

Blessed Are Those Who Hunger And Thirst

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[0 : 00] Man, I am so parched and thirsty. Oh, look at water. Oh, that's satisfying. You know, all of us, everyone everywhere, is hungering and thirsting for something.

All of us want to be satisfied with something. All of us want to be happy. Fifty years ago this past summer, the Rolling Stone released one of their hits, I Can't Get No.

In the 1990s, U2 released The Joshua Tree. I'm a big U2 fan. My son and I were listening to The Joshua Tree in our truck this past week, and we were listening to the second song on the album very carefully.

It says, the title is, I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For. So Bono sings this, I believe in the kingdom come when all the colors bleed into one.

He's singing about Jesus. You broke the bonds and you loose the chains. You carried the cross, all my shame. You know I believe in. And he goes into the refrain, but I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

[1 : 27] We're all looking for something. We're all looking to be satisfied. We're all looking to be happy. Where are you looking for happiness?

Where are you looking to be satisfied? What are you living for thinking that it's going to deliver? Make you happy. All of us want to be happy.

And Jesus tells us in Matthew 5, 6, of where to find happiness. Of where to find blessing. Of where to find satisfaction. Would you turn with me to Matthew 5, 6.

Jesus says, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Hunger and thirst for righteousness, and you will be satisfied.

Well, we're in the middle of, we just started actually, this series on the Sermon on the Mount. And I've been trying to frame it as the manifesto of King Jesus. And in this Sermon on the Mount, His manifesto, our King proclaims what is to be true of the citizens of His kingdom.

[2 : 42] Those are the Beatitudes. And then for the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, He explains how His citizens live it out. Live in light of the kingdom. Live in light of what He has done.

The Beatitudes actually have a logical flow to them. It starts with declaring your spiritual bankruptcy. Seeing your debt to God.

And then it moves to mourning the sin that puts you in debt. You see it as sin against God, and you grieve it because it grieves God.

And then we move into being meek. When you realize your spiritual bankruptcy, when you realize that it is against God, and you mourn, you're going to find yourself in a meek place.

You're going to see yourself as you are in relationship to God and to others. And for those who recognize, they declare their poverty, God meets them with grace.

[3 : 41] He pays their debt. With those who mourn, He comforts. With the meek, He says, I have a parcel of land for you in the new earth.

It's yours. Bank on it. And here in 5.6, Jesus seems to turn a corner because it seems as to what He's saying is the spiritually bankrupt who've been, by the generosity of God, they've been made debt free.

For those who are mourning their sin, for those who have become meek, they have an appetite for something quite unusual. They have a intense appetite.

It's an unnatural appetite. It's even a counter-cultural kind of appetite. And what Jesus says is that these ones, they hunger and thirst for righteousness.

If I can summarize Matthew 5.6 in just four words, it would be this. Christ is our satisfaction. Christ is our satisfaction.

[5 : 00] And I want to help you to see that with two points. We seek, He satisfies. We seek, He satisfies. All point to Christ is our satisfaction.

And so let's look at this first point. We seek. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. He's talking about an appetite. You're hungry for something.

Our appetite as kingdom citizens is intense. So when Jesus says hunger and thirst for righteousness, obviously He's using a metaphor.

Everyone can relate with it. We've all experienced hunger and we've all experienced thirst. thirst. And we hunger for food and we thirst for water and food and water are essential to living, aren't they?

But we live in a first world context. And so our hungering is a kind of, I miss a meal and I'm feeling faint hunger. It's not that strong.

[6 : 07] I came home recently and I had skipped lunch and I made a major mistake. I walked in the kitchen and my family was there and I said, oh, I'm feeling so faint. And I have not lived it down.

I come home and my kids are like, Dad, are you feeling faint? We miss a meal and we're hungry. We go without water for a little bit and we're thirsty. That's kind of first world hunger and thirst. Third world hunger and thirsting is something else. People in places where you're not sure you're going to eat next know a hunger that we don't know.

