

Satisfaction in Christ

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[0 : 0 0] Some of the verses that we read in Matthew chapter 5, Matthew 5 from the Sermon on the Mount. I want to read again verses 6 and 7, Matthew 5, 6 and 7, where Jesus teaches the disciples, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, we've been singing about righteousness in that last psalm, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied and then blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Know yourself, know yourself, know who you are, what you are in the presence of God. That knowing yourself is wisdom, it's biblical wisdom, it's the wisdom that the Bible teaches us. It's absolutely fundamental to anyone, any person in his or her life. And of course you know yourself as God has revealed who you are in relation to Him, in relation to the one true God, whether indeed that you are right with Him by faith, whether you are a person who's satisfied in the Lord Jesus, whether you are walking with the Lord in communion with Him.

God's Word reveals your heart. God's Word reveals your life in all its detail. None of us can hide from that penetrating light of the Bible.

And then when by God's Spirit, when you do see yourself, when you know yourself, when you see yourself as the Bible reveals who you are in your true nature, then you'll realize who you are, who I am.

[1 : 5 0] You're a sinner, I'm a sinner before a holy God. And knowing yourself as a sinner before a holy God, as the Spirit leads, you'll become that poor in spirit.

You'll realize that you've got nothing to bring to God to merit your salvation. And in your spiritual poverty, you'll mourn.

You'll grieve. You'll grieve deeply for your sins. And in your condition of spiritual poverty, in your mourning over your sins, and you'll become meek before God.

You'll become humble in heart. You'll follow the Savior who, as we read of in His life on earth, He was humble in His meekness. Know yourself.

You know yourself through the revealing Word of God. And in knowing yourself, you'll know that your need is great, that my need is great, that our need of salvation through the Lord Jesus alone is that great need.

[2 : 5 2] But, you know, in that realization of your great need, that need that requires a change of heart before a holy God, you know you have a further need.

You know that you need to look outwards beyond yourself. You know that you need to be turned outside of yourself and turned towards God, to reach out to Him, to know God in His righteousness. And in knowing God, to know others in their means. Because that's what Jesus is teaching us here, especially when He speaks of being merciful.

And those who are merciful have been shown mercy. Now, of course, we'll come to that particular beatitude, that particular blessing in a wee while. But, you know, when we come to these next two aspects, as some of you know who have been here before, you know we're starting to look at, the Sermon on the Mount.

But, when we come to these next two aspects of the Sermon on the Mount, in verses 6 and 7, what are we looking at?

[3 : 5 8] We're looking at the Christian life. We're looking at what Jesus is teaching us here, and what it means to be a disciple, and the blessing of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

And we're looking here, particularly at these two blessings. We're looking here at what it means to grow, to grow as a Christian, to grow in spiritual maturity, according to the grace of God.

Now, of course, we continue to need God's grace in our lives. But we grow in grace, not to be dominated by self, but we grow in grace to know God the more, to know Him, and in knowing God,

to reach out to others, to be that spiritually mature person, not just knowing self, but knowing God, and knowing others and their need.

Why? So that we are the servants of our Lord and Saviour. And so it's this aspect of growing as a Christian, of maturing as a Christian. That's what we see, as we said here, in these two further aspects of blessing.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Let's look at the first aspect there.

[5 : 22] The hungry and the thirsty. Now, you know where it's, where it's here this morning, as Jim was saying it, and as we all know, even this particular Sunday, it's often designated as harvest thanksgiving, or time for harvest thanksgiving.

We know that the basic fundamental need of man is to satisfy thirst and hunger. Now, of course, in Jesus' day, when Jesus was on earth, food was often very, very scarce.

Water's often difficult to come by. It was a very, very dry climate. So, you know, the need to access these two most basic elements for physical existence, the need to access them, was really quite an intense need.

It was a longing to be satisfied physically. And that's why Jesus here is using this kind of language to tell of a greater, a deeper, an infinitely fuller longing.

the intense longing of someone who hungers and thirsts for something that is so utterly essential for your spiritual existence.

[6 : 32] In fact, for every aspect of your life. What's Jesus saying that we hunger and thirst for? We are to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Righteousness. Now, of course, we can't just speak of righteousness in and of itself.

We associate, who do we associate righteousness with? It has to be God. God, the God of righteousness. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness, you know, has to, must include, is integral to righteousness is God.

God. And therefore, that hungering and thirsting after righteousness has to involve that desire to be with God.

God, who alone is righteous. What do we mean by righteous? Well, of course, who alone is holy, who alone is faithful, faithful in it as being righteous. Because being righteous speaks of the quality of God.

