

“Good Mourning”
Matthew 5:4
Pastor Benny Parks
September 4, 2022 • Sunday Morning Sermon

We will be looking in Matthew 5 which is a part of what is known as the Sermon on the Mount and we are in this great section called the Beatitudes, where Jesus Christ makes eight declarations of the believer's blessedness. In this study we're only going to look at one in Matthew 5. This is the Word of the Lord. Matthew 5:4 says [4] *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.* This is God's Word, it's living, active and sharper than any two-edged sword.

A friend of mine asked me last week what I'd be preaching on in this study and I said, “Matthew 5:4, Blessed are those who mourn” and he laughed out loud. He said, “Wow, that's going to be really encouraging.” I thought about it and then I actually said to a few other people the same thing, and they similarly laughed and thought the same thing. But there's really a profound reason for why I chose this topic this morning of sadness. This is the reason – many, if not most people today are at the lake or at the beach trying to get their last day of vacation on Labor Day weekend and that made me very sad so I thought I'd preach on Sadness this morning. There is some hope, though, because there is 70% chance of rain at the lake and beach today. So, I hope they enjoy their time at the beach or the lake. That is not bitterness but perhaps satisfying sarcasm.

Actually, this sermon kind of grew out of a sermon I gave five years ago around this time and the title of that sermon was God Wants You Happy. That was a bad sermon title because I had some people that really got upset about the fact that I said, God wants them happy. Pastor Reeder, my wonderful pastor and boss said, “I had somebody close to me say when they saw the title, they weren't coming to hear your sermon because that makes the person frightened” especially coming from the pastor filling in for him but he did tell the person, “Hey, listen to what he has to say and then make your conclusion.” So I appreciated that, so five years ago, it really made some people mad and sad that I was preaching about happiness. In this study, I hope it will make those same people happy and glad that I'm saying God wants you sad.

After I preached the sermon on Happiness, a couple ladies came up to me and said, “Benny, you're just always so joyful. You're laughing all the time and you're just such a happy person.” I thought, you know, really, that's not my default. I love the sermon. I believe in it because I do believe God is increasing our joy and happiness in Him, but since childhood, I've been I was a very fearful and worrisome little boy and that's plagued me my whole life – fears from without and within that I've had to work through. Therefore, this is even today a very important message and one that I need to hear. I suspect that most, if not all of you reading this, need to hear a good word of comfort. If you don't, particularly right now, you will soon, because the Scriptures remind us it's through many tribulations that one enters into the kingdom of God. This is a topic that is sadness in Biblical perspective.

A couple of comments about the beginning of this Word to us – blessed are those who mourn. Think for a moment about the word blessed. It's essentially saying happy are those who mourn. I know there's dispute about that and that's generally because of the way that word is misused today – where we try to locate our happiness, but it's a good word, it's biblical and that's what it means. The late John Stott said ‘One might almost translate this second beatitude to

happy or the unhappy in order to draw attention to the startling paradox it contains. What kind of sorrow can it be which brings the joy of Christ's blessing to those who feel it?"

None other than the great late Reformer John Calvin spoke of the happiness of the believer in this verse, when he said, "Christ does not merely affirm that mourners are not unhappy for He shows that their very mourning contributes to a happy life by preparing them to receive eternal joy and by furnishing them with motivations to seek true comfort in God alone." Jeremiah Burroughs, the great Puritan, calls this the saints happiness – happy are those who mourn.

Now let's think about the word mourning what I have used in this study, sadness. When I say sadness, I mean it's a category word that refers to all types of mourning and pain like, suffering, sorrow, sadness, all those things that lead a person to misery, to frustrations, to discouragement, to despondency, to depression, to despair. Sadness represents the difficulties of life and that's what we'll look at in this study. It's a very important subject that touches us all and I want us to consider just three points – reasons for our sadness, responses to sadness and some remedies for sadness.

First, there are two main reasons for why we experience sadness today – one negative and one positive – sin and God's good purposes. Let's look first at sin. Pastor Reeder always likes to remind us that you can answer almost any question with Jesus or the glory of God and get it right. I'd say closely behind that you can answer almost any question about the difficulties and problems of this life with the word sin and you would get it right, because we live in a fallen world due to sin, and the consequences of the fall of man into sin were devastating and are devastating to us today.

Pastor Reeder is in a study on Romans and he just finished Romans 5, where he reminded us of this whole idea of sin entering to the world through Adam, our representative, our federal head and because of that, we are all plunged into sin. Romans 5:12 says [12] *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.* The Westminster Shorter Catechism says about the estate of sin that because man fell into sin, it plunged us into a state of sin and misery. And in chapter 19 of the Shorter Catechism, it speaks of the misery that's in our life because of sin today, of what we experience by saying 'when we fell into sin, we lost communion with God, we are under His wrath and curse, we are made liable to all of the miseries, all of the sadness of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. That's what we experience because of the fall of man into sin, and it causes great mourning and great groaning.

