**The Dark Night of the Soul.**

**Big Idea: Go very slowly with Jesus when life turns dark.**

“With mere minutes to live, the only three questions I thought about where: ‘Who do I love?’ ‘What have I done with my life?’ ‘Am I ready for whatever is next?’”

**I) The Sermon on the M\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Matthew 5-7.**

1. The most famous sermon ever preached in the world, it is the first of five great sermons Jesus preached in Matthew. Topics of the Sermon on the Mount:
   1. Declaration of Blessedness. Blessed are the . . .
   2. How to live a life of faith. Prayer, Mercy, Giving, . . .
   3. Contrasts Jesus teachings and Jewish traditions. ‘They say, but I say to you . . .’
2. **Paraphrases of the Blessings from the Sermon on the Mount:**
   * "Blessed are those who humbly recognize their need for God, for they will enter into his kingdom."
   * "Blessed are those who mourn for their sins, for they shall receive forgiveness and life eternal."
   * "Blessed are those who submit to God as Lord, for they will be heirs to everything God possesses."
   * "Blessed are those who passionately long for the Lord, Jesus Christ, for he will satisfy their souls."
   * "Blessed are those who show mercy through forgiveness, kindness and compassion, for they will receive mercy."
   * "Blessed are those who have been purified from the inside out, being made clean and holy, for they will see God."
   * "Blessed are those who have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and who bring this same message of reconciliation to others. All those who have peace with God are called his sons."
   * "Blessed are those daring enough to openly live for righteousness and suffer persecution, for they will receive the kingdom of heaven."
3. The blessed describe the blessedness that *already belongs*  to all believers in Christ. They mention eight ways in which all Christian **are ALREADY** blessed. What a Christian naturally is when filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Life Point:** Are these blessings yours NOW?

**II) On ‘All Saints Day’ we mourn for our sin but we also mourn the l\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in our life.**

“*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”* Matthew 5:4

1. Death and suffering are a part of life on a Fallen World. “*Sarah lived to be 120 years old. She died a Hebrom in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her*.” Genesis 23:1-2.

“If you ask people who don’t believe in God why they don’t, the number one reason is suffering. If you ask people who believe in God when they grew most spiritually, the number one answer will be suffering.”

1. Because the soul is the deepest expression of the person, the soul is the place of the greatest pain.

“The dark night of the soul, is not simply the experience of suffering. It is suffering in what feels like the silence of God. In the dark night, my prayers feel like they reach no higher than the ceiling . . . the Bible I read turns to ashes. The words and book and songs that once spoke to my soul now leave me cold.”

1. Even Jesus feeling this way in the Garden of Gethsemane (Gethsemane = Crushing) and on the cross. “*My God, my God why have you forsaken me?*” Matthew 27:46

**Life Point:** When you love, you lose and when you lose, you grieve.

**III) What do we d\_\_\_\_ in the dark night of the soul?**

“*Be still and know that I am God*.” Psalm 46:10

1. In the dark night of the soul you will help in C\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“The presence of another caring person doubles the amount of pain a person can endure. . . people who are connected to caring community heals faster and better.”

“What is the best advice a pastoral or other counselor might give to a women in her prime of life who faces devastating health problems? She should have been an active member of a vital congregation for the previous twenty years.

1. In the dark night of the soul we cling to the c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ like a life boat. In the cross we see a God who is with us in our pain.

“*We have this hope as an anchor of the soul, firm and secure*.” Hebrews 6:19

“I am a Christian because of that moment on the cross when Jesus, drinking the very dregs of human bitterness cries out, My God, My God why have you forsaken me . . . he felt human destitution to its absolute degree: the point is that God is with us, not beyond us in suffering.”

1. In the dark night of the soul we do L\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are told to try more: more prayer, more serving, more giving, more trying. In the dark night of the soul, God might call us to do l\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and wait.

“What do we do in the dark night? We do nothing. We wait. We remember that we are not God. We hold on. We ask for help. We do less. We resign from things, we rest more, we have somebody else pray for us, because we can’t. We let go of our need to hurry through it. You can’t run in the dark.” Ortberg

**Life Point:** Our culture wants to hurry people through their grief.

“In the spiritual life God chooses to try our patience first of all by His slowness. He is slow; we are swift and in a hurry. It is because we are but for a time, and He has been eternity. . . There is something greatly overawing in the extreme slowness of God. Let it overshadow our souls, but let it not disquiet them. We must wait for God’s long arm meekly, in the wind and wet, in the thunder and the lightening, in the cold and the dark. Wait and He will come. He never comes to those who do not wait. He does not go their road. When He comes, go with Him, but go slowly, fall a little behind; when He quickens His pace, be sure of it, before you quicken yours. But when He slackens, slack at once; and do not be slow only, but silent, very silent, for He is God.”

**Life Point:** You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life, especially in seasons of grief.

1. The dark night of the soul will test of your joyful confidence in God. Go slow with one who understands your pain, Jesus.

"*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* [Colossians 3:12-13](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Colossians%203.12-13)

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