

The Secret Of Satisfaction
Matthew 5:6

When you look at people and families today, the first word that does come to mind to describe them is not the word "blessed." Rather than say, "We're really blessed," more often we say, "We're really struggling." "Our marriage is not what it could be" or "Raising kids is more difficult than we thought", or "Financially, we're living paycheck-to-paycheck." We would say we are living under pressure. There are a lot more temptations today than in the past. We wouldn't say our family is blessed. We'd say our family is complicated. We see a record number of single parents today, and it can be so difficult when you're trying to support a family on one income and there's only one of you to carry all the load. The discipline of raising kids on your own is overwhelming.

We've been studying the teaching of Jesus from Mathew 5 and allowing the Beatitudes to guide our hearts and our homes. So many of our lives and homes today are not filled with what matters most. We are searching and striving for anything that would bring meaning.

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

We're filling our lives with things that don't matter, and we're not as blessed as we could be because we're not hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for right living. We're not focused on doing the right thing in the way we live to please God by our faith and by the way we live.

In your life, what are you hungering for?

In your home, what are you hungering for?

What are you pursuing?

What matters most to you?

What do you think it would take to make us happy? What do you think it would take to satisfy us? Completely and totally - to satisfy you? What would it take? Money? Power? Prestige? Pleasure? Health? Longevity? Family? Love?

What would really make you happy?

When Jesus was on this earth, He saw a lot of people looking for happiness. Real joy, real satisfaction, real freedom. He saw them looking for real life. He saw them looking for happiness in wrong ways.

Within the heart and soul of every person is a desire to be happy.

Our pursuit of happiness is most often met with disappointment. As much as we want and try to be happy, most people are not happy. According a Pew Research Center survey, just a third (34%) of adults said they are very happy. That means 76% of people living are not very happy. In spite of the desire to be happy, and all we do to be happy, most people are not very happy.

Why are so many people unhappy?

Happiness does not have to be an elusive dream. Happiness does not have to be something you pursue, but something you possess.

1. The Problem of Hunger

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Matthew 5:6

Have you ever made a bad decision when you were really hungry?

If you go grocery shopping when you're hungry, your bill will be twice as much as usual. As you walk through the grocery store, everything looks appealing.

Jesus talks to us about spiritual appetite: "hunger and thirst"

Appetite is a sign of health. This is the case both physically and spiritually. Hunger is natural. You don't have to think about it, you don't have to plan for it, you don't have to work it up, it comes naturally to you when you're healthy. Hunger is continual. We get hungry every day, several times a day. One meal doesn't satisfy us for all time.

The word "hunger" means to be needy, to suffer deep hunger. And "thirst" means to have a genuine, deep thirst. To be honest, we don't really know much about what it means to be truly hungry and thirsty.

Hunger and thirst represent the necessities of spiritual life. Jesus' analogy demonstrates that righteousness is required for spiritual life just as food and water are required for physical life. Righteousness is not an optional spiritual supplement but a spiritual necessity. We can no more live spiritually without righteousness than we can live physically without food and water.

- Our spiritual aim: "for righteousness"

Everyone is hungry for something. Jesus says, those who are truly blessed hunger and thirst for "righteousness."

Ordering off the world's menu will do one of two things. It will either leave you feeling empty or give you indigestion. Jesus promises that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness "will be filled."*

Proverbs 16:26 says, *“The labor’s appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.”* Hunger does have its benefits. It keeps a man going when he’d rather quit.

- We try to satisfy our desires through pleasure.

“The eyes of man are never satisfied.” Proverbs 27:20

- We look for satisfaction in success.
- We seek for satisfaction in possessions

In our search for satisfaction, we put a premium on having things. A lot of people have all the things they want, and yet they are perfectly miserable. These things in and of themselves cannot and do not bring happiness or satisfaction.

We need spiritual food that can only satisfy us. In the wilderness, the people complained against God. *“They spoke against God; they said, ‘Can God really spread a table in the wilderness? True, he struck the rock, and water gushed out, streams flowed abundantly, but can he also give us bread? Can he supply meat for his people?’”* Psalm 78:19-20

2. The Power To Change Our Appetites

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness...” Matthew 5:6

What is righteousness?