Romans 8:22-23 says [22] *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.* [23] *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* We groan and mourn for so many reasons. We groan because of unbelief as a believer and we say 'God help my unbelief' (Mark 9:24). We groan because our communion with God is not sweet for it's not where we want it and need it to be. We groan because we have unfulfilled desires. We groan because not only do we not love God, we don't love others the way we should, and we groan deeply because of our own sin.

In Romans 7, this famous passage where Paul, a mature believer towards the end of his life says in Romans 7:24, [24] *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* He says this because of sin, so we experience sadness and mourning, living in a fallen world because of our own sins but that's not the only story.

The second reason that we experience sadness in this fallen world, is for God's good purposes – His providential care for His people. The Shorter Catechism says that God's works of Providence are His most wise, His most holy and powerful, preserving and governing of all His creatures and all their actions. In other words, everything and every one of us are under God's sovereign care.

At the beginning, I said, God wants you sad and some of you are probably scratching your head and thinking, 'does God really want me sad?' Scripture says yes at times. Philippians 1:29 says [29] *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake.* Philippians 3:10 says [10] *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death.* He was a suffering Servant and we share in His sufferings.

We see over and over again in Ecclesiastes that all is vanity and in Ecclesiastes 7 it talks about the importance of sadness. Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 says [2] *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart. [3] Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad. [4] The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*

God's Word is counterintuitive for it's so different from the world as we as we think about that but when we come to sadness and sorrow, God in His infinite wisdom and power, is using sadness in our life to produce eternal happiness in us. God's designs for the difficulties in our life are to deliver us from sadness and give us everlasting joy. One day, sadness will be no more. Revelation 21:4 says [4] *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*

Not only will sorrow be no more, but Jesus says in John 16:20, [20] *Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, **but your sorrow will turn into joy.*** That is a great hope for us, a great promise for us. God is using our sufferings, difficulties of life, sadness, sorrow for His good purposes because He loves us, cares for us, and He's using these difficulties to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

Last summer, in Men's Bible study on Friday's, I taught Thomas Watson's small book titled All Things for Good, and in that book, he has a chapter titled 'The Worst Things Work Together for Our Good.' I love that. He spends a lot of time talking about how all the good things work together for good, but in this chapter, he talked about how the worst things work together for our good. He says 'as unbelievers are hurt by the best things in life, believers are helped by the worst things.' That's a powerful God that can help us in the midst of the worst things that we experience.

Now, let's think about some responses to sadness. There are two approaches. There are worldly responses, and then there's Godly responses. Worldly responses flow from worldly sorrow and Godly sorrow. The first worldly response as it relates to sorrow and sadness is a denial of God, a denial that God exists. This is what the unbeliever does and he reasons this way; the argument given is if God is all good and if God is all powerful, then He would want to remove evil and suffering and if He was all powerful, He would be able to remove all evil and suffering, but evil suffering exists, therefore, a good and or all-powerful God cannot exist. That's the skeptics logic. They deny that there's a God, or they doubt that if there is some kind of Being that causes evil and suffering, He is supposed to be good, then He just really can't do anything

about it. This is their logic because God or His Son, Jesus Christ, is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to them.

Flowing from that doubt and denial comes resignation. The resignation of unbelievers is just, 'look, this is just the way it is in the world we live in.' They wouldn't say it's fallen because of sin, but they basically say 'there's really no hope in anything getting any better. We just have to deal with it.' The late Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones in his great commentary on studies in the Sermon on the Mount says it this way; "The world would and does regard a statement like this 'happy are those who mourn' utterly ridiculous. The one thing the world tries to shun is mourning, sadness. Its whole organization is based on the supposition that this is something to avoid. The philosophy of the world is 'forget your troubles, turn your back upon them, do everything you can to not face them.' The motto of the unbelievers, 'Let us eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we will die.'" So then, that resignation so often leads to deep, dark despair, and despair leads to no hope.

For the believer, we can actually fall into that too, can't we? We can fall into depression, despondency, and despair. It's what some writers call a double despair, because for the believer, when that happens, we feel bad, and then we feel worse because we think, 'if I'm a Christian, I shouldn't feel this bad for I should be able to overcome this.' Paul understood this difficulty. He says in II Corinthians 1:8, *[8] For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.* Paul understood the difficulties of life, the sadness that comes with it, and the despairing movement that we can have.

