

James 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Analysis

Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Be afflicted, mourn, and weep; let laughter turn to mourning. James calls for godly sorrow over sin. Superficial happiness must give way to Spirit-wrought lament that leads to change.

Reformed repentance involves grief and hatred for sin that turns to God. Such seriousness about sin contrasts with worldly levity.

Historical Context

Like Old Testament prophets (Joel 2), James summons God's people to lament. Diaspora believers flirting with worldliness needed heartfelt contrition rather than lighthearted excuses.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. When have you last wept over sin—personal or communal?

2. What practices help cultivate godly sorrow?
3. How can lament lead to actionable repentance?

Interlinear Text

ταλαιπωρήσατε καὶ πενθήσατε καὶ κλαύσατε ὁ γέλως
 Be afflicted and mourn and weep G3588 laughter
 G5003 G2532 G3996 G2532 G2799 G1071

ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος μεταστραφήτω καὶ ἡ χαρὰ εἰς
 let your to mourning be turned and G3588 your joy to
 G5216 G1519 G3997 G3344 G2532 G5479 G1519

κατήφειαν
 heaviness
 G2726

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:4 (Parallel theme): Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Proverbs 14:13 (Parallel theme): Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.

Luke 6:25 (Parallel theme): Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Psalms 119:67 (Parallel theme): Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

Ezekiel 16:63 (Parallel theme): That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 7:16 (Parallel theme): But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.

Job 30:31 (Parallel theme): My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

Jeremiah 31:9 (Parallel theme): They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Luke 16:25 (Parallel theme): But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Psalms 119:71 (Parallel theme): It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

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