

# Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, children are free to go to their classes now, and please open your Bible to Matthew chapter 5. And if you do have a Bible, please open it.

We're going to be bouncing all around the gospel of Matthew, and I hope you're able to see it for yourself. And forgive me if I cough a little bit as I go along.

Matthew chapter 5, verses 1 through 12. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth, and he taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

[ 1 : 10 ] Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. We're in the Beatitudes.

And our Beatitude for this morning is verse 6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. So before we look at that, I want to say just a couple things about what we're doing here to remind us of why we're in the Beatitudes.

I work at Chick-fil-A. We have a few Chick-fil-A people here as well. And at Chick-fil-A we have something called the Core Four.

[ 2 : 20 ] It's how we want every team member to engage with every guest every time. The Core Four is make eye contact, smile, speak enthusiastically, and always say my pleasure.

And occasionally we'll have a team member who kind of says something like, you know, just smiling is not really who I am.

I'm not much of an enthusiastic person. And the response they get is, well, if smiling is not really who you are, then you don't really want to work at Chick-fil-A.

Because that's core to who we are. It's part of our Core Four. The Sermon on the Mount has a similar function.

It's Jesus' kingdom manifesto where he says, this is what it looks like to be a citizen of my kingdom. This is what it looks like if you're going to call yourself a follower of mine.

[ 3 : 32 ] And if anyone says, well, you know, these things, I hear them, I kind of see what you're saying, but I'm not really interested in that.

That's not really who I am. That's not who I want to be. And the truth is, then you don't really want to be a follower of Jesus. Because Jesus has told us what it means to be a citizen of his kingdom.

And so as Jesus preaches this Sermon on the Mount in general, and the Beatitudes in particular, he's telling us what it looks like. And he has some hard words for us about what it means to be his followers.

But he shares these hard words with us because he loves us and he wants us to be in his kingdom. So that's the first thing I want to say about the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes.

Second thing is, do you remember why Mike said we're looking at the Beatitudes at this time? It's explicitly because we are in a contentious and divisive and extremely close election season.

[ 4 : 47 ] And Mike said that he wants to love us well by reminding us of the Beatitudes, of who Jesus calls us to be. And there are a lot of pastors in this country who right now, either on Sunday mornings or on social media or wherever, to their churches are standing up and they're waving a Trump flag in front of their people.

Or they're waving a Harris flag in front of their people. And saying, this is what it means to follow Jesus in this season. And Mike has made the choice that he's going to stand up here at this time, week after week, and he's going to wave a King Jesus flag in front of us.

And there are some people who think that's the wrong choice. But woe to us, we're going to hear some woes in this sermon, woe to us here at Christ the King Church, if we see the King Jesus flag in front of us every week, and we choose to pick up a different one.

The Apostle John said, Little children, keep yourselves from idols. And the currents are strong right now, almost unavoidable, pulling us to idolize political partisanship and personality and power, and to make us in the image of those idols.

So let's give thanks for Pastor Mike directing us to Jesus' kingdom manifesto at this time.

[ 6 : 40 ] Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. The question for pretty much all of these beatitudes, as Jesus proclaims them, is, is that me?

Am I blessed? Do I fit that profile? So the question for us this morning is, do I hunger and thirst for righteousness?

And so to figure that out, we're going to have to answer three questions. First, what is righteousness? Second, what does it mean to hunger and thirst for it?

And third, what is the satisfaction that is promised? So first of all, what is righteousness? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. The definition, all give this morning, there are a variety of ways you can think about it.

That I should all give this morning is, righteousness is conformity to God's law. Or righteousness is God's will in your heart and in your life.

[ 7 : 53 ] Why do I say that? Why do I say that righteousness is conformity to God's law? Look at Matthew 17 through 20. Sorry, Matthew 5, 17 through 20, here in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus says, Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

Therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. So Jesus is drawing a clear connection here.

He's saying the law is crucial. It's important. The law must be fulfilled. I will fulfill it. And you better not devalue it. You need to understand it.

[ 8 : 56 ] You need to teach it. And he says, Unless your righteousness in this regard exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. And what he means is, Unless your righteousness, unless your conformity to God's law exceeds the Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

And what he means by that, as you see in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, is that not only do you have to follow the law outwardly, the law has to shape who you are inwardly.

You have to follow the law in every, in the deepest part of who you are. That's how your righteousness has to exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, by conforming to God's law in every way.

