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Matthew 5:6 | Spiritual Hunger

July 24, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 5.
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

We have been studying the Sermon on the Mount for the last month.

The Sermon on the Mount is in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters five through seven.

It's been said, "*The greatest Preacher preached the greatest sermon ever preached.*"

I pray that you are experiencing that to be true as we are only four sentences into The Sermon on the Mount.

As we have learned so far, Jesus starts off with what we call the Beatitudes.

The English word *Beatitude* comes from the Latin *beati*, (bee-at-e) — translated as “blessed/happy.”

And in the first three beatitudes, Jesus has taught us that if we want to be happy,

1. We must address the sin in our life. It involves dying to self.—*Blessed are the poor in spirit...*
2. If we want to be happy...we must start seeing ^{our} sin the way God sees it and address it the way He wants us to address it.—*Blessed are those who* ^{KH} *mourn* their sin...turn away from it and are disgusted by it, that ~~they~~ ^{we} no longer engage in it. Repentance.

3. If we want to be happy...we must choose humility in our life. We must use the power, the influence, whatever status we may have— not to take advantage of people, but to get low and serve others. We are to surrender our power to God's control.—*Blessed are the humble/meek... Gentle*

Today, Jesus turns the corner on the Beatitudes. *w/ V. 6.*

The fourth Beatitude is like a pillar.

The first three flow in | the last three flow out.

We'll start seeing the fruit of the first three Beatitudes ripen in our life within the fourth.

How so? Well, let's find out.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:6 CSB

Matthew 5:1— *When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.*

Matthew 5:2— *Then he began to teach them, saying:*

Matthew 5:3— *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

Matthew 5:4— *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

Matthew 5:5— *Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.*

Matthew 5:6— *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

Matthew 5:7— *Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

Matthew 5:8— *Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

Matthew 5:9— *Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.*

Matthew 5:10— *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.*

***This is the Word of the Lord for River Bible Church.*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 5:6— *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

As we move through these Beatitudes verse by verse, we're really starting to see the Lord's progression in His sermon.

The first three beatitudes are somewhat negative—

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

Blessed are those who mourn...

Blessed are the humble...

And the reason we perceive them as negative is because Jesus is commanding us to stop doing everything we've always done.

As we all know, this kind of radical change in our lives is difficult.

It is excruciating. *It's slow.*

What's the old joke, "God please help, I'll do anything...but change."

We may not pray that way, but we sure do act like it most of the time, don't we?

We want everyone to change around us.

The first three beatitudes are a part of denying ourselves picking up our cross and following Jesus. (Luke 9:23)

After we struggle through the first three Beatitudes, Jesus shows us how the center of our Christian life hangs on the fourth.

Let's take a look at the verse.

Matthew 5:6— *Blessed...*

As a review, "blessed" in Greek is *makários* (ma-car-e-ohs), which literally means happy.

God wants you to be happy.

The problem is that our definition of happiness is not the same as God's.

"Blessed/happiness" implies an inward satisfaction that does not depend on outward circumstances.

External

God is moving all of us along the journey where it doesn't or shouldn't matter what is happening around us.

As Christians, we have a choice whether or not someone or something is going to steal our joy.

We can still choose happiness whether life is good or difficult.

Matthew 5:6— *Blessed are those...*

Jesus points to a specific group of people here— as with the other Beatitudes—
“Blessed are those *people*.”

What kind of people?—Back to verse six.

Matthew 5:6— *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst...*

At this point, we have a huge problem.

There is a colossal disconnect between where Jesus was preaching 2,000 years ago and where I’m preaching today.

You and I “are starving” if we’re late for lunch by 30 minutes.

But many, if not most people in the first century were living in poverty.

They were living day to day with food and water.

So we don’t know how good we have it with the Lord’s provisions.

~~So~~, many of those people who were listening to Jesus at that moment were literally hungry and thirsty as He preached those very words.

Their throats are parched. Their stomachs are growling.

They didn’t want something to eat and drink.

They needed something to eat and drink.

Jesus provides an illustration of the two most powerful forces in our physical life to address the desperate needs of our spiritual life.

Desperation is the idea behind hungering and thirsting.

But Jesus throw's His Disciples a curve ball.

Matthew 5:6— *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst // for righteousness,*

Jesus is not talking about physical food and water.

Jesus is talking about *righteousness*.

At this point, some of us as church people may think that Jesus is getting theological—meaning *imputed* righteousness.

On the cross, Jesus paid our sin debt.

He paid our sin debt with His own blood.

Two spiritual transactions took place on the cross.

The first is that our sin was imputed/transferred/cast on Jesus.

The second spiritual transaction was that Jesus imputed—spiritually transferred—His perfect life (righteousness) back to us!