They know a thirst we don't know. Our hunger is a hunger between, you know, what in the refrigerator am I going to eat? Third world hunger is there's nothing in the refrigerator to eat.

First world thirsting is, man, I prefer my water cold. Third world thirst is, do we have clean water? I mean, the people in Flint are getting it right now.

[7 : 13] What Jesus is getting at is this third world hunger and thirst. It's intense. It's prioritizing. If you don't know where your next meal is coming from or where your next water is coming from, you're going to be prioritizing that pretty significantly, don't you think?

You're going to be saying no to other things so that you can get that. What this is getting at is an intense spiritual appetite.

This is a metaphor. And what Jesus is saying is that for those who He has called to Himself, they have a controlling appetite for righteousness.

righteousness. It's intense. It prioritizes things. A Christian longs for, pursues, yearns after righteousness just as much as he craves food and water.

Because righteousness is essential. It's a requirement of kingdom living. Those who are citizens of the kingdom, who have been saved by grace, they live for righteousness.

[8 : 21] It's the food and drink of a Christian. It shouldn't surprise us, John 4, Jesus says that His food is to do the will of the Father. Jesus, hunger and thirst after righteousness.

And so this is a metaphor for an intense spiritual appetite. But it's also unnatural. This appetite may be intense, but it is unnatural.

When you were born and you came out of your mama, you didn't come wanting this spiritual appetite. You weren't hungering for righteousness. In my devotions, I've been reading through the book of Romans.

Romans. And yesterday, I came across this. Well, more like it came across me. This is Romans chapter 3, verses 10 through 18.

None is righteous. No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together, they have become worthless. No one does good.

[9 : 34] Not even one. He closes this little section in verse 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes. None of us. None of us have an appetite for godliness.

None of us are born that way. None of us. It's unnatural for a human sinner to want righteousness. Ephesians 2, verses 1 through 3 talk about we are dead in our trespasses and sins.

Following the course of the world. Following the prince of the power of the air. Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh. Carrying out the desires of the body and the mind.

Like the rest of mankind. You know what sinners naturally crave? Unrighteousness. Apart from Christ what we want is to fulfill our sinful appetites.

Our natural appetite is for things that grieve God not please God. Sinners crave sin. And so this hungering and thirsting for righteousness that Jesus is talking about what you've got to understand is you cannot produce that in yourself.

[10 : 55] You are so sinful I am so sinful we can't make ourselves want righteousness. But God can.

And God does. God can cause a sinner to hunger and thirst for righteousness. How? By giving them a new heart with a new desire.

And it's the sole domain of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. The appetite for righteousness is not natural. It's supernatural.

It's a work of God. When God 1 Peter 1.3 causes a sinner to be born again and He causes that born again by the Spirit John 3 that sinner is giving a new appetite.

A hunger and thirst for righteousness. A desire to please God. For a Christian and you know all this if you're a Christian your sinful desires don't go away.

[12 : 05] But you have a new affection. A new inclination. A desire to please God. So when we read Matthew 5.6 you've got to realize that this appetite that Jesus is talking about is a grace given appetite.

It's a spirit born appetite. No one seeks God unless God changes them. Our appetite for righteousness it's intense.

It's not natural. It is supernatural. It's a work of God's grace in us. The next thing you need to know about this seeking of God we seek He satisfies that this appetite is a counter-cultural appetite.

What we want is counter-cultural. It's a kingdom appetite. Let's say that all of us file out of here and we break up in twos and we're going to go out into downtown Kenosha and do an informal unofficial survey of people we come across and we're going to ask them two questions.

The first question is this hey what makes a person happy? I'm guessing we're going to get all sorts of answers. Little kids say candy candy makes me happy. Other people say well the next iPhone will make me happy.

[13 : 31] I really like music. Music makes me happy. I love to paint. Painting makes me happy. Sex makes me happy. Vocational success makes me happy. Makes people happy.

Financial independence having no worries that'll make everybody happy. Having the perfect body will make people happy. Making everyone happy will make me happy.

