

Matthew 5:6 The 'Be' Attitudes

“Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness”

9.6.15

Isaiah 26:3

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Turn in your Bibles this morning to Matthew, chapter 5.

This morning I want you to know that I struggled on Thursday until 11:07 am about how to even begin to write this sermon. I started working on it at 8 am and for three hours I read and studied and prayed and I just couldn't get started. I had the standard introduction typed out for this message. And I thought, “Kevin, you're on the fourth Be-Attitude and you need to go over the other three and recap.” And so, I typed that out and it was 6 minutes.

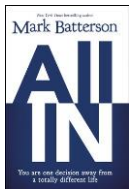
It almost paralyzed me. I was paralyzed because this message is so critical and so important and so timely for today and the Lord said: “Kevin, not today. You can't take the time to recap today. Just preach. They need to hear my Word...you've got to preach verse 6. Preach!”

So at 11:24 am, I went to the dropbox on my computer and took out all the stuff I'd already put in there to explain the first three Be-Attitudes so that we could just focus on this one: #4. So, here we go, hang on and hold on...because this is going to be one of those messages that WILL rock our world, because it rocked mine...simply because what we will see this morning is so counter to how we're living.

Matthew 5:6

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

I've been reading a book titled: “All In.”



It's by author and Pastor Mark Batterson. On the very first page of the book, I was captivated by these four sentences:

“Jesus didn't die to keep us safe. He died to make us dangerous. Faithfulness is not holding the fort. It's storming the gates of hell.” Mark Batterson, *All In*

Well, I was hooked. That's speaking my language. I'm so tired of weak, wimpy Christians who care more about being politically correct than biblically correct. And then I got to chapter 2 and I read these two sentences.

“At its core, sinfulness is selfishness. It's enthroning yourself - your desires, your needs, your plans—above all else. You may still seek God, but you don't seek Him first.” Mark Batterson, *All In*

I thought, "That's it! That's it! We might say we are seeking God...but, we're not seeking Him first! That's what Jesus was talking about!!"

Matthew 5:6

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

On that mountainside outside of Capernaum along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus offered a new way of thinking about life. And it was radical. And this is what scares me to death as a pastor. Most people in most of our churches think they are following Jesus, but the reality is: they have NOT invited Jesus in their lives so they can follow Him. No...instead...they have asked Jesus to follow them. They call Him Savior, but they've never surrendered to Him as Lord.

You see, what scares me to death is that people can go to church every Sunday and still not be hungry and thirsty for righteousness. They can follow all the rules and the traditions, but not really be following Jesus. We have people who name the name of Jesus, but their names are also here:



Ashley Madison. The Bible says, "**Be sure...your sin will find you out!**" (Nu 32:23)

We have people who name the name of Christ who are congressmen and women, who won't stand up for the unborn. We hear about video after video...



...from Planned Parenthood and the dismemberment of babies and selling them because someone wants a Lamborghini and nobody does anything.

We have a court system in America that even though it was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, is now throwing public officials in jail because they believe Biblical marriage is between a man and woman.



Listen, are we really hungering and thirsting for righteousness?

BTW...did you know that the Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear could solve this whole problem by simply calling a special legislative session and establishing statutory accommodations for clerks like that clerk? Any governor could do so. He could simply say that individuals who believe same-sex marriage is not biblical and therefore believe signing their name to such a document indicating as such would go against their beliefs, they can opt out and other officials in the courthouse can sign it. It's a simple "contentious objector" provision. But he won't do it. Why? Because of his political party affiliation. Come on Governor Beshear...how hard is it to change a simple form to remove the lady's name of it?

You see, there are those who try to spin this as “stopping discrimination” but the real victims of discrimination are Christians. People like me who believe that the illegitimate ruling of the US Supreme Court in redefining marriage is unrighteous. There’s not a hunger and thirst for righteousness here folks.

Don’t be deceived. I said this 2 months ago that it was inevitable that what the Supreme Court decision would do is put people of faith in the Bible and God’s Word smack dab in the crosshairs for punishment and eventual loss of our religious freedom. No the discrimination today is now toward Christians and it’s wrong!

And lest you can’t see the handwriting on the wall, please understand... what’s going on in KY is the tip of the spear, concerning Christian’s religious freedom in America. You understand that the very same thing that’s happening in KY can happen to me and other public figures who stand on the Word of God.