Look at Matthew chapter 7, verses 21 through 23. Jesus says, this is still in the Sermon on the Mount, by the way, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

[ 10 : 10 ] As Jesus is saying, it's not about your profession only, or the amount of good works that you do, or the amount of ministry that you do. It's whether or not you follow the law, or whether you're a worker of lawlessness.

That's what defines those who are part of Jesus' kingdom. And flip way over in Matthew to chapter 23.

In Matthew chapter 23, Jesus is giving some anti-beatitudes, woes. A woe is like a cross between a warning and a curse.

And he's giving these woes to the scribes and the Pharisees for the ways they have failed to be the spiritual leaders and teachers of God's people. In verses 27 through 28, he says, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

So outwardly, you appear righteous to others. You appear righteous. But within, you are full of hypocrisy and what? Lawlessness.

[ 11 : 26 ] So the opposite of righteousness is lawlessness. So righteousness is a conformity to God's law. It's God's will in your heart and in your life.

And righteousness has a few features to it. It's exacting and it's comprehensive, but it's also beautiful and refreshing.

I say it's exacting and comprehensive. It touches every part of life and it touches every part of who we are. Going back to Matthew 5 in the Sermon on the Mount again, verses 21 through 48.

One way of thinking about the Sermon on the Mount is it's Jesus' sermon on what righteousness means. And in verses 21 through 48, right after he's saying, your righteousness has to exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, he's going on to explain exactly what that looks like.

And we see how exacting and comprehensive righteousness really is. So we're going to read all of this, verse 21 through 48. Verse 21 through 48.

[ 12 : 29 ] You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder. And whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council. And whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you're offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go.

First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you're going with him to court. Lest your accuser hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard, you may put in prison.

Truly I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. So what you're saying? You haven't murdered anyone? So you think you're all right before the law? No, the law is deeper than that.

You have heard that it was said you should not commit adultery. But I say that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.

[ 13 : 31 ] For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

So if you manage to avoid adultery, that doesn't mean you've kept the law. Where's your heart?

Verse 31, You think divorce is easy, no fault, any reason, no consequences?

Not according to Jesus' law. Again, you have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn. But I say to you, do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king.

And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply yes or no. Complete truthfulness and trustworthiness. Anything more than this comes from evil.

You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

[ 14 : 53 ] And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same. And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same.

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. So over and over again, Jesus is either taking quotations from the law, or taking quotations from tradition based on the law, and he's saying, this is what you think righteousness is.

It's not good enough. It's not comprehensive enough. It's not deep enough in who you are. The law is more than that. Righteousness is more than that. So righteousness is exacting and comprehensive.

[15:56] It goes farther than we ever thought, and it goes deeper into who we are than we ever thought. But righteousness is also beautiful and refreshing, because we don't want to make the mistake of the scribes and Pharisees, of leading our understanding of righteousness to make us judgmental, miserable, oppressive people.

Chapter 7, verse 12. Here in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us a rule of thumb about what it means to follow the law. This is very familiar to us.

Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the law and the prophets. You want to understand kind of a good litmus test to say, am I following the law or not?

Am I being righteous in this moment or not? Would I want someone else to do this to me? If not, don't do it. If yes, do that.

So the law is something that orients us towards doing good to others, because it's a beautiful and refreshing law. Really similar rule of thumb we see in Matthew 22, verses 36 through 40.

[17:15] Someone asked Jesus, Teacher, what is the great commandment in the law? And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. So the law is beautiful and refreshing because the law, properly understood, always orients us towards love of God and love of others.

And if we ever think that we are righteous and yet our heart is not being led towards love for God and love for others, we are not being righteous. So while the law is exacting comprehensive and while righteousness is exacting comprehensive, righteousness is also beautiful and refreshing.

Jesus was the perfectly righteous one and sinners loved to be with him. Sinners who knew their need loved to be near to Jesus because his righteousness was refreshing to them.

So when you think about righteousness, don't think conformity to God's law. Oh man, who wants conformity? That's a negative word in our time.

[18:36] Law. Who wants law? Why would I want conformity to a law? Don't think conformity to God's law as a straitjacket. Think of it as setting a broken bone.

Restoring something to the way it was meant to be. No one says, oh, you think femurs should be in one piece instead of two? That's so old-fashioned. It's really kind of oppressive that you would feel like that's how everyone should be.

Or like, man, you don't understand the unique beauty of a compound fracture? No. No. Righteousness is a restoring to health.

