

## **One**

### **The third Beatitude: Blessed are they who mourn.**

We learn from the Prodigal Son what it means to mourn. Remember, it is the story of a son who had everything, but he thought he couldn't be happy living with his father, so he asks for his inheritance, wishing his father were dead, and turns to a life of sin in search of what he already had.

Luke 15:13-18, "A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but not one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say Father I have sinned against heaven and against you. So, he left the place and went back to the father."

## **Two**

What takes place in this story?

The young man turns away from his father, seeking to find happiness where it cannot be found. He hits rock bottom, becomes a slave of his own doing, and ends up feeding pigs. But then he reflects on his experience, recognizing his life of sin has not made him happy. This

honest reflection is the beginning of his conversion, of his turning back to the house of his father.

These are the very steps of mourning.

We all turn away from God through sin. But if we reflect honestly on our experience, we feel that sin has only left us empty and unhappy. This causes a real sorrow to grow within us. This sorrow, this mourning is good, because this feeling of sadness moves us to return to Our Father. That is why Jesus says blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are those who allow the sadness of sin to wake them up and move them to return to God.

### **Three**

What prevents most people from growing closer to God is simply a lack of reflection.

The turning point for the prodigal son was the moment he reflected on his life and realized he was not happy. This reflection and the feeling of sadness moved him to the right resolution to return to his father.

This can be our turning point every day and this is the transforming power of a daily meditation, a resolution, and an examination of conscience.

At the beginning of your time with God in prayer, reflect over the last 24 hours. Reflect on what you have thought, said and done or failed to do and what it caused you to feel. Which experiences left you satisfied and at peace? Which left you empty and unfulfilled. Then let the sadness and emptiness that come from sin move you to tell God the Father you are sorry and ask for forgiveness. Then read or listen to the Word of God and think about it and apply it to your life. Here we begin to see where

the Word of God connects to our examination of conscience and how we might form a resolution or a strategy to live differently today.

This is what it means to mourn.

## **Four**

What is the one thing the prodigal son could have done that would have saved him all his trouble?

If he had started each day by naming all of the blessings that came from his father, he probably would not have left. Instead, he got focused each day on those things he thought he was missing out on, all the false, illusory pleasures of sin. And this led him to turn away from the Father to sin.

Mourning is really about deepening conversion.

The most effective way to deepen our conversion each day is through a daily examination of conscience, beginning with Gratitude.

For what am I grateful? To whom am I grateful? To God of course.

These things are manifestations of God's love for me, which leads me to ask, "Where have I failed to correspond to his love today?" and, "How can I correspond better to his love?"

## **Five**

To Mourn means to have sorrow for our sin and then turn back to the Father.

Every soldier needs their MREs, their meals ready to eat. You are a good soldier in the middle of a spiritual battle. And we have our MRE, it is Meditation, Resolution, and an Examination of conscience. If you use

your MRE every day, you will fall into sin, because we are human, but your MRE will get you back on your feet and give you the spiritual strength to keep going and to be victorious in battle.