Here’s the truth, what we’re seeing happening in our country now is an all out assault to get rid of people who hold public positions who are Christians and adhere to the teachings and principles of Scripture. There is wave that’s building to get rid of those who won’t toe the politically correct line. It’s about forcing Christians completely and totally out of the public square. It’s about taking 2,000 years of orthodox Biblical teaching and throwing it to the curb.

But, this shouldn’t surprise us. We’re just going the way of Europe. Europe has totally rejected God. In Great Britain and Ireland they now have “Extremism Disruption Orders” (EDO). They tried to get a petition to stop it...



But it didn’t work. What is an EDO? It’s the government’s way to quote: “eliminate extremism in all its forms.” And guess what is listed as “extremism?” Sin. You basically can’t call anything “Sin” any longer in Great Britain and Ireland, and if you do, you will be guilty of violating an EDO. In other words, you can’t call “sin,” sin any longer. It’s now come to America to a small Podunk town in KY and if things don’t change...it will be here soon.

You see, if something doesn’t happen to stop the loss of our religious freedoms soon in America, lawsuits will be filed against pastors who refuse to marry same-sex couples and eventually those pastors will be thrown in jail.

BTW... did you know that a \$70 million lawsuit that has been brought against the two largest publishers of the Bible in America, (Zondervan and Tyndale). Why? Because homosexuals are demanding that the Scriptures condemning sodomy and homosexuality be removed because it’s hate speech and it’s causing quote: “mental duress.” Amazing!

Franklin Graham said this last week:

“If we don’t take a stand for biblical values, we won’t even recognize the America that our children and our grandchildren will be left with.” Franklin Graham

Can I tell you why all this is happening? Because in America we are not hungry and thirsty for

righteousness, not even in the church, but we're instead: thinking like lost people. Do you know what the Bible calls lost people? The Bible describes lost people as: "the natural person." The Bible says...

1 Corinthians 2:14

14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

So, let me ask you: How are you thinking about these issues of Ashley Madison and Planned Parenthood and Religious Liberty? Are you thinking about them as a natural person or as a spiritual person? A spiritual person...is one who can spiritually discern situations...that's the person Jesus was describing as one who...hungers and thirsts for righteousness. **So, what does that look like? What is a person, who hungers and thirst for right living? Well, I'll show you...**

It looks like this...



That's a man who is out of water and he's thirsting to death. His lips are parched and he's so totally and helplessly depleted he's left to crawl for water and he's near death. And it also looks like this...



Those are women waiting on food in Mogadishu, Somalia, just east of Ethiopia and Kenya. They and their children are starving to death.

Listen, when Jesus was talking about being hungry and thirsty to those 1st century followers, they got it. They were hungry and thirsty a lot. Us. Not so much. Oh I know we say get hungry and thirsty from time to time...but, that's when we miss a meal by 30 minutes. But we don't understand the type of hunger and thirst Jesus was talking about. He's talking about being so hungry and so thirsty that you literally are on the brink of death. It's total desperation.

The Greek verbs for hunger and thirst are very powerful.

Hunger (peinaō)

to suffer from want and need

Thirst (dipsaō)

to suffer from thirst

Notice the words "suffer" in both definitions. This is what I'm talking about...



It's the idea of a deep suffering. In the Greek both verbs are written in the **continuous present participle**. So it means: "the ones who are continuously hungry and thirsty." It means you want more. You need more... You gotta have more. **Like Moses. Moses had seen God in the wilderness...**



...in a bush that would not be consumed. And from that day forward, Moses wanted to see more of God. And he did... He went up on Mt. Sinai and received the 10 Commandments after meeting with God and his face was lit up like fire, because he had been in the presence of God and he wanted more. So, he asked God, **"Please show me your glory" (Ex 33:18)**. And God did...but, only from behind... **God hid Moses...**



...in the cleft or split place in a rock and He passed by. Once Moses truly got a taste of God, he wanted to experience more and more. And that's the point Jesus was making on that mountain. We are to hunger and thirst more and more and more for God and His righteousness. To be in His holy presence!