It's a restoring to the way things were meant to be. It's conforming to real health. I live near the Chewauke Prairie Preserve.

I don't know if you guys have been over there. It's by the lake. Really beautiful place. And every year, when we're out walking, we see volunteers out there pulling up weeds for hours.

[19:42] Just, you know, in the prairie, up to their shoulders, pulling out invasive species. Why do they do that? Because they're trying to conform the prairie to its true state.

To its natural state. To a state of real health. They're not saying, hey, we're just going to let anything happen in this prairie. Anything can grow up. Whatever seeds fall can grow. Whatever happens organically is going to be fine.

They know that some conformity is required in order for true health in the prairie. And the result of conformity is beauty and life and flourishing.

And it's the same for us. True righteousness is beautiful and refreshing. Righteousness is conformity to God's law.

It's God's will in your heart and in your life. That's the first question. What is righteousness? Second question. What does it mean to hunger and thirst for it? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

[ 20 : 47 ] For they shall be satisfied. Most of you have probably heard of this psychological concept called Maslow's hierarchy.

It's often pictured as a pyramid. It's a hierarchy of needs that this guy came up with. And in his view, there were different levels of need. In order to be able to meet one level of need, you had to make sure the levels of need below were met first.

So at the bottom, the base level of this hierarchy is physiological needs. Food, water, shelter. The kind of things you need just to keep your body alive for a little while.

The next level of need after that is safety. Safety from outside attacks. Safety from sickness. Safety from financial ruin. The next level of need after that is love and belonging needs.

So how are my relationships? Family, friends. The next level of need after that is esteem needs. So am I accomplishing good things in the world and receive the recognition for it?

[ 22 : 04 ] And then the top of the hierarchy of needs, as he thought of it, was what he called self-actualization. When someone has all of these needs below being met and they are free to fully live out all that they have the potential to be.

Now I'm not saying that this hierarchy of needs is necessarily accurate or, you know, the best way of thinking about human psychology.

We're probably a little more complicated than that. But it is going to help us understand what Jesus means when he says, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. That pair of words, hunger and thirst, in the New Testament, denote need and desperation.

When you put hunger and thirst together, what the image that is brought up in your mind, if you read through the Gospels, is someone who's poor, someone who can't provide for themselves, someone who's desperate, someone who needs help.

So hunger and thirst denote need and desperation. And when he uses these physical metaphors of hunger and thirst, here's what Jesus is saying.

[ 23 : 14 ] He's saying, Blessed are those who move righteousness to the bottom of their hierarchy of needs. Because what we're tempted to do is to say, You know what?

I do want to be righteous. I know that's what I should be. But I need to get some other things in order first, okay? Obviously, I need to make sure that my physical needs are provided for. I need to have job security.

I need to have financial security. I need to get my family under control. I need to have my friendships in order. I would really like to be, you know, working in a job that really fulfills me. And kind of like, okay, like that's when I'm going to have the time and the space to think about righteousness. Righteousness. So we naturally tend to put righteousness at the top of the hierarchy, coming last.

And Jesus says it needs to sink all the way to the bottom. That it's the most basic need that you have in your life. I need righteousness before I need anything else. And Jesus is not saying put it down along with food and water.

[ 24 : 18 ] He's saying put it below food and drink. Are you sure about that? Yes. Let's look at Matthew chapter 6, verse 33.

Still in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is encouraging his kingdom citizens to not be anxious about food and drink and clothing.

In verse 31 he says, Therefore do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear?

For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first before those things.

The kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added to you. Do you see that?

[ 25 : 16 ] Jesus is saying, citizens of my kingdom need to move the need for righteousness to the very bottom. The very foundation that I need righteousness more than I need anything else.

I need to be conformed to God's law more than I need to eat. I need God's will in my heart and in my life more than I need to drink. I need to be righteous more than I need a stable bank account. It comes first. And just like hunger and thirst, what Jesus is getting at is that we feel the lack of it. As we go through our lives, when we recognize an area of unrighteousness, when we realize that righteousness is lacking, we feel that.

When we're hungry, what do we do? We go on the hunt for food. We open the fridge. We look at the shelf. We go to the store.

We go to Chick-fil-A. When we're hungry, we go on the hunt. And we feel our lack of righteousness. We feel it.

[ 26 : 35 ] We say, I need to address this. I need to get righteousness in this part of my life. And I'm not going to rest or be satisfied until I do. I do. I need to get to know.

