

Upside-Down Living
The Radical Message of the Beatitudes
The Satisfaction of Staying Hungry
Matthew 5:6

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Oct. 14, 2018

Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

This fourth Beatitude describes a desire that should rise up out of the heart of a person who recognizes the kind of desperate, spiritual need and bankruptcy seen in the first three Beatitudes. It captures the heart of the Bible and the very heart of the Gospel!

- How would you know whether you’re one of the hungry and thirsty people Jesus is talking about?

Here are some cautions to consider:

I. Make Sure that You’re Hungry for the Right Thing

Anything you try to center your life on besides God will be destroyed and will ultimately destroy you. Nothing in the world can bear the weight of all your desires except God. So, make sure you’re hungry for the right thing - God and His righteousness alone that can fill your life and settle your heart.

The word righteousness is a word that means to be made right with somebody or to be approved and accepted by them. The righteousness that Jesus is talking about in **v. 6** is an alien righteousness or a righteousness that is outside of us, but is given to us as if it was our own.

- How do you know that you’re hungering and thirsting for that kind of righteousness outside of this world?

Jesus was not saying kingdom people just want some righteousness, but they hunger for righteousness itself. They want the full, complete, perfect righteousness that can only be found in God Himself.

There are two aspects of this hunger for righteousness:

- (1) It’s the righteousness that God gives us in a moment, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, plus nothing. The Bible calls that justification which means to have your legal standing made right with God. Your record of sin has been erased and the perfect righteousness of Christ has been applied to your account as if it were yours.

Philippians 3:7-9 “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”

- (2) It’s the righteousness that God calls us to after He gives us the righteousness that we could never merit on our own. The Bible calls this sanctification and it doesn’t happen in a moment, but happens over a lifetime as we pursue holiness and become more like Christ.

Kingdom people who have received God's righteousness as their legal standing also long to see God's righteousness in their own lives to make them more like Christ. They desire to be holy and to be done with sin.

II. Make Sure Whatever You Hunger For Leads You to Do the Right Thing

You can be hungry for the right thing, the righteousness of God, and still do the wrong thing trying to get it!

A kingdom person is not trying to achieve something or do something for themselves. That's not what Jesus was talking about.

Jesus used the metaphor of hunger. The type of person He's talking about is starving and dying of hunger and would bow and beg for food.

A Christian is someone who cries out to God for the food of righteousness as an absolute gift because they can't do anything to work for it or pay for it.

III. Don't Treat This Hunger as Optional

What Jesus is talking about here is not peripheral to the Christian life, it's central!

Very few of us here in America know anything about being really hungry or thirsty, but in the ancient world this metaphor gripped them with a sense of life and death urgency because they knew real hunger and thirst.

Jesus was wanting to communicate to us a desperate hunger and thirst for righteousness that was driven by the realization that if we don't get it, then we're going to die!

IV. Don't Forget that Disinterested or Hostile People Are Still Really Hungry People

Unbelievers around us can look like they're living somewhere on the spectrum between apathy, total disinterest, or hostility and rage against the Gospel and Jesus Christ.

But we have to understand that every human being is born hungry for a relationship with their heavenly Father and for His righteousness. It's the only thing that can satisfy once and for all the innate desire that we all have to be approved and accepted.

Don't hate seemingly disinterested or outwardly hostile people. They are still hungry. Love them, pray for them, and speak to them about Jesus!

We have to be willing to risk their hostility so that we can expose their hunger and point them Christ! That's why God left us here on earth, to be hungry people telling other hungry people where we found satisfaction.

Kingdom people are living with the tension between the already and the not yet. We have a condition of being satisfied and yet still hunger for more. There's a day coming when this hunger will be swallowed up and satisfied forever in the presence of King Jesus when He comes back to consummate His kingdom and be with His people forever. See **Revelation 7:9-17**.