Holy Fire, burn away my desire for everything that is not of you. Lord have mercy upon me. Amen