Righteousness is primarily a person, and His name is Jesus. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says that *“Christ is made unto us righteousness.”*

When I was talking to David Bargoil’s family this week they told me how Mr. David didn’t go to church on Sunday. He was always on the Golf course. He was always on Lake Norman. But David Bargoil had a change of appetite one day. He started seeking the Lord and his righteousness. He became a different person and nothing was more important to him than Jesus. How many people here this morning think that your work is more important than your family? How many people this morning think your hobbies, golf, fishing, hunting more important than your family and the rearing of your children? When you have a change of appetite you will be filled.

“The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord will praise him—may your hearts live forever!”
Psalm 22:26

When our appetite changes, we will feed on things that are better for us, and we will stop craving the junk food that isn't good for us.

- Being filled begins with a Christ-centered life.

“Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”
Hebrews 11:6

If you start pursuing God and start seeking God, suddenly, you're going to see the benefits of walking with God and being led by the Holy Spirit. We will be empowered by His presence and His power. Suddenly, you'll long for more of Him, and the junk food of this world, which distracted you, wasn't good for you, and didn't satisfy you isn't going to be at the top of your cravings because now you're developing an appetite for righteousness.

There are extremes that do not work when it comes to building a life and a home centered around Christ.

- Legalistic Christianity
- Lukewarm Christianity

Legalistic Christianity reduces our lives and our homes to a bunch of do's and don'ts, cans and can't's, should and shouldn't, ought and ought not's. “Don't do this and don't do that.” “Do this.” “It's a rule.” “If you're a good Christian, you always get it right.” The problem is: Rules without relationship leads to rebellion. Legalism turns you into a performer. We put on our best image for the church, and it never works.

The second thing that also doesn't work is Lukewarm Christianity. That's when we believe in God, but we live as if He doesn't exist. It's cultural Christianity. It's Christian in name only, but no real passion for things that bring glory to God.

How do we know if we're part of a lukewarm Christian home? I can't judge your faith. Here some indicators I would know that I or my home are becoming lukewarm.

About 80 percent or so of our country call themselves a Christian family. The problem is our behavior and values don't match that. Only about 30% of families worship in person. Only about 20% read the Bible together. Only about 10% pray together. But that all changes when you become a Christ-centered person, and you decide to live as a Christ-centered home.

I love the way David explained this in Psalms 63:1, he said, "*You, God, are my God, Earnestly I seek you. I thirst for you. My whole being longs for you in a dry and parched land where there is no water.*" Psalms 63:1

You pray, God, I don't just want You when it's convenient for me. God, I don't just believe in You whenever I need You. Every moment of every day and every bit of me longs for You. We're not just a Christian family, we're a Christ-centered home.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" Matthew 6:33

The Bible says that when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, God gives us His righteousness as a gift. He views us, the Amplified Bible says, as being right even though we're still doing things wrong, God views us as right because of our faith in Jesus. "*He that knew no sin became sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ.*" 2 Corinthians 5:21

3. The Promise of Fulfillment

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Matthew 5:6

How many really satisfied people do you know? We are always seeking and never finding. You can have what God wants you to have if you will pursue God.

There's nothing harder than grieving on the inside because you know you aren't living the way God wants you to live.

Are you hungry to do what's right? Are you hungry to treat people right and to make right choices? Holiness is a wonderful reward. We need to live a separated life. We're not here to be like the world around us. 2 Corinthians 6:17 says, "*Therefore, come out from them and be separate,*" says the Lord. "*Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.*"

And Hebrews 12:1 says, "*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. Let us throw off everything that hinders us and that sin that so easily entangles us. And let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*" Hebrews 12:1-2

Are you willing to do what's right, even if you're the only person that you know that's doing it? And if you are, don't get self-righteous and think you're better than everybody else, thank God for giving you grace. In 2 Timothy 4:10 Paul said, "*For Demas, because he loved the world, has deserted me.*"

There were different people that traveled with Paul in his ministry, but Demas loved the world so much that he left Paul and went back to worldly ways.

Psalms 11:7 says, "*For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.*"

Psalms 5:12 says, "*For you, Lord, will bless the righteous.*"

Joshua 24:15, *"Then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my household, we are going to serve the Lord."*