

11 | THE MOURNING WILL BE COMFORTED



As soon as the apostles begin their preaching, you immediately see the Ekklesia of believers in action. Not only preaching followed by signs and wonders, but also caring for those who have needs. Men are appointed to care for widows and the poor in particular. In the Ekklesia, mourners are comforted and those with needs receive assistance.

Jesus tells His disciples that the mourners will be comforted. This is the culture in which the Ekklesia bears fruit. Those who help and comfort the sorrowing help Jesus Himself. *(Matthew 25:35-36)*

The Kingdom comes for the sorrowing

Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount for whom He has come: for the poor, the imprisoned (including those who are imprisoned in their souls or spirits), the blind and oppressed. God's desire in this is the exact opposite of what Satan has poured out on this world.

(Matthew 5:4)

Jesus took away the judgment lying on people; He brings mercy instead of judgment and vengeance.

People who have lived for years under the judgment of the law, poor, prisoners, strangers, now hear the words of grace. This is how Jesus comforts these people. Already during His time on earth, Jesus shows how He comforts people. He understands how His disciples feel, always encouraging and comforting them. In this He shows the character of God, who gives us a family to stand by one another, to encourage, to comfort.

If we know God's character, if we know who He is, from there we can also love and appreciate each other in the Ekklesia. God is love and you experience that with one another. When that happens, the restoration will then be passed on outside your Ekklesia to people around you.

Secret of the Kingdom

Although Jesus had received death threats before, no one could do anything to Him. When it was God's time, He allowed Himself to be taken like a willing lamb and condemned to the cross. He suffered horrendous pains through torture and finally He died. **Jesus achieved the greatest victory of all time on the cross. Not by displays of power and strength, but by His total surrender.** By this act Satan was defeated; victory over death was won and the power of sin was broken. Many can now enter the Kingdom through His death and resurrection. *(Luke 4:18-19)*

Strength in weakness

Jesus was able to accomplish this task because his focus was not on suffering, but on what lay behind the suffering: the joy of victory. The secret of the Kingdom lies not in achieving victory through one's own

efforts, but in carrying out God's will. Surrendering to God's way means that you don't go to work in your own strength, but that you die to your own self-chosen way of life and choose the way of Jesus. That way then gives peace and joy.

In the Ekklesia, encouragement is important - we help each other persevere in difficulties. Sometimes we go through suffering ourselves, and it is precisely in this suffering that we can stand strong and encourage others to do the same. Jesus' suffering was the way to our freedom; our suffering can become the way for others to become free. (*Hebrews 12:2*)

There are two kinds of suffering, and to each there is an appropriate response. We sometimes suffer because we are on the offense; we are persecuted, oppressed, and sometimes there is spiritual struggle that culminates in physical suffering. In this suffering we may strengthen, empower and encourage. There is also suffering that we should not have: illnesses that should not be there, everything that overwhelms us. In this case, we pray for physical healing, healing of the heart and deliverance. (*2 Corinthians 4:7-11*)

Our mission

The culture of the Kingdom is a culture of comfort; of looking out for the weak in society, looking out for those around you who need comfort. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. He dwells in us and through us will want to pass on that comfort to others.

EXERCISE:

1. Are you a comforter who brings comfort to others, if so how do you do this?
2. What is the passion that drives you to do this?
3. If you cannot comfort others, is it because you personally would like to be comforted by people from your Ekklesia who pass on God's comfort to you? If so, would you like to share this with someone or with an Ekklesia?
4. Explore whether there is any form of suffering in your Ekklesia as described in the lesson and whether any action is needed for this.



LESSON LEARNED:

Jesus' suffering brought victory through His total surrender. In suffering in our lives, we can experience victory. The Ekklesia is a place where we can encourage and build each other up, when we or others in our Ekklesia are suffering.

