

1. As we get into God's word this morning, I just want to remind you.
2. I still believe that **this is your year of jubilee.**
3. I still believe that this is our year of jubilee.
4. I believe that this is our year for freedom and restoration, and I believe that God is at work even when we can't see or don't know what he is doing.
5. Don't give up faith and don't give up hope.
6. Keep praying and keep asking and keep believing. God loves it when we refuse to give up and the enemy hates it when we refuse to give up.

TEXT: **Matthew 5:4** *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

TITLE: **Freedom from Grief.**

INTRO:

1. Now. Before I move on, I want to clarify what this message is not about.
2. I am not saying if you listen to this message, I can show you a way to never experience hurt, or pain or loss ever again.
3. I am not trying to insinuate that there is a way to avoid disappointments and struggles and emotionally difficult situations.
4. When we talk about freedom from grief, what I am referring to is getting free from destructive and unhealthy cycles or seasons of grief.
5. I am talking about the freedom to move past those stages of grief so that you are not stuck in a rut for an extended period of time, and in the process miss the good things God is doing or wants to do in your life.
6. How many are still with me?
7. In spite of the fact that this verse only contains 10 words, I believe they are 10 very powerful words that carry a significant message that has the ability to give us freedom if we understand what Jesus is trying to say to us.
8. Matthew chapter 5 verses 3-11 contains nine individual statements made by Jesus called The Beatitudes. **The word beatitude simply means blessing.**
9. Jesus makes nine statements that all begin with the word blessed.

10. What I found to be interesting about the use of the word blessed is that even though it is the same word used every single time in the English language, the Amplified bible defines that word blessed nine different ways with nine different meanings depending on the circumstance.
11. If you want to be blown away by how many different ways God can bless you, I encourage you to read this passage in the amplified bible.
12. In the NIV **Matthew 5:4** *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
13. I am going to highlight two different ways to interpret this verse, we will only spend a couple of minutes on the first interpretation, and then we will spend the rest of the message on the second interpretation.
14. The first way of looking at this passage is to look at it from the perspective of sin. Some scholars believe that the meaning has to do with mourning over sin.
15. Blessed are those who see sin in their own life, or see sin in the world at large and they mourn over that sin. They recognize that sin and they repent of it in a sincere and deep way.
16. Those who repent over sin will be comforted.
17. I believe this is a very valid way to interpret this verse especially when you consider **2 Corinthians 7:10** *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*
18. So, when we as believers in Jesus recognize sin and refuse to gloss over it like it's no big deal, we are opening ourselves up for the blessing of God in our lives, specifically the blessing of salvation.
19. God is eager for us to bring our sin to him and confess and repent of that sin because our heavenly father wants to bless us with salvation and forgiveness.
20. Would everybody say, thank you Jesus.
21. We don't have to stay away from God when we sin and fail, we need to run to him and come clean so we can start living again.
22. So, the first interpretation has to do with sin, the second interpretation has to do with grief.
23. Blessed are those who mourn over grief. Who mourn over the losses in their life.
24. **Grief is a response to any loss that occurs in our life.**

25. We most often will probably associate grief with the loss or death of a loved one, but in reality, we experience all kinds of losses in our lives on a regular basis.
26. Loss of a job. Loss of a friendship. Loss of physical ability. You name it, negative things are likely to occur that will require us to put it in the loss column.
27. So, in this interpretation, the meaning is this. Blessed are those who mourn over their grief, because then they will have the opportunity to be comforted.
28. So, whether you interpret this to mean sin of grief, I believe either way is accurate and provides the meaning that Jesus intended.
29. Have I lost anybody yet? Good.
30. For the sake of the remainder of this message we are going to focus on the idea of grief.
31. So, if we were to insert the word grief into the equation we might say, blessed are those who mourn over their grief, for they will be comforted.
32. The thing I would like to point out is that in either interpretation, **the word mourn is an action word.**
33. In order to mourn you have to actually do something.
34. I am about to get way over my head here so I will be very careful, but for decades people have tended to think of grief and mourning as having to do with feelings only. But mourning over grief is more than just feeling that grief, mourning also conveys the idea of expressing that grief.
35. And in order to express grief, most often you have to identify the source of that grief or loss, and then you have to put that grief into words, or show it, or reveal it in some way.
36. If all the word mourn meant was to feel, Jesus' statement would be really nice and clean and tidy.
37. Blessed are those who feel grief, for they will be comforted.
38. But that's not all Jesus is saying. He is saying, blessed are those who feel their grief and then do something with it, they mourn it, the people who do that will be comforted.