↳ *RIGHT STANDING before God the Father*
Jesus, the perfect Son of God, was murdered on a cross, buried for three days and then was **resurrected** by God the Father.

Jesus walking out of His grave proves that He is who He said He was—and is.

That's the Gospel. That's the Good News.

That's how we are saved from ourselves and saved from a very real place called hell.

And the reason that Jesus gave His life for ours is because *moral perfection* is what it takes to have a relationship with the Heavenly Father.

And since we can never achieve moral perfection on our own, Jesus provided His life for us.

So *imputed* righteousness is the giving of Jesus' perfect life before God to sinners.

That's why we call Jesus our substitute. Theologically we call this substitutionary atonement.

All that to say this...

Imputed righteousness is not what we're talking about here.

And the reason we're not talking about *imputed righteousness* is because Matthew doesn't use that term—righteousness—in that way.

We don't learn about the theological concept of imputed righteousness until we start reading Paul's epistles.

In Matthew's Gospel, righteousness refers to a right thinking that leads to right actions.

KEYPOINT #1:

Righteousness refers to a right thinking that leads to right actions.

Righteousness— *dikaiosynē* (de-kay-uh-soon-eh)

The root word is *dikē* which is justice, justness, or divine holiness.

So to be divinely holy means that people must adhere to/abide by/comply with and conform to the standards of life that are required by God.

What's required?

We, as sinners, must conform to God's standard of what is morally right.

We can only do this if we have repented from our sin, confessed Jesus as Lord and believe that He was raised from the dead. Rom 10:9

And then
As a result of Jesus being Lord and Savior, we must accept God based on the conditions set by God. *-> born AGAIN!*

God's conditions are found in the Bible.

God's standards are what define true righteousness.

Self-righteousness, on the other hand, is defining what is right based on our own opinion.

Here's the danger in self-righteousness—we become our own moral authority.

Truth is defined by whatever I say truth is.

In other words, I get to define reality.

If I say a fetus is not a baby, then it's not.

If I say that I identify as a woman, then I am.

Which of course is nonsense.

A self-righteous person denies true truth by neglecting the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

A self-righteous person scoffs at the idea that they must repent from their sin.

A self-righteous person looks down on others with contempt when people disagree with their opinion.

Self-righteousness is why the religious leaders continually attacked Jesus—and eventually murdered Him.

The religious leaders loved their religion.

And they murdered Jesus, because Jesus called them out on their self-righteousness.

Jesus told them to, “*Repent, the Kingdom of God is near.*” (Matt 4:17)

The religious leaders of the day thought that their ^{Form} ~~form~~ of religion would save them.

Religion—the idea that keeping all the rules qualifies them for Heaven.

BTW, it wasn't God's rules, they made up their own rules.

And Jesus shows up and says, “*Nope. You have to repent and believe that I'm God.*”

A self-righteous person refused^s to repent and believe.

Back to verse six.

What's the result of hungering and thirsting for righteousness?

Matthew 5:6—... for they will be filled.

The idea of being filled or satisfied comes from the Greek term *Chortazō* (Hor-Taz-Oh)

The picture here is that a farmer would feed his animals so much food that they could not want more.

In other words, Jesus is promising total satisfaction for those who seek Him.

Now, to illustrate this point, I need to get all geeky in Greek. I have too. I must.

Stay with me. This is fascinating.

First, there's a definite article in the Greek that were not seeing—

+ "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **the** righteousness...*"

Meaning it's God alone who defines what is morally right and wrong.

There's one way—the narrow gate. And we have no idea how narrow that gate is. (Matt 7:13)

Secondly, in Greek, verbs like hunger and thirst are typically followed by the pronoun "of."

+ "*I hunger for, of food. I thirst for, of water.*"

I know that sounds strange, but the Greek wouldn't say, "I hunger for food."

And the reason he wouldn't say that is because "I hunger for food" represents all the food there is to him.

In other words, he doesn't want all the food there is.

He simply wants enough to satisfy his hunger.

Same thing with water. The Greek person would never say, "I thirst for water."

Because he doesn't need all the water in the world.

He would say, however, "I thirst for, of water."

Why? Because he only needs enough water to quench his thirst.

Now, I bring this up because the normal use of the Greek is rejected in this verse!

W/ this Beatitude

+ The correct Greek usage in verse six should say, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after, of righteousness."

But it doesn't. Why?

Because when it comes to righteousness, Jesus overwhelmingly provides all there is.

Jesus promises that if you pursue righteousness you will receive it all— Not just a part— but all.

Jesus wants to give away all of His righteousness!

Dang.

I'm reminded of...

+ **Matthew 6:33**—But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

Our part is to seek.

God's part is to satisfy.

I'm reminded of...

Matthew 13:44—“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.

What does this joy and satisfaction look like?

Psalm 23:1—The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.

I shall not want...anything.

