

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor David Bennett
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Key verse: Matthew 5:4

“Be Comforted”

Well, as you know, we are studying the God “blesses” statements in the Sermon on the Mount. Last week Pastor Rolly started the series with “Be Committed.” Specifically dealing with four commitments of first place living.

1. Giving God the first part of your Day.
2. Giving God the first part of your Week.
3. Giving God first place of your finances.
4. Giving God first place of my relationship.

Today we are going to look at Matthew 5:4, which is the second of what is sometimes called the Beatitudes, the sermon is called “**Be Comforted.**”

These first eight statements from the Sermon on the Mount are the most powerful statements ever presented. Each of these statements begins with the two words “**God blesses**”.

The Sermon on the Mount was a collection of challenges to behave in ways that radically departed from the norm but honored God.

Jesus own lifestyle exemplified the ways in which he expects us to live with zeal, passion, and purity.

His different approach to life was consistently **demonstrated** through his love and service to those he encountered, from his **disciples** and the crowds to the **women** at the well, to **Nicodemus**. All of whom were initially clueless, yet all were transformed by their interaction with him.

How well **do we** the Christian community, measure up to the example set for us by Jesus and later by his disciples.

Jesus was telling his audience, I want you to know right up front what it takes to live a life blessed by God. They are the **keys to happiness**. If you think about it, real happiness comes from being blessed by God. You are happy when you are blessed and you are sad when you are not.

Today we are looking at this one. In chapter 5, verse 4. Jesus says something very unusual.

He says, “God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Now the reality is that sometime in our life, all of us are going to mourn. And we are all going to face that.

One of the words that we just used is kind of a common, everyday word for mourning, is problems. Problems come our way and they crush us and they defeat us sometimes.

They cause us to mourn. God says something very interesting. He says, “You are **blessed** when you mourn for you will receive comfort.” Today, we are going to talk about how you receive that comfort in our lives.

The reality is that problems are going to come all the time. While you may not be able to explain the problems, and due to time sake we are not going to try to explain why problems happen, we will save that for another sermon. However, we do have an opportunity to respond to the problem.

You can respond in a way that **God teaches** you and that God uses you and in a way that God pushes you and takes you further along your journey, or you can ignore these problems and miss out on the blessings of God.

Problems come in all **shapes and sizes**. Sometimes, they are small problems. Little everyday things that annoy you. Then sometimes they are big problems. Like having to deal with a broken relationship or having to deal with an emotional pain from your past or having to deal with the deal of a parent.

Someone might be asking, right now, why in the world would anyone want to talk about problems? It's such a downer. What a depressing way to begin my week on Sunday by coming and talking about problems at church. I would leave in a worse mood than when I first walked in.

Why would I want to talk about problems?

The answer is, because problems are going to be there anyway. They are **unavoidable**. Issues, such as failure, conflict, pain and struggle, though negative in nature are there. They exist whether we want them to or not.

Look at this church like a **hospital**, you come here with all your **problems**, all your brokenness, your pain and issues, and that's what a church is supposed to be.

Not a place you go to that **fails to deal with today's problems**. So it may be depressing but it has to be dealt with, and there is no better place to do it than the church.

3 stages Christians go through, either you about to go through something, or you are currently going through something or just came out of something. The question is not a question of **"If"** it's a matter of **"When."** So if you are not going through something right now enjoy it, because it's right around the corner.

Look at what Jesus says on the Sermon on the Mount. It's a short verse from Matthew 5: 45 it says this,

"He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." You know what?

Good things are always going to happen to bad people. And bad things are going to continue to happen to good people. It's just plain life.

Why? A big part of why that happens is because God gives each of us free will.

Over 90% of the suffering and problems in this world are caused because of human sinfulness, because we have free will and we get to make choices. A lot of times we use that free will to make choices that are harmful to other people or that are harmful to ourselves. Now, there are natural disasters and other things in this world that are beyond our control and that we can't control. But the majority of problems that we see in this world are caused because we have free will and we make choices that hurt us and hurt others.

For example, just think about the **World Trade Center** disaster that happened on September 11. God didn't cause that disaster. It was caused by individuals exercising their free will in a horrible, horrible way.

And if God had stopped them, which God could have done. God could have stopped them, but in order to stop the disaster, God would have needed to take away free will. If God wanted to remove all of the problems and all of the evil from this world, He would have to take away all the free will in the entire world.