We hunger and thirst for righteousness. We make conformity to God's law essential to our life. So if you're like me, right now you're thinking, that's not a very accurate description of me.

I probably cannot honestly say that right now, in general, that's the way righteousness sits in my heart.

Well, that's why Jesus gave us the beatitudes to call us into his kingdom. So how do we take steps towards fitting this profile?

How do we develop a hunger and a thirst for righteousness in ourselves? A few quick thoughts.

[ 27 : 53 ] The first thing we need is a new heart. You will never hunger and thirst for righteousness without a new heart given through faith in Jesus.

That is one of the chief promises of the new covenant that Jesus brought, is that we would have a new heart. Jeremiah 31, 33, looking forward to this new covenant that we have in Jesus, says, For this is the covenant, this is God talking, that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord.

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. A hunger for righteousness can only exist in a new heart given through faith in Jesus.

So if your faith is not in Jesus, that's your first step. You need to realize, I need salvation.

I am unrighteous, and I need the perfectly righteous one to save me and give me a new heart. Only a new heart can hunger and thirst for righteousness.

[ 29 : 04 ] Second way we can cultivate a hunger and thirst for righteousness is by studying God's law. The Old Testament and the New Testament, looking at them, you can't hunger for what you don't know.

You can't recognize a lack of righteousness if you don't know what righteousness actually looks like. So we have to spend time in God's word, hearing God's will expressed to us, understanding his law, understanding his character, understanding what he's calling his people to, so that then we have the framework to say, okay, this is what righteousness looks like, and this is what unrighteousness looks like, because sometimes we can be deceived, even with a new heart.

So if we are not studying God's law, we can't expect that we can hunger to conform to it. Number three, we need space for reflection. We need time to reflect on God's law and time to reflect on our own hearts and lives.

And I don't know that we're busier now than people have ever been, but I do know 100% that it's a lot more possible to fill every little crack of time and attention than it ever has been before.

And you can go from the moment you wake up when you grab your phone off your nightstand to the moment you go to bed when you put it back on your nightstand and literally not have a single moment of quiet reflection.

[ 30 : 38 ] Because if you are not working or talking to friends or family, you are looking at your phone or you are listening to music or a podcast or you are watching a show or something like that, and in 24 hours you might not have a single moment of meditation or reflection.

Do you remember the beatitude from Psalm 1? Blessed is the man who does what?

Walks not in the way of sinners nor walks not in the way of... I probably should make sure I get this right. Walks not in the way of...

In the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but what? His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Blessed is that man who meditates on God's law day and night. The Psalm 1 beatitude. So we need space for reflection. And then lastly, we just need to do it.

[ 31 : 50 ] Right? When we see what righteousness looks like, when we see what God's law calls us to, we just need to act on it. Look at Matthew chapter 7, verses 24 through 27. This is the very end of the Sermon on the Mount.

After everything that Jesus has said in this sermon, this is how he finishes it off. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. Sometimes we just have to obey.

And in the obedience, we will find our joy in righteousness increases. So what is righteousness?

[ 32 : 48 ] It's conformity to God's law. It's God's will in your heart and in your life. What does it mean to hunger and thirst for it? It means that conformity to God's will is essential to your life. It's the need that comes before all other needs.

Last question, what is the satisfaction that is promised? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. So the danger for this beatitude, and really for all the beatitudes, is that we hear them, and we wonder if it's worth it.

What's the point of fitting this profile to be poor in spirit, to mourn, to meek, to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, to be peacemakers, to be persecuted?

None of those things are valued by the world around us. Not one of them. None of those things are encouraged by the world around us. So what's the point of conforming ourselves to that kind of profile?

What's the payoff? Especially when we take into account that like, okay, well, even when I do hunger and thirst for righteousness, I can't seem to accomplish it fully.

[ 34 : 11 ] So am I just struggling and hungering and thirsting and striving and missing out on a lot of things for nothing? And what about everyone else who is not righteous at all?

What about those who oppress others and lie and cheat and hurt and kill? What about them because oftentimes their unrighteousness seems to be working out just fine for them?

I hope it's not too offensive to point out that our two major candidates for president have lives and policies that are deeply marked by unrighteousness.

What's the point? Jesus promises, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

satisfied. Jesus promises that you will be satisfied, that you will see the point, that you will have a payoff if your life is characterized by righteousness.