Being in control will make me happy. Family and friends make me happy. The great outdoors makes me happy. And then we ask them the second question.

Well what makes you happy? You know I'm guessing that if that person was really honest and if they've been around long enough we'd hear something like this.

Well I'm not really sure. I still haven't found what I'm looking for. In Matthew 5-6 Jesus tells us what leads to real happiness.

[14 : 45] It's a surprise. It's so counter cultural. I am guessing that when we're doing our informal survey together we're not going to hear many people say when we ask hey what makes you happy they're like righteousness makes me happy.

Mmm I just love to say it. Do you know why? Because normal people don't think righteousness is happiness. Seriously. Normal people don't think that righteousness results in happiness.

Normal people tend to think that righteousness leads to things like boredom. Being uptight. Getting constipated. Things like that. Feeling guilty.

Churning your own butter. People think righteousness comes like when you have eight kids and you dress them all in different sizes of the same denim outfit.

they think that's what righteousness is. Billy Joel gets at it. If that's what righteousness is I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints.

[16 : 02] Seriously. Those who are righteous are serious party poopers. Let's stay away from them. Well brothers and sisters in Christ I'm here to tell you this morning that they got a point.

A Christian who craves righteousness is anything but normal. A Christian is a sinner born again by the Holy Spirit.

A new creation. A Christian a citizen of heaven is one who's been justified. Their sin put on Christ God's wrath poured out on Jesus for them.

Christ's righteousness 33 years of perfect living imputed to the Christian the sinner in God's favor poured out for eternity on the sinner. Is that amazing? That's not normal.

Justified set apart made holy transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved son. Christian's not normal. The penalty of sin fully paid the power of sin is broken.

[17:06] They hold on to this promise that sin will one day be eradicated. They've been given the verbal deed that has been sealed by the blood of Jesus that they have a parcel a beautiful parcel in the new earth waiting for them.

That's not normal. It's biblically normal but it's not normal to the world. Christian is anything but normal. Check it seriously.

Seriously. You know what a Christian is? A Christian is a walking supernatural event of grace.

That's what we are. A Christian is a miracle of regeneration wearing Adidas.

That's what a Christian is. It's amazing what God has done. We're anything but normal. We are counter-cultural by God's grace.

We've been made citizens of the kingdom of heaven and we have a spirit-born appetite for the things of God. Of course it's not normal. We stand out. It's counter-cultural.

[18:13] Don't let the world deny you. Don't let the world deny you what you're craving. Don't let the world give you some empty calories of worldly empty promises.

Don't let that happen. Our spirit-born counter-cultural appetite picks purity over pornography. That's what we want. Purity.

Our spirit-born counter-cultural appetite craves to be generous, not greedy. We want to be like our king. Our spirit-born counter-cultural hunger hungers to be honest and not to lie, like our king.

Our spirit-born counter-cultural appetite wants to serve others, not to be served. It's very Christ-like.

Our spirit-born counter-cultural appetite longs for God's glory, not our own.

Our spirit-born counter-cultural appetite is hankering for world evangelization, not worldwide internet access. Hey, that would be great, but not as good as people from every tribe, tongue, and nation coming to bow at the knees and worship Jesus.

[19:24] as it were craving. Our spirit-born counter-cultural appetite craves above all else God's will.

We want what God wants. This intense, supernatural, hungering, thirsting for righteousness is counter-cultural.

Now, I'm guessing you're wondering something right now. What is this righteousness that Jesus is talking about? If it's all that, I want to know.

Well, this appetite, our seeking, is for righteousness. And where I want to bring you is this is Christ-likeness that we're hungering for.

Chances are that when you hear the word righteousness and if you've been raised in a Protestant church, you think in terms of Pauline righteousness.

[20:34] It's a legal righteousness, a positional righteousness that God imputes to a sinner like that when they believe. They're made legally righteous in God's sight.

It's the righteousness of being justified. And though that is true of us in Christ, that's not the nuance of righteousness that Jesus is talking about here.