That is just too great a cost for God to take. You see, free will—God gives us free will that is both the most wonderful and the most dangerous gift that God gives us.

It gives us the possibility of real love, which we can, chose to love other people, but it also opens up the door to undeserved suffering and pain and problems and difficulties.

For example, let's just say you had a choice. Say, I brought up here a live puppy, a little puppy dog up here on one side and on the other side, I had a stuffed puppy dog. Just one of those soft cuddly type puppy dogs. And I gave each of you the option of which one you wanted—the live puppy dog or the stuffed animal.

Nearly every person here would say—I want the puppy dog. I would ask—why do you want the puppy dog? They might say—well, it's alive. It's fun. It will play with me. It will love me. It will lick me on the face. It will do all the things that puppy dogs do that make puppy dogs wonderful.

But then you can look over at the stuffed animal. With a stuffed animal, you don't have to worry about it barking and annoying the neighbors, or peeing on the couch or pooping on the floor or doing all the bad things that puppies do. You don't have to worry about taking it out for a walk. You know what, the live puppy dogs are a lot bigger problems than the stuffed puppy dog, right? But we still want the live one because it's a live thing and it has the ability to love us and we can have a relationship with that puppy.

You see, free will is why live can be so wonderful and so difficult at the same time. What makes the puppy so wonderful is also what makes it so difficult. We could talk about the "why" of problems all day long, but we would be just skirting the real issue.

The Bible teaches that since the fall, we exist in a world with pain and problems that we desperately try to avoid. We try not to focus on them and we pretend that they aren't there. We want to minimize their effects on us and we want to blame the problem on other problem, and so on. But the best thing we can do is learn to deal with the problems that we are going to face every day.

Your life depends not upon dealing with problems and not always from upon understanding why problems happen. Your life depends upon what you do with the problems that you are going to face each and every day.

So today, let's take a look at what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount about facing problems. Today, we are going to look at four ways that God brought comfort to me when I was facing problems. Here's the first one.

1. God hears my Cries

The first way that God brings comfort to us as we face is this—God hears our cries. Have you ever noticed that mothers have a keen sense of hearing when it comes to their children?

You could have a full living room full of people and the mother could say did you hear that? She said, "I just heard the baby. She woke up." The majority

of people would respond I didn't hear anything. There was no noise whatsoever that anyone could hear.

However, the mother could hear the baby wake up. She heard the baby moving. Most mothers have this sense where they are in tune with their child and they can hear and sense their children even when other people can't. It's even truer when we talk about God and His children. You see, God hears every sound we make. Every moment comes from deep in our gut and God is aware of every problem that we have.

This is the first thing we need to know when we are in the midst of problems. That is God is aware of your problems.

We need to know someone else knows and that someone else cares. Not just that, but that they understand the current situation that we are in.

Saints please understand this; God hears you and understands you.

God knows everything and there is nothing beyond His scope. He is present with you at all times and in all places and you are NEVER ALONE. So God hears your cries and because of that His first provision for you in the midst of problems is prayer.

That's God's first provision for you because He hears your cries. Simply put, prayer is communicating with God.

Prayer is not formal. Prayer is not complicated. There is no formula that you need to learn in order to pray. Prayer is simply communicating with God in a real and personal way, opening your heart and sharing with God what's on your mind and then in turn, being willing to listen to Him.

In fact, Jesus teaches on the Sermon on the Mount not to use formulas, repetition or try to look good to others when you pray, because God knows what you are thinking. When you pray, He knows what you are thinking. He knows what your motivations are and the Bible says, God even knows what you need before you ask Him for it.

Look what happens when you do pray. When you communicate with God.

It says in Luke 11:9, from the New Living Translation,

It says this, “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will **receive** what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you **will find**. Keep on knocking, and the door will be **opened** to you.

You want to know how to pray—that’s it. Keep doing these three things. Keep on asking, **keep on** looking, **and keep on** knocking.

God is already there. He already sees, He hears, He understands. But it is when we ask that He gives. It’s when we knock that He answers. It’s when we seek that we find. And we pray and we open communication with God, and we acknowledge in prayer our need for God, it is then that God will draw near and enter our situation in a real and powerful way.

God understands where we are and what we are feeling even when we can’t express it verbally. That’s how much He loves us and understands us. We don’t even have to have the right words. That’s because God hears our cries He understands the cries and moans of His children.

So, if you only hear one word today, it’s to **pray**.

