

Pursuing God's Blessing Through the Beatitudes:

“The Power of Renewed Affections”

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

From the first three Beatitudes we have learned the blessed person is one who becomes poor in spirit, mourns over his/her sins, and submits to the will of God.

- The first three Beatitudes deal with our need.
- They humble us and lead us to bow before God with penitent and teachable hearts.

This fourth Beatitude is about the desire that arises from our heart because of obedience to the first three:

- It is the greater blessing of a heart that now hungers and thirsts for God and His righteousness.
- In Scripture there is a **roots – life – fruit** pattern:
 - Poor in spirit, mourning over your sins, becoming meek are the roots of a godly life.
 - When we activate these Beatitudes in our life, it produces a deep hunger and thirst for righteousness.
 - Righteousness will produce the beautiful fruit of mercy, purity, and peace the Jesus speaks of in the later Beatitudes.

Scriptures speaks of two types of Righteousness:

1. The righteousness that God gives to us- 1Cor. 1:30 “But by His [God's] doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification...”

- Jesus lived the fully righteous life that we have failed to live, so that His righteousness could be applied to our account.
- He laid down His perfect life as a sacrifice for our sins and now offers His righteousness to all who trust in Him.
- This gift of eternal life is referred to as “imputed righteousness” which means the righteousness of Christ is credited/reckoned to our account.

Phil. 3:9 Paul says: “...we are found not having a righteousness of our own achieved by keeping the Law, but that which is through faith [trust] in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith [trust]....”

- Before he met Christ, Paul thought he had righteousness, but when he encountered Him, he knew he was far from being righteous.
- His only hope was in receiving a righteousness that he did not have in himself.
- That is our only hope also.

2. The righteousness God calls you to-

- This is the righteousness Jesus is calling us to in saying: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled/satisfied.”

We have to look at the purpose Jesus died?

- So that we could be forgiven.
- So that we could attain eternal life.

But look at the insight Peter gives to us: 1Peter 2:24 “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness;”

- Jesus died for sin so that we could die to sin!
- Rom. 8:4

The purpose of the suffering [passion] of Christ is so that we should have a passion for the pursuit of righteousness.

- Jesus died to redeem us so that we would become a people who no longer live for ourselves, but now live with a greater ambition to pursue holiness, which is to be our distinguishing mark as a Believer in Christ.
- There is a difference between the righteousness that God gives to us and the righteousness to which He calls us.
- We come to Christ in salvation because we realize we don’t have what it takes in ourselves.
- When we have come to Him, He gives the righteousness of Christ and then calls us to make the great exchange of our filthy sins for His righteousness to take as if it was our own. It is a gift from God to us because we can’t attain it on our own!

His righteousness is a gift to be treasured and not a virtue to be sought!

- Once our heart is renewed, it creates within us the desire to live a life that is pleasing to Him.
- We are fully righteous because of His gift to us, yet we hunger and thirst to live in righteousness with a life that honors and pleases and brings glory to Him.
- Because it’s His character and the character of His Kingdom, it now becomes our character and desire – mercy, truth, justice, righteousness.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst...”

Observations about hunger:

1. Hunger is a sign of need-

- It's your body telling you it's been too long since your last meal and you need to eat.
- It's the absence of food and the body's awareness of that.

Jesus tells us the ones who are blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

- The blessing belongs not to those who think they are righteous, but to those who see how much they are lacking.
- It does not come to those who remain content in their sins or a lower life of commitment to the Lord, but to those who have a strong desire to pursue the abundant life the Lord offers to those who hunger and thirst.

2. Hunger is a sign of life and spiritual health-

- No one has to teach a newborn to be hungry. Where's there's life, there is hunger.
- If you hunger and thirst after righteousness, you are spiritually alive – if you're not hungering, it maybe you're not alive yet or you need to be revived.
- Losing our appetite is a sign of illness.
- Knowing your need to grow in Christ and thirst for more of Him is a positive sign of spiritual health.
- There is always room for a deeper relation of knowing Christ.
- Paul's cry: Phil. 3:9, 10 “And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is of Christ...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings...”

vv. 12-14 “Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but **I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus**. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward all of God in Christ Jesus.**”

3. Hunger is a powerful motivation-

- Hunger is not vague; it is an intense desire.
- A hungry person is driven to find food.

The question for you is this:

1. Is righteousness what you long for, or are you focused on something lower, less than eternal value?
2. Are you just seeking a blessing?

Jesus does not say that we are righteous if we hunger and thirst to be blessed. He says we are blessed if we hunger and thirst to be righteous.

- If money, fame, recognition, position, lust or power grabs your heart; you will never be satisfied, you will never have enough.
- Hell is a place of unending hungers and thirsts where the soul is always destroyed because it can never be fulfilled. Luke 16:25 Rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to him with a touch of water to cool his tormented being.
“Abraham said, remember that in your lifetime you had all the good things, and Lazarus had nothing, now he is comforted but you are tormented.”

John 4:13-14 Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well and asked her for a drink of water. After religious discussion – Jesus told her: “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give them shall never thirst; but the water that I will give will become in them a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

How do you cultivate a hunger & thirst for righteousness?

It’s about your **diet**, your **appetite** and your **time**!

- Hunger is a natural desire, but appetite can be cultivated!
- Righteousness is the gift God gives us and is applied by our faith in Jesus on our behalf, but the appetite for righteousness is developed by us as we hunger for righteousness.

Paul says to train yourself in godliness: 1Tim. 4:7 “...discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness...”

To recover from a heart attack or most diseases, the doctor is going to tell you to change your diet. Eat the right foods and your body can heal itself.

- At first, the healthy foods don’t taste good – but given time, your appetite can develop and change and want the good and reject the bad foods.
- Appetite can be cultivated.

A healthy hunger for righteousness will require a change in our spiritual diets:

- Just like in the natural, our flesh won’t like it at first, but we can cultivate healthy spiritual appetites of prayer, reading/studying the Word of God, living righteously.
- We really are what we feed on; both in the natural and in the spiritual!

We are a season of: **Repentance – Resetting – Restoration**

So, what have you been feeding on?

What will you choose to feed on during this time the Lord is after our attention to bring us into a greater awareness of our need to hunger and thirst after righteousness so we can be blessed by Him?