Matthew, who wrote the Gospel of Matthew, uses righteousness in a different way. We see that in chapter 5, verse 10.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. And then if you look at verse 20 in chapter 5, we read, for I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Righteousness in the book of Matthew is describing a way of living. We're not talking about the legal positional righteousness of Paul, but a real-time practical righteousness that results from faith-filled decisions to do God's will.

[21:56] Righteousness is living in conformity to the will of God. That's what Jesus is getting at here. And what that requires is faith-filled obedience of both attitude, what's in you, and action.

And so this righteousness that Jesus is talking about here is not a pharisaical righteousness. And a pharisaical righteousness was one that was self-dependent and aimed at pleasing others, impressing others.

That's not what's going on here. The righteousness that Jesus is talking about is God-dependent and God-aimed. And Jesus is going to spell that out for us in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, but I want to bring you one more step.

I hate goats. I really hate them. I have had some less than pleasant experiences with goats.

And as a result, I don't like goat meat. There's this goaty aftertaste and it just makes me sad.

[23 : 13] A couple years ago, some friends invited us over and they served us tacos. And as soon as I bit into the taco, I was like face-to-face with a goat in my mind.

And I was like I was like face-to-face with a goat in my mind. I asked, is this, does this happen to be goat meat in this taco? And they're like, well, yes, of course.

And then I said, will you pass the chips, please? Because I can't handle this anymore. That taco had a goaty flavor. the righteousness that we hunger and thirst for.

And for some who come into contact with this kind of righteousness, that flavor is repulsive.

But for those of us who've been born again, the righteousness that we long for has the savor of the Savior. the flavor of our founder, the tastiness of the one who was sinless.

[24 : 27] It's got the zing of the king of kings. It's got a strong aftertaste of the king of grace. And we love it.

We can't get enough of it. The righteousness here is a Christ-like righteousness. And we see it played out all throughout the New Testament, all throughout the Gospels.

You keep an eye on Jesus and you see righteousness incarnate. We want to be conformed to Him. We want to be conformed to the will of God.

I'm not sure if you remember this being in your Bibles, but in Romans 8.29, we read, for those He foreknew, He predestined, He willed to be conformed to the image of His Son.

And so if righteousness is conformed to the will of God, you better believe that we're going to have a hunger and thirst to be like Jesus. And so this righteousness is a Christ-like righteousness.

[25 : 32] We hunger and thirst for Christ-likeness. The Father made us alive by His Spirit so that we would live for Christ to be like Christ. That's what we want.

That's what we're hungering and thirsting after. And so when we talk about we seek our appetite, it is an appetite that is intense. It is an appetite that's supernatural.

It's born in us. It's an appetite that's counter-cultural. It's an appetite for Christ-likeness to be like Him. And so as I close this first point, I just want to ask you, do you have the hunger?

Are you thirsty for Christ-likeness? Do you want to be like Him in every area of your life? Do you want it? Do you love others like Jesus loved others?

Do you long for the Word of God as though it's pure spiritual milk? You can't live without it. And maybe you're settling for empty calories of worldly promises that don't satisfy.

[26 : 44] Shove those aside and turn to the One who satisfies. Now let's turn there now. We've talked about our appetite.

We seek. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Let's look to the One who satisfies. For they shall be satisfied.

That word for in verse 6, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. For they shall be satisfied. You see in all the other beatitudes. It signals the reason why.

The reason why someone who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is happy, is blessed, it's because they know that they're going to be satisfied. They got the promise.

And what you need to see here is that satisfaction is a satisfaction given by God. Look back at 5.6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

[27 : 51] It's a passive verb. You know what that means? It means that the subject of the verse, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they don't satisfy themselves.

They are satisfied by someone else. The subject is being acted upon. Who's the one doing the satisfying? God alone satisfies our craving for Christ-likeness.

God satisfies. God satisfies. I'm not sure if you've figured this one out yet.

Sin never satisfies. Christ always satisfies. And so, for the remainder of our time, I want to help you see how God satisfies a citizen of the kingdom of heaven with Christ three ways.