Even when you don’t have the words. Set aside time each and every day to spend communicating with God and listening to Him in return. That’s God’s number one provision for our problem.

The second way that God comforts you in the midst of problems is that—

2. **God Is My Light Shiner**

When we face problems, the second thing that God does is to shine light into a dark situation. He brings truth in an area of our life that is confusing and the number one way that God does that is through the promises He makes to us in the Bible, in His Word.

Look at this next verse. It's from **Psalm 119:105** it says this, *"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path."*

You know, there are times when we are overwhelmed with problems, when we are unable to see God's truth in the situation. We don't see hope. We don't see the good things. We don't see the best options or anything besides the problems that are pressing in around us. As a result, we feel hopeless, depressed and discouraged. But God promises, like a flashlight in the dark, to bring hope, to bring perspective, and to bring truth into our situation. He promises that there is a way out.

Saints please don't let your emotions take over. I want you to listen to me and you need to remember and hear this. Circumstances and emotions will deceive you every time.

If you are only viewing your problems by looking at your circumstances and going with your feelings, you are going to feel hopeless and depressed and overwhelmed each and every time. But God wants to show you the truth.

The real reality of your situation by shining light on your problems and letting you see that He is in control and that He has a purpose for everything that you are going through.

You get this **truth** and this **hope, not by** following your emotions, but by reading **God's Word** and **believing** His promises.

Are you facing problems today?

If so, you need to make the commitment to begin spending time reading God's Word every day.

If you do, I guarantee you that God will begin to shine His light of truth and hope into your life and over your problems. You will see meaning and purpose even in the most difficult situations.

But that's just one way to begin spending time reading God's promises each and every day. Reading His Word.

I want to leave you with one of God's great promises. It's especially pertinent promise if you are going through a problem that are leaving you feeling overwhelmed or alone or depressed or anxious.

It's from Romans 8:38 It says this, "I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love.

- Death can't and life can't.
- The angels can't, the demons can't.
- Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away.

Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all of creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God."

How does God provide comfort for our problems? First, God hears my cries. His provision for that is prayer. Second, God is My Light Shiner. His provision for that is His promises from scripture. Third, the way God provides comfort for us when we mourn is that God is.

3. God is My Heart Healer

If you think about it, problems are really issues of the heart. Maybe you have used that language before. You may have said I have had my heart broken. My heart feels crushed. My heart cries out because problems are an issue of the heart. Because they are, God's provision for this is to provide healing for our heart. Look at what the Bible says in Psalm 147:3

It says, "God heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. He numbers the stars and gives them all a name."

He also numbers your problems and provides healing for each one. You see, when you have a problem of the heart, you really don't need an explanation as to why the problem came. Instead, what you need is encouragement and comfort. So God's provision for your heart problem is rather unusual.

God has a prescription. It is somewhat different from each of the ones we have talked about so far. Here's what it is. God's provision for your problem is His people.

Sometimes you need someone to come along side of you. Sometimes you need a hand around your shoulder. Sometimes you need someone to carry you to Jesus. You see, God uses the other people in His Kingdom to assist Him in bringing healing to the problems of your heart.

Someone said that a friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you've forgotten the words.

Did you realize that all the people in this room have the potential to be God's provision for your problems? They may be sitting beside you, or in front of you or behind you right now.

Why? Because more than likely, in a crowd this size, someone else has gone through similar problems.

Sometimes you are the solution to the problem the person sitting next to you has. Why don't you turn to the person next to you and say—did you know that I am a solution to your problem?

Go ahead and do that.

Now I know that sounds like a contrast because you thought the person next to you was the cause of your problem. Nonetheless.

In 2 Corinthians 1:4 it says, "God comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others."

Think about that. God gives us Comfort so that we can turn around and give it to other people. "When others are troubled," we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

We are on the receiving end of God's comfort and then we can be conduits for others to experience that same comfort.

God wants to give you His comfort, God wants to comfort you when you mourn by providing healing in your heart by listening to your sighs and by shining light, but He does it also so that you might be a comfort to others.

Ask yourself how can you comfort others today, or this week? Maybe you need to send someone an encouraging email. Maybe you need to make a phone call. Maybe you need to offer a hug to someone or maybe you sense the tension in their voice and you just want to let them know that you are praying for them this week. When you do that, you are working in conjunction with God to be the provision for people's problems. The last point is;

4. God is My Strength Giver

God provides strength when problems come. You know, the reality is that problems drain us of strength. We feel pressed down. We use words like—I ran out of gas. The wind has been knocked out of me. I have no more steam.

