
"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN"

By David Roper

Solomon said, "Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart."
(Ecclesiastes 7:3)

Sorrow--with despair removed--is good for the soul: it uncovers hidden depths in ourselves and in God and enables us to give sound and convincing counsel to others that we could not otherwise give.

Sorrow, seen as God's tender touch, makes us think long and earnestly about ourselves. It makes us ponder our motives, our intentions, our real interests. We get to know ourselves as never before.

Sorrow also helps us to know God as we've never known him before. We learn for ourselves that he is indeed the "Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles..." (II Corinthians 1:2) Job said, out of his terrible grief, "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you" (Job 42:5).

Jesus was a "man of sorrows"--intimately acquainted with grief. He learned obedience through the heartaches he suffered. It's important to be exercised as he was by our sorrow: to think about its meaning at the deepest levels of our souls.

Those who don't let sorrow do its work, who deny it, trivialize it, or try to explain it away, remain shallow and indifferent souls. They never understand themselves or others very well. I don't think God can use anyone very much until he has taught that person to mourn.

Joseph had more sorrow than anyone I can think of, apart from our Lord. It was the making of the man. Jacob, his father, said of him, "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall." (Genesis 49:22) Joseph's sorrow had enlarged his soul and empowered him to bring salvation to his brothers.

My life is but a field
stretched out beneath God's sky,
Some harvest rich to yield.

Where grows the golden grain?
Where faith? Where sympathy?
In a furrow cut by pain.

Maltbie Babcock
