

# Worship from King's College Chapel Podcasts

## Season 3 – Wednesday Worship Winter Term 2021

### Episode 4 Transcript – The Beatitudes: Blessed are those who mourn

**Voiceover** This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.

**Introit** *Let your restless hearts be still* arr John L Bell (b1949)

**Rev David Hutchison** Good evening and a very warm welcome to King's College Chapel. Thank you to our choir for that glorious introit. To explain, for our service this evening, we're relying on the piano and the organ is receiving its overhaul and unfortunately it takes it out of action this evening. So we are bound to the piano this evening and I would encourage you to sing as loud as you can to drown out my singing voice, which is not what you want to hear. A couple of announcements, we will have a retiring offering in aid of Shining Lights, a charity assisting with the resettlement of refugees and I believe the plate might be at the back. Although I know that that access route is not the one you might take because we will be having teas and coffees following our service in the James Mackay Hall, which is just adjacent to us on my left. Thank you for coming, thank you also for your willingness to wear masks. I humbly apologise but unless you're participating in this evening, we would appreciate if you kept your mask on.

Regardless of what is said from here this evening, tonight is an opportunity for all of us to be very open and honest with our God, whatever that may mean. God, if nothing else is a listening ear and please believe me when I say God is a lot more than science. But this evening you can be honest and open with our God.

All are welcome. All are welcome. All are welcome in this place. Let us worship God by the reading of our Opening Affirmation from Psalm 105, printed in your order of service.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name;

**make known his deeds among the peoples!**

Sing to him, sing praises to him;

**tell of all his wondrous works!**

Glory in his holy name;

**let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!**

He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

**He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.**

**Praise the Lord!**

We begin by singing our hymn number 736, Give thanks for life, the measure of our days, hymn number 736.

**HYMN 736** Give thanks for life

**Rev David Hutchison** Please be seated. Let us pray. Sovereign God and intimate friend. Almighty God and fellow traveller. God of grace, God of power, God of light and life, come we pray, meet with each and every one of us here this evening.

In you gracious God, we have someone in whom we can trust. In you living God, we have someone who trusts us. We are humbled by your love, your care and your ongoing faith in our abilities to spread your Word.

As we gather here this night, remind us of your faithfulness: your longing to see us thrive; your wish to see us shine; your plan to see us grow toward you and thus, toward all those around us. We thank you, loving and merciful God.

Forgive us when we fall, when we opt to ignore you, when we seek first our own kingdom, when we imagine we can ignore you, your Word and your light. Forgive us Loving God, and remind us of your faithfulness and your willingness to forgive us, to dust us off, set us on our feet again and pave the road ahead.

Inspire us with your Word this night we pray. Grant us courage and strength to pursue your will, whatever that may mean, and keep us from harm, every step we take. This night and every night.

And now, using the words Jesus used to teach his disciples to pray, we say together,

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

Amy Bender will read our lesson this evening

**Amy Bender** Our scripture reading this evening is Psalm 23, the Divine Shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;



**Rev David Hutchison** Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. It almost sounds ludicrous that somehow in the depths of grief and sadness and loss, God should promise something so helpful, so welcoming, so rich and comforting. It almost sounds perverse. Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted. We need to be clear what it is not saying, it is not saying that mourning is wrong. It is not saying that somehow mourning can be avoided, and let us remember Christ himself weeping following the death of his friend, Lazarus. Grief and mourning the loss of someone you knew and you loved is a very human and a very natural response to loss. But then what is this beatitude saying? Blessed are you in the midst of your loss, your sadness, your grief because in the very deep, dark valley of your grief, there is somehow comfort. Remember the words of Psalm 23: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

I was in my final year at university doing my divinity degree. I was training for the ministry, I was convinced I would set the church alight with my preaching, don't laugh. I had a girlfriend who I proposed to and she said yes. The sun was shining, at least it was on me. The sun was also shining on the day my dad phoned to tell me my mum had cancer. Six months later she was dead.

I missed two of my final exams when I went home for the funeral. I vowed not to cry because I was training for the ministry. Imagine if people saw me crying and I was training to become a minister, what would that say about my faith. Genuine grief is a very dark and very lonely place. I hope perhaps you have lost you have avoided the loss of a near one, but I know because I know so many of you. I know you have lost people close to you, and the truth is, the closer they are the worse the grief. The amount you grieve is directly proportional to the amount you loved that individual and so maybe I should be standing here telling you to avoid grief entirely, avoid loving anyone, avoid associating with anyone, avoid any social contact, avoid your family for goodness sake, and certainly don't get married and oh, for Pete's sake, don't grow fond of anyone. That way you'll avoid this deep, dark valley. I can't do that. The Beatitude is giving us a promise of a bigger picture. In your grief you only see your loss, you only witness the hole, the gap, the dark place in your life. Your world has been turned around, whether suddenly or over time, one of your anchors, one of your family, one of your soul mates, perhaps even your only soul mate, and therefore, you feel lost. But our text today promises you comfort. Comfort, not joy, not happiness, not fun, comfort. And comfort will come in all manner of shapes and sizes. A shoulder to cry on, a friend to walk with you to commiserate with you. A colleague to take you for coffee, a letter from a family member describing the person you've lost in colourful and fun ways that lifts your spirit, a family reunion, a hymn that you sang at the funeral which will always remind you of your loved one. The comfort will never replace the individual, the loss will always remain. But the comfort reminds you you are not alone. The comfort provides some light, some stability, some support, some safety when you most need it. And the reminder of how much that individual has left you better off. Thanks to them, you are wiser, you are richer, you can walk taller, you have been changed for the better. As the novelist Dostoyevsky put it so well in *Crime and Punishment*:

The darker the night, the brighter the stars,  
The deeper the grief, the closer is God!

Or as it's put in *the Message translation of the Bible*:

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.

The Lord is your shepherd  
God will comfort you  
God loves you, more than you know,  
Thanks be to God. Amen

Friends, we sing our final hymn, a triumphant hymn of rejoicing; Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son, endless is the victory thou, o'er death hast won. Hymn 419.

**HYMN 419** Thine be the glory

Go from here in peace and in love and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sustainer descend upon you and upon all those whom you love and remain with you now and forever more.

**Amen sung by Choir**

**Recessional**

*Prelude and Fugue in E minor BWV555*

J S Bach (1685-1750)

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