Listen, Jesus was simply saying: Divine happiness belongs to the holy. Do you understand that? We are the happiest (true happiness...not fleeting) when we are in the presence of God. But friends, we can't be in the presence of our holy and pure God while we are living in overt sin. And that's why so many Christians are unhappy and they are unsatisfied.

You see, if you are unhappy in your life, somewhere along the line, you're unholy. Listen to me...understand this...Jesus is not talking about holiness that comes from keeping rules and regulations. The Pharisees were good at that. They looked good on the outside, but in private they were filthy. They would probably have had an account with...



When Jesus was teaching on that mountainside, He was talking to a lot of Jews who thought they were righteous. To them holiness was conformity to rules and it was totally an **external thing**... But Jesus said that's not enough...

Matthew 5:20

20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

This BE-Attitude drives straight to the heart. It strips away the surface and goes into the bedrooms and the secrets places of our lives and asks, “Are you really desperate? Are you really hungry and thirsty for Jesus and His righteousness?”

Church family please hear me... I’ve been doing this a long time now and this is what I’ve learned: **The only real happiness in this life is to be right with God. That’s it.** You will bounce around from circumstance to circumstance...emotion to emotion and all that’s going to happen to you is to be left empty.

And that’s why Jesus said:

Matthew 5:6

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

The only way to be satisfied is to be right with God.

You know I’ve got to tell you...I don’t know how many times I’ve been preparing a message and the Lord brings something into my path that goes right along with it. It happened to me again on Tuesday, Sept. 1st (earlier this week). I was reading Oswald Chambers, “My Utmost for His Highest” on Tuesday morning and this was the heading:

“Destined To Be Holy”

I want to read to you a portion of that devotion from Tuesday and I want you to tell me if you think it was a coincidence that it showed up this week as I prepared for this message.

Destined To Be Holy

“...it is written, be holy, for I am holy.” —1 Peter 1:16

Do I believe I need to be holy? Do I believe that God can come into me and make me holy? If through your preaching you convince me that I am unholy, I then resent your preaching. The preaching of the gospel awakens an intense resentment because it is designed to reveal my unholiness, but it also awakens an intense yearning and desire within me. God has only one intended destiny for mankind— holiness. His only goal is to produce saints. God is not some eternal blessing-machine for people to use, and He did not come to save us out of pity— He came to save us because He created us to be holy. Atonement through the Cross of Christ means that God can put me back into perfect oneness with Himself through the death of Jesus Christ, without a trace of anything coming between us any longer.

Never tolerate, because of sympathy for yourself or for others, any practice that is not in keeping with a holy God. Holiness means absolute purity of your walk before God, the words coming from your mouth, and every thought in your mind— placing every detail of your life under the scrutiny of God Himself. Holiness is not simply what God gives me, but what God has given me that is being exhibited in my life.

Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*

Is that what you desire? Are you placing every detail of your life under the Lordship of Jesus, or under the Lordship of your desires and wants? Be honest...Do you really want Jesus for Who He is or for just the blessings...the eternal blessing machine?

You see we hunger and thirst for stuff. We hunger for more money. Nicer phones, bigger flat screens. New furniture. Better vacations.

The truth is today...it can be down right disappointing to hang out with most "modern" Christians. Oh we push love and grace and happiness, but then people look at our lives and how we are living and there is a disconnect for them. Why? Because they see that we're living in sin ourselves. We cuss and watch trashy movies and listen to garbage music and they see that and say, "Why would I want what they want...it's not changed them." You see, we've gone soft on sin. We've dumbed it down to fit our culture and it's destroying us!

Listen, the biblical definition of sin doesn't change just because our culture changes. Sin doesn't change because our friends do it or because we struggle with it. Sin is always sin, and it always will be. The definition of sin and the definition of righteousness don't change with the winds of culture. And must never forget that fact!

I want to remind you of what Biblical sin is. Because I think many of us have forgotten what sin is. We've forgotten what it means to be righteous...and to hunger and thirst to live that way. Everything I'm going to show you right now on these screens is defined as "Biblical Sin."