In these moments, God would desire that we have Godly responses with Godly sorrow that leads to greater dependence and trust. We are to trust in Him. I will depend upon the Lord. Godly sorrow causes us to turn to God and not away from Him. We are to turn to Him in dependence and trust.

I'm going to recommend three books in this study and one of them is Tim Keller's book; [Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering](#). I would encourage you to get it and read it. In the book he said that when he went into the ministry, he wanted to find out why so many people reject God. He said, "I soon realized that perhaps the main reason was affliction and suffering, sorrow and sadness. How could a good God, a just God, a loving God allow such misery, depravity, pain and anguish? Doubts in the mind can grow along with pain in the heart, but at the same time, I learn that just as many people find God through affliction and suffering, sorrow and sadness. They find that adversity moves them toward God rather than away." That's what God is wanting to do – draw our hearts to Him, to love Him.

Job said in Job 13:15a, *[15a] Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.* Though He slay me yet well, I trust Him. This is often how God brings us closer to Himself. Oftentimes, when we experience the blessings of God, that's when we're tempted to go away from Him. Jeremiah 5: 7b says *[7b] When I fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the houses of whores.* What stark language! So often when we receive the blessings of God, we actually go away from Him and leave Him. So, in pain, suffering, and sadness God draws our hearts back to Him to depend on Him because we know we can't do anything about it. It's what one of C.S. Lewis' famous quotes is about; 'God whispers to us in our pleasures. He speaks in our conscience, but He shouts to us in our pain. Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world.' That's what God is wanting to do. That dependence and trust in God should lead us to greater devotion, worship, and a desire to glorify God, even in the midst of our sadness.

Job after hearing that he had lost everything in this world which had been taken from him, it says in Job 1:20-22, [20] *Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped.* [21] *And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."* [22] *In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.* He worships in the midst of great sorrow and sadness.

I'd like to now give some remedies of sadness. There are two worldly remedies and then Godly remedies or Biblical remedies. The worldly remedies fall into two categories – relief and reliance. Let first look at relief. The world is constantly seeking relief from their problems. They just want to feel better. Now, if you're a believer, you kind of want that too. We don't like feeling bad. We want to feel better, but that becomes the all-encompassing desire. The remedy is relief from what we're dealing with.

Jesus had a more profound approach, more than relief for it was healing and forgiveness. I'm always struck by the story of the paralytic by the pool in John 5. John 5:5-6 says [5] *One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.* [6] *When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"* Jesus did say, 'Do you wish to feel better?' Jesus wants to do something more profound than just making us feel better. He wants us to understand forgiveness, grace, His power in our weaknesses and struggles.

There are many ways that the world seeks relief and I call these worldly medicating. It can be literal, mood-altering drugs, legal or illegal. A lot of people get into drugs to try to ease and numb the pain. Some use alcohol to ease the pain and there are other forms of medicating – material possessions, money, sex. We all have a tendency when we're struggling to want to distract ourselves with the things in this world, to try to make us feel better, to fill our lives with as much pleasure, as much fun, to try to overcome the sadness in our life. Proverbs 14:13 says [13] *Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief.* If you looked on social media today, you would think that 99.9% of the people are happy 99.9% of the time. It's not true for even in laughter, the heart may be in pain.

What if you find out that your medicines aren't working anymore because you were told that you have deep depression and that's due to a chemical imbalance in the brain? There was a major study done on this and there was an article about it. It said, 'Depression is not caused by chemical imbalance in the brain. There is no convincing evidence that depression is caused by serotonin abnormalities. Major depression is one of the most common psychological disorders affecting more than 23 million adults and adolescents each year in the United States.' So, what if you hear that medicine just won't change everything? I'm not saying don't take medicine, but these are the things that are important.

The second book that I would recommend deals with this subject is titled Good Mood Bad Mood Help and Hope for Depression and Bipolar Disorder by Charles de Hodges. He's a medical doctor. This book is very helpful in this whole idea of sadness, the loss of sadness in our country. Not that we're not sad anymore, but that we call everything depression and sadness. Deep sadness can be very debilitating. But how do we deal with it?