Before I get to them, I want to just remind you that as kingdom citizens, we live in between the kingdom inaugurated with Jesus' first coming and the kingdom consummated when Jesus comes back and He cleans house and He makes all wrongs right.

[29 : 18] And so, these three ways that God will satisfy us with Christ, what you need to understand is that the first two deal with the present. A present satisfaction.

It's partial. And the last one, the future satisfaction. That's going to be full and complete. So, the first way that God satisfies us in Christ, we've already talked about it this morning, God justifies us through the finished work of Jesus.

I'm guessing that many of you have this anxious hunger for forgiveness, to know that you've been forgiven, to know that you're not condemned for your sin, and Jesus satisfies.

The doctrine of justification helps us to be satisfied in the finished work of Christ, to rest in what He's done, to be content in His work on the cross on our behalf.

Our sin, imputed to Christ, God's wrath, poured out in full on Jesus, and simultaneously, Christ's righteousness, His perfect living for 32 years, His perfect conformity to the will of God, that is imputed to us, and because it's imputed to us, what's poured out on our head is not wrath, but God's favor forever.

[30 : 54] Let that satisfy you. But it's a partial satisfaction because if you're like me, and I know you are in this area, though you're justified, you still sin.

We are simultaneously justified and sinners. In other words, you have vying appetites within you.

There's something in you that wants to hunger and thirst for ungodliness still, but there's something in you born of the Spirit that hungers and thirsts for Christlikeness.

And so we're justified. That is satisfying, but it's partial because I'm still wrestling with sin. And so let me point you to another way that God satisfies us in the present.

Would you turn to Romans 13, 14? We are legally righteous in God's sight.

[32 : 10] Thank God for Jesus. But we constantly fight our sin. And one of the ways we fight our sin, we are shown in Romans 13, 14.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to satisfy its desires.

Find your satisfaction in Jesus and it will crowd out desires for the flesh. Christ justifies us and Christ sanctifies us.

We dwell on Him. We find our savor in the Savior and it weakens the delight of sin.

We say no to sin by being satisfied in Christ. By putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what defines me.

[33 : 16] Who defines me? This is the one I live for. This is the one that controls me. This is the one I want to please. If you have a sissy view of Jesus, you're going to have a hard time fighting sin.

But if you have a grand and glorious view of Jesus, if He just continues to ravish you, like, I can't believe Him.

He's awesome. And you dwell on that. And you put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It will weaken the desire for sin. God satisfies us in Christ.

He's justified us. God satisfies us in Christ. His delight in us helps us to fight sin. Those are the two for the present.

The last way that we find our satisfaction, that God satisfies us in Christ, it's a future satisfaction. They shall be satisfied.

[34 : 30] And this future satisfaction is our full and complete satisfaction. When Jesus returns, He said He would, we will receive glorified bodies unencumbered by sin and we will see Him.

Faith turns to sight. One of the joys of having your resurrected body is resurrected to eyeballs that will see your Savior and be with Him.

At that moment, at that moment, you lay eyes on Him. At that moment, you're in His presence that you hear Him call your name.

At that moment, you're going to be satisfied. There's going to be a contentment that you've never had. It's going to be complete. It's going to be full.

And it's going to be forever. Because you're going to be in His presence forever. We will be with Him completely satisfied in His presence for all times.

[35 : 43] So we have present satisfaction justified. We're being sanctified. We're dwelling on Christ and we've got this promise of a future satisfaction of when we're actually with Him.

I hope that makes you happy. I hope you realize your blessing, how good that is. There's one last thing I want to add.

This is a satisfaction that's guaranteed. You can bank on it. They shall be satisfied.

Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, your future satisfaction is guaranteed because God never lies. Jesus is coming back and when He comes back, you will experience fullness and completeness of satisfaction in His presence.

You will be completely satisfied by Christ Himself for eternity. He is, Jesus is, your satisfaction.

[36 : 54] And He is your guarantee. So be happy. Fight sin with joy because Jesus is your satisfaction.