God and His wisdom. God and His holiness. His justice. His goodness. His truth. His faithfulness. So you can't speak about righteousness and hungering and thirsting for righteousness without, without referring and without directing that hungering and thirsting to the God of righteousness.

[7 : 48] So when Jesus here is speaking of the one who's blessed, He's speaking of the person who hungers and thirsts for God. So, it says, looking beyond ourselves.

Looking beyond, yourself to God. That is an indication of a mature Christian follower of Jesus. Someone who longs for the God of righteousness.

Someone who longs to have that right relationship with God. And of course, how do we have that right relationship with God? We only have that right relationship through the Lord Jesus.

And it's that longing, that thirsting, yes, to know God and that thirsting as a believer to know the Lord Jesus. You know, Paul the Apostle hungered and thirsted for God.

He wrote to the church in Philippi, I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. That's a hungering and thirsting for righteousness. That longing to know the Savior of the world.

[8 : 52] Why? So that you grow in righteousness. So that you become Christ-like. So that you have that righteousness of God and holiness in your devotion to God and your walk with Him and your communion with Him and your witness to others.

And therefore, it has to be that, you know, in that hungering and thirsting for righteousness that you lose yourself and that you gain the Lord Jesus.

Knowing the God of all grace. That's whom you worship. That's whom you live for. And of course, in knowing God and hungry and thirsting for God, there have to be practical consequences.

Living in a way that honors God. That honors the God of all righteousness. And of course, that longing has to be a longing, yes, to live well, to live a righteous life.

So there are consequences, practical consequences in hungry and thirsting for righteousness. Let's take worship. Let's take worship. Let's take our, even our corporate worship, even though we're engaged in it at the moment.

[10:08] Ask yourself this. Is my being here in this time of worship, is it self-centered or God-centered? Is it self-directed or God-directed?

Is your worship, is my worship of God, is it to please myself? You ask yourself, is it to please self or is it to please God? I mean, if we're coming into this place of worship, we're coming here simply to get out of, you know, being here to please self.

You know, some kind of quickening the saints as some kind of feel-good factor, that's not hungering and thirsting for righteousness. That's a hungering and thirsting for self. The person who simply seeks what he or she can get out of a worship experience, that's not worshipping the God of all grace, but rather when we come together even in this act of worship, what are we doing?

We're seeking first the kingdom of God. We're seeking first to worship Him. We're seeking to praise Him, to acknowledge who God is in His righteousness. So we're coming before Him to know Him through our worship.

Yes, of course, we come here to learn more of who God is in order that we serve Him, in order to give Him the glory, to give Him first place in our lives.

[11:32] And you know, it's that giving Him first place in your life. Surely that should energise your hungering and thirsting for righteousness in a way that honours Him, in a way that is right.

That costly grace that denies yourself, that takes up your cross and follows Jesus. There are so many practical consequences in that practical righteousness.

Because, you know, even when we think, as we've said, even in our worship, even think, for example, in the way that we regard our church and our state. You know, hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

We've said, seen in so many ways. Think of the church context. In being devoted, yes, to God first and foremost, but the consequence even seen in being devoted one to another.

In establishing a climate of righteousness in the church. Where we see brothers and sisters in Christ united in loving one another.

[12:35] Yes, in forgiving one another. In embracing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. And, you know, where any fellowship denies that righteous living, where any fellowship denies the living for God, even seen in our relationships one with another, relationships that are grounded in God's righteous and holy law.

Where that is absent from a church and a congregation, surely it's for us to come before God and seek us forgiveness. Forgiveness for our unrighteous behaviour and contradicting our Lord and Saviour.

You know, those who do hunger and thirst for righteousness, how is it seen? We might say, what's the bottom line, as it were? It's to make it your life's work to see and to show forth the glory of God, to show the preciousness of God's word, to exalt God and exalt His word.

You know, it should surely be your heart's desire, my heart's desire to glorify God, to enjoy Him forever and to see God and His holiness made known, yes, made known through the preaching of His word and the teaching of God's word.

I mentioned at the start of the service, some of you knew Professor John L. McKay who died just a few days ago. Those of you who knew John L. as he was affectionately known, who heard him preach and certainly, in my own case, who was under his teaching for a number of years, he exhibited that hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

[14:23] Every free church minister and I'm sure many from many other different denominations have a great debt to John L. McKay and even in his commentaries, his commentaries in the Old Testament, so many Old Testament books, these were labors of love, love for the Lord that certainly have helped unravel and to help but that must understand so much of the teaching of the Old Testament.

Every time I'm in my study and I look at my bookshelf, I see the name of John L. McKay on the spines of so many of his books that testify to a hungering and thirsting for righteousness, a hungering and thirsting to have God's Word explained for the glory, not of John L. McKay, but for the glory of God.