The second aspect and remedy that the unbelievers often face is just reliance and what I mean by that is, self-reliance, depending on myself. I've got to work through or I'm determined to work through it. Ultimately, all man's ways to cope with pain and suffering outside of God don't work. We know that. More devastating, whatever we do when we're just trying to find relief and get through life without God, ultimately, whatever we give ourselves, whatever we

take, not only doesn't work, but it leads to death and destruction. Proverbs 14:12 says [12] *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.* II Corinthians 7:10 says [10] *For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*

The parallel passage in Luke 6 on this Beatitude puts it in starker language and in the negative reverse. Luke 6:25b says [25b] *Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.* For believers weeping won't last forever. For those who don't know Christ, it will be sorrow, and weeping and gnashing of teeth forever and ever. One of the saddest sights in all the world is to see a sinner laughing his way to hell; one who finds pleasure in the pleasures of his own sin. Jesus said in Mark 8:36-37, [36] *For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? [37] For what can a man give in return for his soul?* We have the answer to those who struggle and that is to take the Gospel to them that brings healing and forgiveness. There are great opportunities here to be trained to take the Gospel out to a lost world – to share the bridge to life with people. We have the hope that everybody needs.

So, what are God's remedies? It's really one and it's in our verse for this study, Matthew 5:4 – they shall be comforted. That's His promise to you and me and it's sure! He wants to comfort us in our sadness and He wants to draw us closer to Himself. That's why He came to this earth. Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1-2 in the New Testament and it says [1] *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; [2] to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.*

That's what Jesus did when He died on the cross as the suffering Servant, the man of sorrows. That's what He is doing now, to bring hope, healing and joy to the hurting heart. He was a Man of sorrows, and He wants us in our pain to take our eyes off of ourselves and look at Him, to dwell on Him, to consider Him who endured such hostility by sinners against Himself. Why? So that we may not grow weary and lose heart – to look at Jesus, to remember Him. The parallel passage in Luke 6 also gives this in a positive way. Luke 6:21b says [21b] *Blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh.* One day we will laugh.

In another book by Thomas Watson titled The Doctrine of Repentance, he says this; Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet. What we want is for our sin to become bitter. God uses the fact that we even sin to try to bring the bitterness of it so that we will see that Christ is sweet to forgive us. Psalm 32:1-5 says [1] *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [2] Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. [3] For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. [4] For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. [5] I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

Oftentimes we feel that God in our pain and suffering doesn't love us and he doesn't care for us. It's a real feeling, but they're not true because our feelings are lying to us. We are to take our comfort in God, to trust Him. One of the ways we do that is to learn to, in all things, give thanks, to practice thankfulness. Here is the third book I recommend titled Practicing Thankfulness; Cultivating a Grateful Heart in All Circumstances by Sam Crabtree. We need to practice thankfulness in the midst of difficulties. We want to run from our problems and sorrows – avoiding them and yet God says, "I'm going to give you a great promise in the midst of your problems and difficulties." Psalm 34:18 says [18] *The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and*

saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 73:28a says [28a] *But for me it is good to be near God.* Psalm 27:13 says, *I would have despaired if I thought that I would not see the goodness of the Lord.* Psalm 30:5 says, *Weeping may endure for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.* That's why Paul said, "I don't even consider the sufferings of this world to be worthy, to be compared to the glory that's going to be presented to us" (Romans 8:18).

Here's how Paul viewed his difficulties. II Corinthians 4:16-18 says [16] *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. [17] For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

Here is a final story I want to share with you from Pilgrim's Progress. It's about giant despair in Doubting Castle. When I taught this lesson, I gave ten principles for getting out of Doubting Castle but I'm only going to give you three. I want you to know how to get out of Doubting Castle and overcome giant despair. Pilgrim's Progress is an allegorical presentation of a man's life, Christian, who becomes a Christian and is on the path to the celestial city. He leaves the city of destruction, going to the celestial city to heaven. It's about sanctification in the life of a Christian and in Pilgrim's Progress, you're always to keep your eyes focused ahead at the light and you are to always stay on the king's highway, never to veer off of it. It can be rough. Just like the Scripture says, the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to eternal life. Then a message that comes through Pilgrim's Progress constantly is that the exposure to great spiritual danger often lies just beyond the enjoyment of great spiritual delight. Have you ever found that out in your life?

Something goes great in your spiritual life and you think you can conquer the world. You'll never sin again and then immediately you're tempted and you fall. That's what happened all the time to Christian in Pilgrim's Progress and in this case their feet are bothering them. It's talking about the difficulties of the Christian life and they come to a place where there's a little bridge going over stream, and on the other side the ground looks so soft and Christian says, "Let's go over there, that looks great. We can walk along the path. It looks so much easier, easier than what God has told us to do." Hopeful, who is the young Christian just following his leader says, "I don't know that that's a good idea. What if it gets us out of the way?" Christian says, "that's not going to get you out of the way. We will be in the way" and as soon as they get over, they see a man in front of them named Vain Confidence.