[ 35 : 20 ] And there are three ways that we can think about our hunger and thirst for righteousness being satisfied. The first one is the righteousness being accomplished by Jesus. Remember Matthew chapter 5 verse 17, do not think that I have come to abolish the law of the prophets.

I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Jesus says, I got this. My mission is to fulfill God's law perfectly and he did it.

Righteousness, full righteousness, as comprehensive and exacting and as deep as it is was accomplished by Jesus. So when we are wondering if our desire for righteousness will ever be fulfilled, we can have peace knowing that Jesus has already accomplished that righteousness.

Look at Matthew chapter 11 verses 28 through 30. Jesus says, Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

[ 36 : 31 ] It's like, well Jesus, you already preached the sermon on the mount. How can you call that easy and light? Jesus' burden is light because he carried it for us and we're joining with him in that.

So full righteousness has been accomplished by Jesus so we have peace. So even when we hunger and thirst and we fall short, we have peace with God because of what Jesus has done. So our hunger and thirst for righteousness is satisfied in that way.

Secondly, our hunger and thirst for righteousness can be satisfied because righteousness is now possible in us. Remember Jeremiah 31, 33, we have a new heart. God's law is written on our hearts and where previously we had no power, no ability to be righteous in any way, we have a new heart and we have the life of Jesus in us enabling us to grow in righteousness more and more.

So our hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied because as we hunger and thirst for it, we will see our righteousness grow and increase. It's not futile. We have the power to increase in our conformity to God's law, to see God's will in our heart and our lives more and more and more. And then lastly and perhaps most importantly here in the Beatitudes, our hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied fully and finally in Jesus' final kingdom.

[ 38 : 00 ] Righteousness will be perfected in Jesus' final kingdom. Righteousness in us and righteousness in the world around us and so we hope for that knowing that full satisfaction is coming.

Now one thing that I wish we had more time to talk about is that righteousness is not just personal. It's not just in your own heart and in your own life.

Righteousness is also something that God wants to characterize families and communities and towns and nations and businesses.

And we should hunger and thirst for righteousness to be accomplished in all of those areas as well. And if we understand what righteousness really is and we look around at the world around us all of the systems and organizations and groups we're going to find a lot of unrighteousness.

And if we are kingdom citizens we can let go of the need to be apologists for the Republican Party or apologists for the Democratic Party or for any other system or group and we don't have to be people who say hey no we're all good here the problem is with the other guys.

[ 39 : 28 ] If we're true kingdom citizens who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness we can look at any group including group that we might call our own and say there's unrighteousness here and I'm not okay with it and I'm not going to cover it over because of the unrighteousness in some other group.

And one of the promises of Jesus' kingdom is that righteousness will not just be personal it'll be societal in his full and final kingdom.

And Jesus talks about that in Matthew chapter 13. So this is your last page turn. Turn to Matthew chapter 13.

Jesus tells a parable talking about what his kingdom is like his coming kingdom. First in verses 24 through 30 he tells the parable.

He put another parable before them saying, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

[ 40 : 42 ] So when the plants came up and bore grain then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds? He said to them an enemy has done this.

So the servants said to him then do you want us to go and gather them? But he said no, less than gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.

And at harvest time I will tell the wheat reapers gather the weeds first and buy them in bundles to be burned but gather the wheat into my barn. So that's Jesus' parable about his coming kingdom.

And in verses 36 through 43 he explains it. Then he left the crowds and went into the house and his disciples came to him saying, Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.

And he answered, The one who sows the good seed is the son of man. The field is the world and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom, kingdom citizens. The weeds are the sons of the evil one.

[ 41 : 48 ] And the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire so will it be at the close of the age.

The son of man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father.

He who has ears let him hear. You see what Jesus is promising there? He's saying the same thing that he said in Matthew 5, 6 blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

He's saying there's a payoff coming. There's a moment coming when full righteousness is going to be accomplished and those who are right, first of all cause of sin and law breaking will be taken out of the kingdom so there is no more oppression and pain and then the righteous those who have spent their lives hungering and thirsting for righteousness then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father for they shall be satisfied.

[ 43 : 18 ] Let's pray. father we feel our lack of righteousness and we ask that you would help us to feel it more.

Help us to hunger and thirst for righteousness and may we be kingdom citizens who display the beauty and refreshing nature what righteousness is to the world around us.

We can only come to you and pray these things and ask these things because Jesus is our king and he died for us and he rose for us and he is going to return to establish his full kingdom.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.