

A wooden block with the word 'bless' written on it.

James Coleman

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.'

Matthew 5:4

'Count your blessings' is one of those unhelpful things that people say when they really mean 'You shouldn't feel the way you do'. It can be one of the least helpful things to say to someone who is feeling low. So what does Jesus mean? Is he another one of those unhelpful people, who know just how to say the wrong thing?

We often think that "blessed" means "happy", but how can those who are unhappy (because they are mourning) be happy? Blessedness is not exactly happiness. It is not helpful to tell people who have been recently bereaved that they should be happy, even if this is based upon a hope of heaven or life after death. But this isn't really what Jesus is saying. The context of that passage is one just like ours – in which war and terror place people in exile and captivity, and in which the present reality is anything but happy.

Pain and trauma can easily lead us to struggle with our mental health – quite rightly. Bad things do, and should affect us. But what Jesus is promising is different; more a promise that God is always with us even – perhaps especially – when it seems otherwise. God walks with us to help us find meaning and new hope. God also calls his people to comfort one another, so that this comfort isn't some distant concept, but a reality for today. We are called to provide comfort, and allow ourselves to be comforted by the love of those around us.

There is, however, a paradox to reflect upon. We often do not fully realise the depth of God's love when we are content and self-satisfied. Sometimes, only when we mourn over the loss of the people and things that we love the most do we fully appreciate what really matters.

A "Have a Go" habit: Sit down

- Picture being in that crowd and Jesus catching your eye, knowing your feelings and circumstances and saying straight to you "you are blessed".
- Have a go at breathing in the word "blessed". Repeat it slowly.
- Look at [Psalm 40](#)...a bad day, a deep hole? God lifts you, God sets your feet on a rock, God puts a song in your heart...



Looking for support?

Explore services and organisations that can offer help and support

A person's hands held together as they rest their arms on a balcony.

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Next reflection

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The *#FaithAndMentalHealth* reflections were written by Rev Prof Chris Cook. Ruth Rice developed the "Have a go" habits.

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