Now, throughout the Book of Pilgrim's Progress, Christian is telling you who not to follow by their names like Ignorance, Talkative, Vain Confidence and he should have known, but, Christian says, "Hopeful, look up there. This man, what is your name?" He says, "Vain confidence. Where are you going?" He said "to the Celestial City." "Great," he says. Christian says the Hopeful "look he's going where we are." So, they start following a fool and it gets dark. Then they hear the man in front of them fall into a deep pit and they heard him no more. It starts raining and they try to go back, but they can't. They wake up in the morning and who comes to get them but Giant Despair. He grabs them and he throws them into Doubting Castle and tells them they will be there from Wednesday to Saturday. That means a long time and not just four days.

This is where Pilgrim's Progress is not a children's story. Most people think Pilgrim's Progress was just written for kids. It's not and there are several places in the book that we know that and this is one of them, because in this section where they deal with Great Depression and Despair, what Giant Despair and his wife Diffidence does, is tries to get Christian and Hopeful to

kill themselves. In the old version of the book, it's too dispatch of themselves, to commit suicide and they come close to doing it. Christian is the main one who wants to kill himself because he has led Hopeful out of the way and they're in this stinking dungeon. They get out and you will have to read the story to how they get out but here are the three principles I want to give you – don't stop talking, be a praying prisoner and use the key called promise.

First, don't stop talking. One of the things that happened is and as Christians we need to do it, is we need to talk to each other more about the truths of God's Word and Hopeful was the one who kept Christian from killing himself. There's one point where he says “with these words...” as he was talking to him, he was recounting all of God's blessings in Christian's life. Hopeful said, “Don't you remember, Christian, my brother? Don't you remember how valiant you were when you fought Apollyon? Don't you remember how you survived the valley of the shadow of death?” He listed all these blessings of God in the past. Bunyan says in the book “with these words Hopeful calmed the mind of his brother so that they continued together in the dark that day in their sad and dismal condition.”

That's powerful. He didn't say that after they talked that everything was great and they were telling jokes, but it says they continued in their sad, dismal condition. But they stayed alive. They kept hope alive. They kept talking so much so that Giant Despair went back to his wife and she said, “did they kill themselves?” He said “No, are sturdy rascals, sturdy rogues.” Then comes one of my favorite lines in the whole book when the wife says to him, “I fear those men live in hope” because they kept recounting the goodness of God, the blessings of Him.

So secondly, that means be a praying prisoner. Not only stop talking about the goodness of God and His blessings, but be a praying prisoner. James 5:13 says *[13] Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.* In the book it says about midnight they started praying and prayed all night, and it's hard to pray when we're having difficulties. That's why you need a Hopeful in your life. You need someone to come alongside of you, to pray with you and for you, but you are to be a praying prisoner because those who are suffering are to pray as God's Word says.

John Newton said, “If we're not getting much out of going to God in prayer, we certainly will get nothing, if we stay away from Him.” So, we go to God in prayer. Thomas Watson said, “Prayer moves the heart of God. Tears melt the heart of God. Our prayerful tears melt his heart.” Remember He saves every tear of yours in a bottle (Psalm 56:8). He will tell you one day how every one of those tears contributed to your growth in Christ.

The final and third thing is, use the key called Promise. Psalm 19:7-8 says *[7] The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; [8] the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.* It's why it's called Doubting Castle – because we tend to trust our feelings of despair and we doubt God's promises of hope. We have to believe and trust the promises of God, what He says in His Word. After Christian and Hopeful had prayed all night Christian said, “What a fool I've been! I have a key next to my heart – the Word of God called promise, and it will unlock any door in this stinking castle.” That's what we do – we use the key called promise, God's Word. It's living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword and it revives the soul and rejoices the heart (Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 19:7-8).

In conclusion, what are you to do with this? Take your hurts and your pain to Jesus. Trust Him. Get help. Talk to your pastor or shepherding elders. Help others. God wants us to sit with others, speak to others, pray with others. I had breakfast with a good friend of mine this past Friday who is going through a very difficult time and is very lonely. He started sharing with

me some things he was encouraging his small group to do, and I thought, 'That's it' for not only do we seek help, but we help others even in our pain and that's how we grow in Christ.

What about the unbeliever? If you don't know Christ, come to Christ today. Come as you are. If you want to talk or pray with someone about this decision, please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, [28] ***“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”*** Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, we do ask that You would administer comfort to Your people today. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Lord, meet each one of us where we are, remind us of Your love for us and Your care for us. Then I pray, Father, if there's someone here who does not know you that are hurting, that they would come to Christ just as they are. They would say, “Jesus, I need you. I've tried to rely on myself and find my own remedies, but I want Jesus, please forgive me of my sins. Come into my life and make me the kind of person that You want me to be.” I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.