This is Sin:

- Having sex before marriage is sin
 - Living with someone you're not married to is sin
 - Adultery is sin (that includes Ashley Madison websites)
 - Homosexuality is sin
 - Divorce for reasons other than adultery or abuse is sin
 - Looking at pornography is sin
 - Daydreaming lustful thoughts is sin
 - Teenage boyfriends or girlfriends who are sexual with one another is sin
 - Getting drunk is sin.
 - Cussing is sin
 - Gluttony is sin.
 - Lying is a sin
 - Doing anything that would cause a Christian brother or sister to stumble in their faith is sin
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I know what some of you are thinking... "Well...I'm not on that list...or at least...not that much. So, I'm fine." Folks, those are sins of commission, but what about sins of OMISSION. You see, so many of us are so self-absorbed in our own lives of comfort and security, we do nothing for the kingdom. We don't really care about people. We won't sign-up to give a devotion on Saturday or carry some bleachers to try to reach lost people in our community. Are you kidding? We won't even give a tithe to the church, much less give time to actually serve anyone. NO! Serve me! It's not about God's kingdom, it's about mine! And so we will go home after service to the comfort and security of our own homes while the rest of the world goes to Hell.

No... no longer do we hunger and thirst for righteousness... NO! When it comes to sin that's directly called out in the Bible, or commands of Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations...NO...we'd rather avoid all that and just about grace. We'd rather talk about everyone's right to make their own decisions. Because it makes us feel better when we live such lazy, slothful Christian lives. We almost take solace in the lost person's sin, because it helps us to justify ours when we rationalize and say, "Hey...I'm not so bad!"

Oh Church family hear the heart of a burdened man today, there's something seriously wrong when Christians advocate...and take up for people who are living their lives in what the Bible describes as sin. And all we say is: "Who am I to tell them what to do?" I'll tell you who you are!! You are a Christian and you are carrying the antidote to their sin-sick condition. You've got the truth of Jesus Christ!

You are the salt and light of the world. You are the body of Christ...and bless God that includes the mouth – of Christ. If you see a fellow Christian living in sin, you are to be iron that sharpens iron. You are to be a friend who's willing to wound instead of giving the kisses of an enemy.

I'm telling you today...based on the authority and the power of the Word of God... Christians need to stop worrying about stepping on toes and being politically correct. We better stop dumbing down sin and pretending it's just another valid choice based on the current winds of culture (because everybody else is doing it). And we better start leading those we say we love away from their dangerous path of destruction if we really love them. Because if we really love them, we must first help them to see that they are sinners in need of a Savior.

But, please hear me...our words MUST be seasoned with kindness and gentleness...

1 Peter 3:15-16

15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as **holy**, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with **gentleness and respect**, **16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile **your good behavior** in Christ may be put to shame.

Listen, no part of mercy and grace negates our duty to speak the truth. The grace of God is the power to live lives of righteousness. The grace of God empowers the human heart to overcome sin...not stay in it.

People will never realize they need Jesus, if they don't first realize what causes the need? And that's sin! It's sin that creates the need for Christ. Because if a person can live in sin and be okay with it, then really, why in the world did Jesus come and die an agonizing death on the cross!!

So, where have we been? Let's wrap this up. Jesus has taken us down. He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit..."



Jesus calls us to humble ourselves and go down by swallowing our pride

in humility, realizing that we're nothing more than spiritual beggars...



And that will lead us to mourn over our sin...



to the point that we realize there is not hope for us in ourselves. We can't save ourselves because we've been shot up and beaten...we are bloody and wounded and lying on the battle field of life, but oh...listen...if we will repent of our sin and call on Jesus...



...He will come running and pick us up and save our lives. He will make us new. We will be regenerated...born again...new creations...empowered with a hunger and thirst for righteousness!

But, there's a cost to following Christ. You will have to look like this...



Jesus said:

Luke 9:23

23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

For many of you here today, the truth is...you're lost...and you now know it...you've been living like the "natural man" because you've never been born again. Repent of your sin...confess it...call on Jesus and be saved today.

For the rest of you, if you are truly a follower of Christ...then, ask yourself this question about everything you do from this day forward: "If I do this or if I say this, will it show that I hunger and thirst for righteousness or will it show the world that I don't?"

Psalm 107:9 says, "He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness." Oh it's true! It's true... Because Jesus said:

Matthew 5:6

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

And BTW...just so you'll know. I finished this message Thursday night at 11:03 pm and I went outside and walked around my house and I begged God to change us all!