

## Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

Sermon Title: Christians, Despised by the World, but Super-Blessed by the Father, A Study of the Beatitudes Part Five. From Matthew 5:3-9

November 4, 2018

Theme verse: Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)

Introduction: It's easy for us as Christians to point the finger at others and condemn their evil ways. We can and should point out the wickedness of people like Cecile Richards the former head of Planned Parenthood who was totally complicit in the selling of baby body parts. Or we can point the finger at Kermit Gosnell, America's biggest serial killer and say shame on him and those like him. But do we have the same intensity of emotion when we point the finger inwards at our own sin and complicity with evil. Do we always do what is right or do we always behave in a righteous manner, or do we always have righteous motives or thoughts? Of course we don't. But are we upset by this fact? Today's beatitude addresses the person who is desperately hungry for the kind of righteousness so absent in his or her life.

Context

Exegesis (no need)

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

Main point: Only people who know they have no righteousness of their own and know they cannot earn any to merit salvation are the ones who will gain the righteousness of Christ and be saved.

1. The hearers knew instantly what Jesus was talking about in terms of:
  - **The severity of the hunger pangs and thirst pangs.** We Americans have no idea what First Century life was like in their subsistence culture.
  - **The fake self-righteousness of the Pharisees** whose prideful displays of egotistical external righteousness was an offense to God and to men. Matthew 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (ESV) and Matthew 23:25–26 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the

outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. [26] You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. (ESV) and Matthew 23:27–28 “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. [28] So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (ESV)

- **Their own lack of inner righteousness.** Even though they despised the Pharisees obnoxious self-righteousness, they still knew that deep down they were filled with dead men's bones in their hearts as well and were just as greedy and craved the self-indulgent life.
  - **Their own lack of inner righteousness that is so far removed from God's perfect righteousness.** They were familiar with the prophets who frequently spoke of God's justice (synonym) and man's unrighteousness.
    - The Hebrew word for righteousness is tzdiq and means “straight”. In other words God never strays from the moral path of perfect and right decisions and actions. Best word would be “right”.
    - The Greek word is dikaiosuna which means perfect justice or rightness.
    - Ezra 9:15 O LORD, the God of Israel, you are just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is today. Behold, we are before you in our guilt, for none can stand before you because of this.” (ESV)
    - Daniel 9:7–8 To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. [8] To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. (ESV)
    - Everyone on that hill knew of Israel's idolatry, the Baal worship and offerings to the Queen of Heaven (Ishtar). They knew of all the years they failed to keep the Sabbath year. They knew of the children that were sacrificed to Molech. But, they didn't rationalize their own sin by comparing their small sins to their ancestors great sins, because,
    - They also knew that they were no different deep down than their ancestors (just as we are no different than our Nordic Viking ancestors! The same heart is within us as them!
2. Later, the Apostle Paul knew exactly what Jesus was talking about when he said in Romans 7:15–20 [15] For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. [16] Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. [17] So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

[18] For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. [19] For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. [20] Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (ESV)

- How was Paul's hunger for righteousness satisfied? Romans 5:17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (ESV) and Romans 5:19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (ESV)
3. We need to hear the same message today in our own hearts in order to be saved.
- We cannot minimize our sins. If we do we will not be hungry and thirst for his righteousness.
    - We must admit that we are prideful, greedy, we are addicted to alcohol or medications, self-righteous, lustful, idolatrous, disobedient, even rebellious, callous to the needs of others, inhospitable, materialistic thinking things will bring contentment and joy, we are often angry and bitter and we hold grudges, we are unforgiving, unkind, unloving, impatient, and filled with wrongful motives.
4. How will we know if the righteousness we long for is ours and we are satisfied?
- When we see our natures changed by the blood of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (ESV) and, Ezekiel 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, (ESV) and Ezekiel 36:26–27 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (ESV) and Ephesians 2:4–5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— (ESV)

#### Application

The Secrets of Jonathon Sperry – wow what forgiveness.

The Gospel is . . . pray for all those who don't hunger for the righteousness of God.