Now we aren't all gifted. I think very few of us are gifted with the amazing intellect of the late professor. You all have gifts and you all who know the Lord Jesus, you have a name to confess, you have the name of the Saviour to confess and you have a heart that will not find peace unless it's hungry, it's hungry and thirsting for God's righteousness to be made known, to be revealed to

others.

So use the gifts that you have for the glory of God, for the sake of God's righteousness being made known. Tell others the great name of the Lord Jesus.

Tell of Jesus, the Son of righteousness, so that others, by the empowering of the Holy Spirit, so that others will give their lives to the Saviour.

[16:01] So we mentioned in hungry and thirsting for righteousness there is a responsibility within the church but of course there is a responsibility towards the state. We live in a broken nation.

We live in a broken world. We live in a world where the boastings of unrighteousness, we see it every day. We see it in the media every single day. There isn't a day when there's some kind of flaunting of unrighteous behaviour is shown in all its gory ugliness.

Last week the Christian Institute promoted a week of prayer for the nation and the focus of these daily prayers well it concerned the promotion of righteousness in the nation and the removal of unrighteousness.

The communication that was sent by the Christian Institute had as its promotional heading the text from James 5.16 the prayer of a righteous man is effective and powerful.

The righteous prayer of a righteous person for the blessings of God's righteousness for the nation.

That's part of our hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

[17:14] Pleading before God for our school. That the unrighteous ethos of a secular liberal humanist mindset that that be eradicated. Pleading before God for our society that this holy secular thinking and so many issues so many issues that we are being bombarded with.

Pleading for that God will remove that influence in our land. Pleading for God for our religious freedom. Freedom that the state will not interfere with the work of the church.

That Christians will continue to be free to express our faith in action and to do so without harassment or persecution. It's a challenge.

It's a challenge to each one of you who profess the name of Jesus. Are you hungering and thirsting for righteousness? Is that the desire of your heart to glorify God to enjoy Him forever and that that glorifying God permeates your own life, the life of others, the life of the church, the life of in our society?

Or is there a complacent mindset in our hearts you know that doesn't really want a real concern for God's righteousness to be seen in our church and in our land?

[18:39] Ask yourself as I have to ask myself as my heart were driven to hungry and thirsting for that which has no bearing in the righteousness of God.

You shall find no satisfaction in anything that does not give glory to God. If you have that longing for God, that hungering and thirsting for Him, you want to know Him, you want to follow the Savior, you want to promote His ways, His righteous ways.

That's your heart's desire then. As Jesus tells His disciples, as He tells you, you will be satisfied.

And you know, again, the language Jesus is using here about satisfaction is connected to the whole idea of hungry and thirsting, that satisfaction of being filled.

You know, in your physical sense, when you're hungry and thirsty, you're fed and watered, you know you're filled, you're filled up, you're satisfied with the food and drink that you've consumed.

You've been filled, you've been satisfied, your physical needs have been satisfied.

So when you're hungry and thirsting for righteousness, you will know, as Jesus tells you, you will know that blessing from God, the God who fully and wholly satisfies, who satisfies your deepest needs in the joy of a right relationship with God.

[20:05] God. So ask yourself, I mean, why is there so much dissatisfaction in the world? Why isn't there so much dissatisfaction in our church, the wider church?

Sure it's because there's so little hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Because that hungering and thirsting characterises a mature Christian. You know, it's so easy to grumble.

It's so easy to grumble in our dissatisfaction with God and with others. But no, don't be a grumbler.

Be somebody who seeks to know Him, who seeks to be satisfied in Him and with Him.

Being that person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, you'll know that blessing, that blessing that satisfies your soul, that peace that He gives you, that peace that passes understanding.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. But secondly, and more briefly, blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

[21 : 14] You know, sometimes we complicate the Christian faith and almost denigrate the practical aspects of living as Christians. But, you know, look at what Jesus is saying here about the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Surely Jesus is teaching us here that the Christian lifestyle, that yes, hungers and thirsts for righteousness is a lifestyle that's characterized by being like Christ in our being for others. Yes, in showing that genuine kindness and compassion, being merciful to others, others even in need.

somebody put it very succinctly about what it means to be a Christian who's merciful. He said this, of Christians who are merciful, they have an irresistible love for the lowly, the sick, for those who are in misery, for those who are demeaned and abused, for those who suffer injustice and are rejected, for everyone in pain and anxiety.

So surely being merciful is to show the mercy of Christ to those who can't help themselves. You know, to be merciful is to reflect the Lord Jesus because he in mercy reached out to the hopeless sinner to give him and to give her to give you that hope, that new hope.

