

# BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 4:23-5:12

Theme of Matthew: "Behold your King is coming to you" (Zech.9:9; Mt.21:4-5)

Theme of the Beatitudes: Christ's Portrait of His People (John Stott)

Theme of the Sermon on the Mount: Life Styles of the Rich and Famous

## REVIEW OF THE BEATITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit – "I have need to be baptized by You" (Matthew 3:14).

Blessed are those who mourn – "Oh that my head were waters And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jeremiah 9:1)

Blessed are the meek/gentle – Meekness is not a renunciation of ambition or aspiration or the achieving of a goal. Meekness has to do with the path one chooses to be ambitious, AND the path one chooses to achieve greatness (Philippians 2:3-12). Meekness is the kingdom way of ambition! But the way of ambition is the way of the cross.

Blessed are the merciful – Mercy is not letting people get what they have coming to them. Mercy is giving to others what God has given to us. A merciful life is rooted in the cross.

Pure in heart – undivided allegiance, single-minded devotion. The pure in heart give no foothold to the devil, the world, or our own sinful lusts.

## I. HUNGER AND THIRST

- A. It's hard for most of us to imagine what hunger or thirst is when we have Evian mineral water from the French Alps, 64 ounce big slurps or a coffee mug in hand.
- B. Physiologists use Greek-based words to describe different stages of hunger or thirst.
  - 1. *eudipsia*, "ordinary thirst"
  - 2. *hyperdipsia*, "temporary intense thirst"
  - 3. *polydipsia*, "sustained excessive thirst."
- C. The fourth beatitude is the opposite of what we would expect!

The cost of food in the kingdom is hunger for the bread of heaven, instead of the white bread of the world. Do you want it? Are you hungry? Or are you satisfied with yourself and your [toys and your electronic gadgets] and your television and your computer...?

*Citation:* John Piper, author and pastor, from sermon "The Present Power of a Future Possession," preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota (4-27-97).

## II. HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Matthew 5:6; Job 23:12; Ps.42:1-2; 63:1,5; **107:5,8-9**; Jer.15:16; Luke 1:53; cf. **Mt.4:4; 6:16-18**).

- A. The temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4 illustrate the priority Jesus placed on righteousness (Matthew 4:4 with Deuteronomy 8:3).
- B. Righteousness is something that gets better over time. Without righteousness everything in this world, given enough time, gets boring the more you do it (Ecclesiastes).
- C. The rest of the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew's Gospel illustrate what righteousness is (see Genesis 18:19: "righteousness and justice"; cf. Ex.23:6-9 with Isaiah 53; Deut.16:18-20; 24:10-22; 2 Sam.8:15 = 1 Chron.18:14; 1 Kings 10:9=2 Chron.9:8; Job 29:12-17; Isaiah 5:7; 9:6; Psalm 72:1-4; Ezek.18:5-9; Amos 5).
  - 1. Righteousness is obedience to the Law of God, even the least of the commandments (**Matthew 5:17-20; 28:20**; see Ecclesiastes 12:13).
  - 2. Alms giving is a form of righteousness for which we are to hunger and thirst (Mt.6:1-5,19-21)
  - 3. Prayer is a form of righteousness for which we are to hunger and thirst (Mt.6:5-6)
  - 4. Fasting is a form of righteousness for which we are to hunger and thirst (Mt.6:16-18)
  - 5. Feeding the hungry, giving the thirsty something to drink, inviting strangers, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and prisoners are all outworkings of righteousness for which we are to hunger and thirst (Matthew 25:35-38).

*Are you one of the blessed? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness?*

### III. FOR THEY SHALL BE SATISFIED (Matthew 5:6; Isa.49:10; Ps.17:14-15; 22:26; 37:19; 132:15; 146:7; **Mt.14:19-21; 15:33-38**; cf. 2 Peter 3:13)

- A. There is a “now and not yet” aspect to the satisfaction Jesus promised.
- B. There is a hungering and thirsting Jesus satisfies now:
  - 1. “whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst” (John 4:13-14).
  - 2. “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst” (John 6:35; cf. John 7:37-39).
  - 3. The word “satisfied” only occurs three other times in Matthew’s Gospel after the fourth beatitude and they are all in the context of Jesus feeding the 5,000 and the 4,000 (Matthew 14:19-21; 15:33-38).
- C. Just as most people can never have enough money, enough toys, enough beauty, etc. we should never be satisfied that we have done enough in the pursuit of the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

Isaiah 55:1-3 (NIV)

1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

### IV. THE MORE YOU EAT FROM THE TABLE OF THIS WORLD, THE LESS HUNGRY YOU ARE GOING TO BE AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD AT THE BANQUET OF GOD.

- A. Righteousness & its connection with reward in Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 10:40-42):
  - 1. “greatest and least” (Matthew 5:17-20)
  - 2. Giving (Alms) is a practicing of righteousness that God **rewards** (Mt.6:1-5,19-21)
  - 3. Prayer is a practice of righteousness that God **rewards** (Mt.6:1,5-6)
  - 4. Fasting is a practice of righteousness that God **rewards** (Mt.6:1,16-18)
- B. There is a correlation between righteousness and satisfaction and reward. However hungry and thirsty you are now for righteousness will determine how satisfied you are in heaven.
  - ✓ God satisfies us in the future, in proportion to how much we hunger and thirst for righteousness now.
  - ✓ God satisfies us in heaven commensurate with our thirsting for righteousness on earth.
  - ✓ There is a direct correlation between God’s future reward and our present pursuit of righteousness.
- C. The natural tendency is to satisfy our bodies to the neglect of hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We want our earthly comforts now and we take no care for storing up for ourselves heavenly treasures.
- D. In heaven, we will all be perfectly satisfied, but some Christians will have the capability to be more satisfied than others.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." *Citation: Jim Elliot, martyred missionary*

“There are different degrees of happiness and glory in heaven...The glory of the saints above will be in some proportion to their eminency in holiness and good works here [and patience through suffering is one of the foremost good works, cf. Romans 2:7]. Christ will reward all according to their works. He that gained ten pounds was made ruler over ten cities, and he that gained five pounds over five cities (Luke 19:17-19). “He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6). And the apostle Paul tells us that, as one star differs from another star in glory, so also it shall be in the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:41). Christ tells us that he who gives a cup of cold water unto a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward....” (Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol.2 [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974], p.902).

Revelation 22:11-12 (cf. 2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 10:35; Revelation 11:18)

11 “Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

## QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

*Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer. Are you hungering and thirsting after righteousness? How would you like to grow in your hunger and thirst for righteousness? Pray that God would enable you to grow in this grace.*

*Give examples of the “righteousness” for which we are to hunger and thirst. Are you pursuing after these things like a person suffering from polydipsia?*

*Explain the following, “God satisfies us in the future, in proportion to how much we hunger and thirst for righteousness now.”*