



Good grief?

Dear Friends,

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”. Until recently, this is a verse of the bible I would have disagreed with, if I’d given it much thought. I meet a lot of people who have lost loved ones for whom “blessed” is the last word that comes to mind. Miserable, unfortunate, and devastated are more appropriate. But then a preacher pointed out that Jesus didn’t say blessed are those who are bereaved, but blessed are those who mourn.

Bereavement is a process that takes time—and getting to the point where you can really mourn, where loss is physically felt, is crucial for moving on—for being comforted.

But the preacher also said that Jesus was talking about wider issues. Looking at the world around us many issues might make us mourn. We can see the violence and bitterness that leads to war and terrorism; the greed and corruption that results in poverty; the power struggles and politics that divide communities; the abuse that devastates families.

The preacher reckoned that those who mourned were those who engaged enough with the situation to make a difference. Their mourning could energise them for prayer and action. He made me think.

But of course, Jesus also said, “I am the resurrection and the life” – we believe that because Jesus died and rose again we can know that one day we can all be re-united. Death will be no more. All tears will be wiped away. So yes we will be comforted.

But that hope of resurrection and healing also applies in our world today. As Spring approaches, the snow drops and daffodils speak of the new life to come. Winter does not last. So too, as we all mourn for Israel and Gaza, and for Ukraine, we can have hope that one day peace and healing will come. And that combination of grief and hope can inspire us to persevere in prayer. I do pray for the victims, for so many on both sides who long for peace. And I pray for those with power, that they would mourn in the right way. That they would have a passion for peace and justice, and wisdom and courage to play their part.

Peter