39. Now, that matters because some of us, not all of us, but some of us, including me, have the tendency to want to avoid not only the feelings of grief, but we will try and avoid expressing that grief.
40. **Some of us are not very good at mourning.** And until we become better at mourning the way God intends, we are going to continue to be separated from the comfort that we so desperately need.
41. Mourning grief is to express that grief, and God has provided two areas in which we need to express our grief.
42. We need to express our grief to God, which means we need to be honest with ourselves and with God about what we are truly feeling, and we need to be honest and express our grief to others, especially when we see them as the source of some of that grief.
43. But that's not easy. Because when it comes to feelings and grief, many of us have difficulty being honest. Or those of you who are shocked by that statement, let's get real.
44. **As humans we have difficulty sometimes being honest with ourselves, with God, and with others.**
45. In fact, some of us may have even been taught from an early age to not be completely honest about our feelings of grief.
46. For example. How many of us were taught that it was not only ok to be angry with God, but it's ok to express that anger to God? Not many.
47. Oh pastor. It can't be ok to be angry with God. Why not?
48. Isn't one of our goals to become more like Jesus every single day?
49. Well Jesus didn't have any problem letting people know he was angry with them. All throughout the bible God never hesitated in letting people know he was angry.
50. Through His Holy Spirit God has no trouble letting us know he us upset with us. Why then would God be offended if we acted like him and let him know when we are ticked off at him?
51. I am convinced that God is a big boy. He can handle it.
52. I am convinced that God can handle any emotion we reveal to him. It sure seemed like David, the writer of many of the Psalms, had no problem letting God know exactly how he felt, and I can't remember

one single time where God became upset because David expressed how he really felt.

53. And yet we. I know for sure me throughout my life. We have somehow become convinced that we have to hold it all together perfectly all the time and always have our emotions under control.
54. Well, I hate to tell you, but my emotions aren't always perfectly under control. Sometimes my emotions feel out of control.
55. And I think so many times it has to do with the fact that we don't mourn the losses like Jesus said to do.
56. I hate to admit it, but I think I have used every single coping mechanism I am about to mention.
57. Rather than mourn the loss we will say something like...

It's no big deal.

1. You just lost your job. Your finances are affected. It's no big deal.
2. That relationship you thought was really special, the other person just dropped you like a hot potato. It's no big deal.
3. You thought they were your friend but then they hurt you. It's no big deal.
4. Someone you had confided in talked behind your back. It's no big deal.
5. That prayer I've been praying for so many years is still unanswered. It's no big deal.
6. I don't know about you but every one of those things is a big deal to me. But why is it so hard to admit that is affecting me?

I don't want to talk about it.

1. As kid I may have been the worst at bottling up my emotions. I would hold it all in and hold it all in. I don't want to talk about it.
2. I was one of those people, and there are as lot of us in the world, we put up, put up, and put up, and then it builds up to the point where we blow up.
3. Just bottling up all those emotions.
4. I don't want to talk about it.
5. Or we eat those emotions, and we get an ulcer.