Psalm 23:5—You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

The righteousness of God overflows out of a Christian's life.

When you bump into the world | what spills out?

Anger, hatred, name calling, resentment, jealousy...and on and on.

But what happens when you bump into a Christian?

Our cup overflows with grace, mercy and forgiveness...not perfectly but increasingly.

Jesus told the Woman at the Well...

John 4:13—Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again.

Picture Jesus pointing at the well as he says this.

John 4:14—*But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life.*

Jesus does two amazing things in this conversation.

The first thing is that Jesus calls Himself “living” water—eternal water.

Jesus satisfies our thirst eternally

The second thing Jesus does is point this Samaritan woman to the truth found in the OT.

A Samaritan is someone who has impure beliefs mixed into her theology.

Jeremiah 2:13—*For my people have committed a double evil:*

1. *They have abandoned me, “the fountain of living water,”*
2. *and dug cisterns for themselves—cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.*

Jesus knew how hungry and thirsty this ^{Samaritan} woman is for truth.

She’s been married five times and living with someone who wasn’t her husband.

That’s six men in her life, by the way.

And if you know anything about numbers in the Bible, six is the number of man.

Six is the picture of man’s best effort, and yet, here’s Jesus, the seventh man in her life, telling her how to quench her spiritual thirst.

Seven is the number of perfection.

In other words, she was digging her own cistern with men who are cracked and broken trying to find happiness through relationships.

And these men, [no matter how good they may have been to her at one time or another,] could never fulfill that God-sized thirst.

The testimony of the Samaritan woman is that she's been looking for Jesus.

Here's the thing with that story—Jesus didn't only offer Himself as living water to a Samaritan woman.

He also offered Living Water to the Jews during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Let's touch on a bit of Biblical history this morning.

The Feast of Tabernacles/Booths/Shelters was a major celebration for the Jews.

It was a party for an entire week!

So the Jews built tents—and lived in them for a week to remind them of God's provision as their ancestors wandered in the desert for forty years during the Exodus.

The Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated in the fall— its harvest time.

It time to reap what was sown.

So here's the scene— The city of Jerusalem is packed.

On the last day of the feast, the priests would go to the pool of Siloam.

These priests would gather water in jugs, march around the Temple seven times, and sing this song of praise from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 12:2— *Indeed, God is my salvation;
I will trust him and not be afraid,
for the Lord, the Lord himself,
is my strength and my song.
He has become my salvation.*"

Isaiah 12:3— *You will joyfully draw water
from the springs of salvation.*

Salvation and righteousness go hand in glove in the OT.

So as the Jews are singing this song—hundreds of thousands of people would shout for joy, and the priests would carry water around the temple, thanking God for deliverance.

And it's during this moment—this moment, Jesus stands up and shouts...

John 7:37— *On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and drink.*

John 7:38— *The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him."*

Talk about chutzpah!

Jesus came to satisfy our hunger and thirst.

The world can't do it, religious traditions can't do —only Jesus.

He is the only one who can.

Back to verse six.

Matthew 5:6—*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

As our physical body hungers for provision, our spirit hungers in ways that we don't understand.

The phrase *they will be filled* are in the passive voice.

It means we can't do the filling on our own.

We can try with our good deeds.

We can try and convince ourselves that ^{our business} ~~addiction~~ to Christian service does the filling.

But it doesn't. Why?

First, because we're making our lives about us rather than Jesus.

Secondly, the text has a "divine passive," which means that the filling/the satisfying is an act of God alone.

To "Hunger and thirst" expresses a supernatural desire.

Just as our physical life depends on food and water—our Christian life depends on righteousness.

Our hunger for self and sin is slowly and steadily is being replaced with God's righteousness.

There's a spiritual purification process happening.

Many people come to Christ at this desperation level—the hungering and thirsting for God—why?

Because the world has failed them—just as God promised it would

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness is a supernatural desire.

If it wasn't, the Psalmist would not proclaim,

Psalm 42:2—*I thirst for God, the living God.
When can I come and appear before God?*

Are we as a church that thirsty?

To be longing, and praying for the anticipation to stand before a holy God?

Or are we feeding ourselves junk food?

We all know the consequences of eating junk food?

We know what it does to our physical bodies.

The analogy carries over to our spiritual life as well.

If we're feeding ourselves spiritual junk food—we will be terrified at the thought of death.

Being uneasy, hesitant & a bit scared is normal for a Christian.
And the reason we're terrified of death is because we don't know Jesus.
We may know the facts about Jesus.

We may talk in Christenesse to fit in the group, but we don't know Jesus personally.

The fruit in our lives reveals that we're terrified at the thought of death because Jesus will be our judge and not our Savior.

And yet we see Jesus inviting people who hunger and thirst to know Him even in the OT.

