**HOLY SAVIOUR, BITTERNE BIBLE STUDY – WEEK BEGINNING MAY 17th (Beatitudes 2)**

*We are continuing our series of studies on the Beatitudes which is the theme homegroup leaders settled on for this term. The Beatitudes teach us about Christian character, something which the current crisis may well be helping to shape!* ***Jot down your thoughts about the questions in the spaces provided*** *–* ***and it would be really good to share them with others.*** *Phone, Skype, email some members of your homegroup or a friend and/or email me your thoughts (* brianparfitt@btinternet.com *).* ***Brian Parfitt***

Do you ‘cry at anything’ or do you keep your composure? What things make you tearful?

**The second Beatitude, Matthew 5.4, says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” or “Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!” Quite naturally we mourn the death of those we know and love. At the moment many are mourning because they have lost loved ones due to Covid-19, and the restrictions at the moment mean that they cannot mourn in the way they would like. The rituals surrounding a funeral can be helpful in what we often label ‘the grief process’ with its stages or aspects of dealing with grief. But there are other things over which we mourn and in which we experience something of that grief process – loss of job, failures to achieve our ambitions etc.. We have a God who mourns with us and enters into our grief, but he also mourns over the sin and the mess we make in our lives and in the world. Christians can echo that mourning too – over their own sins and in their concern for our troubled world. In all this we have a God who is a comforter. To explore what it means to mourn we are going to look at passages from the Old and New Testament. *(If it’s helpful you might look at them over a few days, one at a time, rather than all at once.)***

**Read an Old Testament promise to those who mourn - Isaiah 61.1-3.** What promises does God make to ‘those who mourn’ and are struggling? In Luke 4.16-21 Jesus says he fulfils Isaiah’ words - can you think of stories which show Jesus fulfilling this prophecy in his ministry?

**Read John 11.28-36.** What do these verses show about Jesus’ compassion and his own grief in the face of death? How can we ‘mourn with those who mourn’? In what ways do people often seek to avoid doing so and why?

**Read Luke 13.34 and 19.41-42.** Why is Jesus mourning in these verses? What things in the news make you mourn? **Look again at Romans 8.18-27 which we read a few weeks ago.**  What does it say about our mourning over what is wrong and our prayerful longings? How do these verses promise comfort?

**Read James 4.8-9.** What are we called to weep over here? What is God’s promise to those who do so?

**Read Revelation 7.17 & 21.3-4.** What vision are we given here of God comforting those who mourn? How can these words encourage and strengthen those who mourn?

Reflect on what you have discovered from ***each of the passages*** we have looked at. How do they help you understand the Beatitude, **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”**? How can they help those who mourn (in any of its meanings) in our current circumstances?