[22 : 40] So, yes, look out for others, forget self, be merciful. And you know, you who know the Lord Jesus as Savior, you know that God is merciful to you, not because you're merciful to others.

You know, we don't preach our salvation based on works or our own efforts, but when we say that God is merciful to you, we say it because of Christ's grace that enables you to be merciful.

That's why we read the parable of the Good Samaritan. You know the story, you know it so well.

Three men pass by a beaten and injured man who's been attacked and robbed. Two of the Jewish religious leaders pass that man by.

One person doesn't pass the injured man. It's the non-Jewish Samaritan. It's the Samaritan despised in Jewish society, the Samaritan who stopped when the others passed by.

It was the Samaritan who bound up that man's wounds. It was the Samaritan who took him to the nearest inn and paid for his recuperation there. And you know that telling question that Jesus gave to the lawyer.

[23 : 52] Remember the lawyer who first asked Jesus about who his neighbour was in relation to loving God and his neighbour. And Jesus asked that lawyer, which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among robbers?

He said, the one who showed him mercy. The one who showed him mercy. Jesus saying, yes, you go and do likewise.

So what's the parable teaching us about being merciful? Surely it means this. It means being proactive. Proactive in seeking to restore the dignity of someone whose life has been broken by sin. It means the binding of wounds. Whatever these wounds are that have broken a person. maybe addiction who's had an addiction or suffering from some kind of abuse.

Maybe some personal sins that have contributed to a life that's now broken by sin. Maybe it's the sin that themselves they've committed. Or maybe that someone else has committed against that person.

[25 : 01] But that showing mercy means coming alongside that person. It means showing the mercy of Jesus who comes alongside us in our spiritual need. And that mercy is the many definitions.

But surely one definition surely is this of mercy. The mercy of the Lord Jesus to us to keep from us that which we deserve. Because we deserve eternal punishment for our sins.

But in his mercy Jesus our saviour keeps promise that which we deserve. you know it's such a sad indictment on ourselves as Christians that we can and do it so often pass by those who are broken in sin.

We might even trample on them in condemnation. But mercy doesn't pass by a broken sinner.

Mercy doesn't trample on someone else and pointing the finger of judgmentalism.

No. Mercy extends the hand of love to someone who's been broken in sin. Mercy reveals the true mercy of the Lord Jesus in restoring a person through the grace that heals and delivers from sin.

[26 : 18] Not an option. Mercy isn't an option in the Christian's armour. Mercy is integral to ourselves being Christians. In Proverbs 21 13 we read these words Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.

But the one who does open his ear to the poor will call out and will be answered. Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.

And when will God be merciful to us? Certainly in the present. We receive from God his mercies. We speak of God's mercies that are new every morning.

Mercies of God are addressed. Yes, our physical needs, but above all our spiritual needs. God's mercies are given to us each moment of each day and keeping from us, even from you who know him, keeping from you his wrath for your sins, for my sins.

But when will his mercy be ultimately revealed? Surely his mercy, his great mercy, be revealed on that day of judgment. And we all have to stand before him on that last day.

[27 : 34] Then we'll know fully and truly the mercy of God in keeping from us what we deserve, what we deserve as wrath and curse. So what have we seen this morning?

We've noticed satisfaction for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. We've seen the mercy of God towards those who are merciful. These are blessings, blessings that are wholly undeserved, but given by the God of all grace.

What are we told to do? We're told to count our blessings. Well, if you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, count your blessings. You who are in Christ, you count these blessings that the world cannot even remotely give.

Because all the world gives is the false jewel of pleasure, the false jewel of power, the false jewel of status. that's all you can see in what the world offers.

These things are worthless. They don't have true eternal value. Will you stop and think? Even what you consider is of value, do they truly satisfy?

[28 : 43] Well, they can't. There's only Christ, the Lord Jesus. Only He satisfies. And by faith, when you know Him, you'll know that satisfaction that is now and forever.

We'll listen to the words of Jesus. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Amen. Let us pray. Lord, forgive us for our weakness. We are not hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Forgive us, Lord, for the times when we are utterly unmerciful towards others.

Teach us, Lord, strengthen us so that we do truly hunger and thirst for you, so that we truly love you and our neighbour us ourselves, that we show mercy to others, that you have shown mercy to us. Continue with us. Now, Lord, as again we sing from your word, bless us, go before us, forgive us our sins, even in holy things.

[29 : 50] We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, let's close in Psalm 85. Psalm 85 on page 113.

We'll sing from verse 8 to verse 13. I will hear what God the Lord says. To saints he offers peace, but his people must not wander and return to foolishness.

8 to 13, Psalm 85, to God's praise. Godspeed. Amen. .

. . Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 46] Thank you.

Thank you.

And now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and remain with you both now and forevermore. Amen.