6. Or we eat those emotions and get headaches.
7. Or we eat those emotions and have a panic attack.
8. Or we just eat another bowl of ice cream rather than being honest about how it is affecting us.
9. Thankfully I had a mother, who will be watching this message later today, who would say, let it out. Get it out. You will feel better when you let those emotions out.
10. And praise God I have had a wonderful wife for the past 33 years who will give me my space when I need it, but who also knows not much good comes from bottling it all up.

We run away.

1. Rather than saying it's no big deal, or I don't want to talk about it, we just run away from everyone and everything that makes us feel uncomfortable or triggers our emotions.
2. We don't deal with it, we just cut ourselves off from the only people who can help us deal with those emotions.
3. We have become really good at running away from our problems.
4. Our motto is, I've never faced a problem I couldn't try and run from. And as a result, we stay locked in the same patterns of emotional bondage that we've always lived in.
5. You see, all of those methods lead us toward isolation. Cut off from the relationships that we so desperately need.
6. Those methods of dealing with our emotions cut us off from God and from the people closest to us.
7. And these methods of dealing with our emotions keep us locked into the lies of the enemy that God doesn't care about us and others don't care about us. But it's a lie.
8. God does care about us and others care about us, but we will not receive the comfort that we need from the losses of life and the griefs of life unless we open up to the meaningful relationships God created us to need.
9. We need close intimate relationship with God, and we need close intimate relationships with other believers.

Conclusion: .

1. In the bible it was a very common practice that when a person passed away, the surviving family would hire professional mourners. True fact.
2. It's believed the children of Israel picked up on that practice when they lived in bondage in Egypt for 400 years.
3. At the loss of a loved one, these hired mourners would cry, they would wail, they would sing songs, they would walk in the processional to where the person was to be laid to rest.
4. And it wasn't meant to be fake, it was meant to be as reminder that **grieving and mourning, feeling and expressing of the emotions was something that was to be done with others.**
5. Not cut off from others.
6. And I am convinced we still need people to mourn with us.
7. Without a doubt we need God. We need to be real with him. We need to quit trying to hide our emotions from God and we need to allow him to be the savior of every single part of our lives, even the parts that aren't all that pretty.
8. One of the very last things God tells us in the bible is that he wants to help us with our grief.
9. **Revelation 21:4** '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.'
10. May I just point out that the verse doesn't say, God will look at us and tell us to dry it up or he'll give us something to cry for.
11. It says he himself will gently wipe the tears from our very eyes. That's what I call comfort.
12. And we need comfort from others that only comes through meaningful relationships.
13. We need people to mourn with us when we hurt. When we are disappointed. When our dreams come crashing down. When we get a bad report from the doctor. When someone we love is hurting and we don't know how to help them. We need people to help us. We need people to mourn with us.
14. Because according to Jesus, it is as we mourn that we receive comfort.

15. I wish I had been smart enough to tell myself this when my father-in-law passed away almost 9 years ago.
16. We had plenty of time before his death to grieve. He was in the hospital for over a month before he passed. In fact, at one point he died and they brought him back.
17. But I just kept myself busy. I'm not going to think about it. I have to be tough for my wife.
18. Then when he passed away, I learned that he wanted me to speak at his funeral.
19. So, I went into pastor mode. Thinking about what I was going to say and how I was going to honor Doyle. How would I comfort everyone else who was at the funeral.
20. I got through the funeral and didn't shed a tear.
21. Then nearly ten days after he died, when I got back to Batesville, one day I just started bawling for no reason.
22. I couldn't figure out why I was crying. And then all of the sudden it hit me. I haven't allowed myself to mourn.
23. I just sucked it up and held it all together, or so I thought I did, until guess what. I couldn't hold it together.
24. I didn't let God comfort me and I didn't let others comfort me. I just acted like I was fine.
25. We don't have to act like we are fine when we aren't fine.
26. That isn't faith. That's being fake.
27. Let's be real today with God and with others.
28. Do you need to mourn today? Do you need to grieve?
29. Pray.
30. Call people forward who have experienced loss and who want to present those emotions to God.
31. Call people to come and pray with them.