Isaiah 55:1—“Come, everyone who is thirsty,
come to the water;
and you without silver,
come, buy, and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without silver and without cost!

Isaiah 55:2—Why do you spend silver on what is not food,
and your wages on what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and you will enjoy the choicest of foods.

Isaiah 55:3—Pay attention and come to Me; (Jesus)
listen, so that you will live.

Now, let's fast forward 500-700 years and Jesus says...

Matthew 5:6—Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

The result here is that God blesses a righteous man with a supernatural filling.

And when the filling goes away, the man does something about it.

The blessed man gets hungry when separated from God's word.

The blessed man is not hungering and thirsting for happiness, but righteousness.

People who pursue happiness are miserable.

And here's the thing—Happiness is the by-product of seeking and searching for righteousness.

KEYPOINT #2:

Righteousness leads to happiness.

The other side of a blessed man being hungry is this...

The blessed man gets hungry when solid Biblical teaching and preaching become scarce.

The blessed man fears a spiritual famine.

This verse in Amos terrifies the blessed man.

Amos 8:11— *Look, the days are coming—
when I will send a famine through the land:
not a famine of bread or a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the Lord.*

Amos 8:12— *People will stagger from sea to sea
and roam from north to east
seeking the word of the Lord,
but they will not find it.*

PREACH

So the question becomes at this point, how do you know that you hunger and thirst for righteousness?

How does this spiritual hunger reveal itself practically in our lives daily?

To get there, let me ask a few questions:

1. *Do you depend on external things / worldly things for satisfaction?*

Are you satisfied with stuff?

Are you content w/ what you can provide for yourself?

On the other hand are you dissatisfied when you don't have, stuff?

God's Word teaches us that if the pretty, sparkly things of this world satisfy you, then you will not see a need for God's satisfaction.

Spiritually speaking—If you're pleased with your own righteousness, you will not see a need for God's.

2. *Do you crave God's Word? Do you long to be with God's people?*

There are two things that matter / eternal: 1. God's Word 2. God's People

Let me ask it this way—Does a hungry man have to be told to eat?

You don't have to beg a hungry man to eat.

This is an important lesson for the Church.

Dear friends, the world doesn't care about God because the world feeds them.

And often, we as the Church are busy begging people to come.

Or were wondering why our spouse or kids aren't reading the Bible—

Or we guilt them into a Bible study.

But here's the thing, if people don't want to do these things, what does that tell us?

They're not hungry for righteousness.

The world is feeding them.

They're full and temporally satisfied.

You can't take someone who just had a meal,
3 invite them to go All you can eat buffet.

Now that doesn't mean we don't pray for them and love them.

It does mean that we give them space for God to move in their lives.

Our prayer is this— that they will eventually find out that

KEYPOINT #3

Unholiness leads to unhappiness.

The only way to experience happiness is to be right with God.

Dear friends, are you right with God this morning?

Is Jesus your personal Lord and Savior?

The beatitudes show us how to do that!

Some of you may be saying, "*yes but, I feel like a prodigal.*" (Luke 15)

This young son insults his father, takes his inheritance and tries to satisfy his hunger and thirst on everything the world offers.

He spends all his money, a famine hits, and he finds himself in big trouble.


When he starts to get hungry, he gets a job feeding pigs.

He wants to eat the pig's food.

But here's the key—when he begins to starve, he repents and then runs to His father!

If you're a prodigal son or daughter, dear friend, the Lord is telling you today to repent and return.

For the rest of us...


- 
- How is your appetite for God?
 - What is the driving ambition of your life?
 - What is it that you long for?

The answer to these questions reveals what Kingdom you're in.

The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of darkness

In other words, the answer to these question determines whether or not you are a Christian.

The prophet Jeremiah said,



Jeremiah 15:16—*Your words were found, and I ate them.
Your words became a delight to me
and the joy of my heart,*

It's an amazing experience to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

They are a delight and a joy.

Feeding on God's Word actually increases our appetite for it—and for Him.

The more you hunger and thirst, the hungrier you get.

It's like when I eat some of Amy's homemade chocolate chip cookies—I've been satisfied, but I need more. Cookie Monster.

The last thing to consider as we hunger and thirst for righteousness deals with the conditions we place on God.

The rich young ruler wanted God...but only on his terms. (Matthew 19:16)

The rich young ruler wanted God AND his money.


Dear friends, God share's his glory with no one.

The amazing thing about God is that if you want anything the world has to offer, God will let you pursue it.

He'll let you devour it.

But please don't think you can have that thing—plus God.
Here's the thing, we all get to choose today, don't we.

We get to choose what we'll feed ourselves with, but please know this...

 **Matthew 5:6**—*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

 **LORD'S SUPPER:**

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Tommy Nelson, Denton Bible Church. Matthew 5:1-12

