

Day 6

Give Me the Change

Matthew 5:4(Message) *"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you."*

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, is not dealing with abstract spiritual truths, truths that are difficult to understand. He is precise in His words, clear in His purpose, powerful in His delivery and resolute about the end results. His words are radical to His Jewish audience. To an audience that is used to the Pharisees that are more interested in clean hands than pure hearts, this was like a truth tsunami on steroids. The Jewish leaders bragged about their heritage as sons of Abraham and saw their wealth and influence as God's stamp of approval. The ordinary people of the day were used to hearing how they were not as blessed or favored. Then Jesus shows up, climbs a mountain and dispels pure truth to an audience hungry for a blessed life.

What came out of His mouth was nothing that anyone had heard before. Jesus was teaching with such veracity and authority, that there was no doubt that He knew what a true blessed life looked like. This was not "old time religion" of cleaning the cup, straining the gnat, praying with disdain for others and despising anything that would remotely challenge a pharisaical way of life. This was and is about a radical transformation of the human heart that leads to a permanent change in actions and results.

The word poor and spiritual did not go together. Mourning over my sin? No, we would rather brag about how righteous we are by all the stuff we do for God. You see, recognizing my poverty and mourning over my brokenness will be of no value unless it leads to a change of life. What's the evidence? In the weeks to come, we will see how Jesus begins to tell us what the "blessed life" change looks like. But how can we know that we have truly repented? Paul writes and says; *"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 wrong.** You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right."* **2 Corinthians 7:11(NLT)**

Our mourning and Godly sorrow is not an outward act that leads us to boast about how spiritual we are. It is a heart transformation that produces qualities that make us beautiful from the inside. We don't order our outside world to get our insides right. Our inside world is set right by an honest act of repentance that creates qualities such as, earnestness, eager to do what is right, a holy longing, being concerned and alarmed over wrong and a passion for God. We don't behave right to get God's approval. We bring our poverty to Him and in brokenness and humility, ask Him to change our hearts. Then our new behavior is the evidence of a heart that has been made new through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just like John the Baptist admonished; *"**So produce fruit that is consistent with repentance [demonstrating new behavior that proves a change of heart, and a conscious decision to turn away from sin]**" (Matthew 3:8 AMP)*

Mourning over my sin does not mean, I see God as harsh and feel forced to change. Not at all! Quite the opposite. We all know forced change is simply a breeding ground for rebellion. None of us like to be forced to do anything. In living the blessed life, we simply see the ravages of sin in our own life and the lives of others. Sin separates us from the greatest relationship in the universe, a relationship with our Heavenly Father. *"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. **Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.**" (Matthew 5:4 Message)*

Jesus wants all of us to have a vibrant life-giving relationship with the Father. We come to the Father, because it is His kindness that leads us to change. This life change is not forced on us. But just because God does not force us due to His kindness, don't see this extravagant kindness as accepting our ungodly behavior. Just the complete opposite is true. God is kind, His kindness is meant to melt our hearts of stone and lead us to repentance, and that repentance results in a changed life! How beautiful is that? Paul writes to the church in Rome: ***“Do the riches of his extraordinary kindness make you take him for granted and despise him? Haven't you experienced how kind and understanding he has been to you? Don't mistake his tolerance for acceptance. Do you realize that all the wealth of his extravagant kindness is meant to melt your heart and lead you into repentance? Romans 2:4(TPT)***

The comfort we receive from acknowledging our poverty and weeping over our sin, is the comfort of knowing we now have an eternal relationship with our Heavenly Father. Maybe your earthly father was and is a great one, maybe he was not, but no earthly father can compare to God our Father. Our comfort comes from knowing our Father. It is easy to change when we are in love with the One who asks us to change. It is easy to change when the One who asks us to change actually empowers us to change. If you are reluctant about the change you need to make, trust in your Heavenly Father's extravagant kindness. Think of it like crossing a busy, busy street with a small child, no parent in their right mind will let a young child run free when they need to be crossing the street. Just the opposite, if that child tries to break free, the parent would simply tighten their grip. A parent who tightens their grip to protect their child is not seen as a control freak, just the opposite, they are seen as kind and caring.

Your Father is inviting you to a whole new way of living. It is going to challenge you, it's going to demand you going further, deeper. It will require all of your life, not just part of your life. If you feel like you are about to cross into the unknown, just look up, your Father in His kindness, is taking you firmly by the hand and leading you to a changed life. Your comfort is the fact that you are firmly in His grip and He won't let go.

Reflection and Prayer:

- Read these verses in Psalm 103.
- ***Psalm 103:8-12 (NIV) The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. ⁹He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; ¹⁰he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.***
- Take a few moments and just simply meditate on them, let it sink deep into your soul.
- Thank the Father, that He is the Comfort, with which you are being comforted.