And God says, when you run out of gas and problems are about to run over you, look to Him for strength.

John Claypool pastor of the Crescent Hill Baptist church in Louisville had a daughter with Leukemia. She went into remission and everybody thought she had been healed.

She had a reoccurrence on Easter Sunday morning. Claypool said his daughter asked, "Daddy, did you talk to God about my leukemia?" He responded yes, and we have been praying for you. She said, "Did you ask how long will I have Leukemia? And what did God say?"

What do you say to your daughter when you can't help her and it seems as if the Heavens are silent?

A few hours later Claypool's daughter died. The following Sunday John Claypool got up to preach and his text was Isaiah 40:31, "Those who hope in

the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, and they will walk and not be faint.”

Claypool said, “There are three stages of life, sometimes we mount up with wings as an eagle and fly, were on top of the world.”

“Sometimes we run and do not grow weary. Other times we just go through the routine. Sometimes the best we can do is walk and not faint, and that’s where I am right now. I need your prayers.”

At that moment Claypool was at his lowest and he preached probably his most influential sermon. Like Paul said when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:10)

How does God give us strength? He does it through His presence. God’s provision for us when we need strength is to be there for us. God comes along side of us. He lifts us up.

He strengthens us. He is there with us. Throughout the ages, God’s presence has meant many things.

God’s presence is depicted many times in the Old Testament; God’s presence was very tangible. You’ll remember, when Moses was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, God would provide a very visible presence. It was a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, and God was saying—don’t give up, I’m there with you.

Look to My presence. In the life of Jesus, you will often find that when Jesus walked into the room, strength is provided.

He brings healing. He brings calmness. He often brings comfort. That was in days of old, what about us today? I mean, Jesus is no longer here with us physically.

But what about today?

This is a topic that we have been dealing with in our IMPACT Class.

How do we see God or his presence with us here today?
Jesus said God will provide us with a comforter.

Look at what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit in John 15:26, Jesus is referring to His coming departure, He says, *“Once I leave, I will send you the Comforter.”*

God never leaves us alone. Whether it is the pillar of fire in the Old Testament, the person of Jesus for the early Christians, or the Holy Spirit with us, God’s presence is always there. When we acknowledge that presence, we receive strength for the journey.

The Spirit provides comfort for you when you are going through problems. So if you have ever felt like you are alone when you are going through problems, and you are a Christian, you are not, because the Holy Spirit is there.

If you will reach out to God and lean on Him, He will provide you with the strength that you need. This is why Paul was able to say in Philippians 4:13. *“For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.”*

Look, problems are guaranteed in this life. But, God promises that those who lean on Him, and give Him first place in their life will be able to call upon Him in prayer.

They will be able to receive His promises. You will experience healing through other people. You will learn to lean on His presence and you will call upon His Holy Spirit in the difficult journey of life. You see, problems are going to come. You cannot escape them. In this earthly life, you are going to have problems. As a matter of fact, you have heard me say over and over, that there is a word for one problem after another.

Life!

It's just going to happen. It's a temporary deal, because you were created for eternity. You see, your earthly life is only a small part of your eternal life. The life we spend here on earth is full of problems and is only a very small part of what you were created for, because every one of you are created for eternity. You are created to live forever. In this life, you are going to experience problem after problem after problem, but you have a choice as to whether or not those problems will continue for all eternity.

I started today with the statement that problems are an issue of free will. So it is with eternity. You are going to have problems in this life, that's just a fact, but whether or not you have problems for all eternity is an issue of your free will.

You see, will you choose, will you make a conscious free-will decision to follow Jesus Christ and experience eternity in the problem-free place that we can only describe as Heaven, or will you choose to reject Jesus Christ and thus experience problems in this life and experience eternal problems in what the Bible describes as hell. The choice is yours.

The earthly problems are temporary. But the eternal problem of saying "no" to Christ goes on and on forever. Now, I want to challenge you today to say "yes" to Jesus Christ.

When you say yes to Him, you get all of these provisions that we have listed here and then you also get the promise of eternal life in Heaven.

The Bible describes that eternal, problem-free life in Revelation 21. The Bible says, "There will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain. For the old order of things has passed away." If you have never said "yes" to Jesus Christ, will you say yes to Him today, receive His provision for the immediate needs of your earthly life and then receive His eternal gift of a problem-free life in Heaven. I hope you will.

Let's pray together.