

It is a special day today as we get to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Iglesia Hispanica, our ministry to the latino community. And I think it's fitting that this celebration falls on the same day that we are looking at the beatitude that is kind of in our lineup today. Because I believe that when I look at the ministry of Iglesia Spana, I see them living out of Jesus words in this beatitude. I see them living out and experiencing the blessed life that Jesus talks about in our text. For today, they embody this blessed life that Jesus is pointing to.

And so I want us to look at the text this morning, and I want to invite us to read it out loud together. The words will be up here on the screen. It's Matthew, chapter five, verse six. Let's read this out loud together. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. What does that word mean? I think there's a lot of confusion around what righteousness is, and maybe what it isn't. And I think a simple definition of righteousness would be this. Righteousness is the place where holiness and justice meet.

When you read through the Old Testament and you read passages about God's righteousness, it is this place where his holiness and his justice meet. When we are called to be righteous, we are called to live in this place where holiness and justice meet. Righteousness is a combination of our personal devotion to God and our outward actions to others. And so holiness, on one side, it speaks to our relationship with God. When we put our faith in Jesus, the Bible says that we are made holy.

We are made right with God, brought back into a right relationship with him. And out of that new relationship, we seek to live a life that is holy, that is set apart, which is what that word holy means. A life that is morally upright and spiritually pure. A life that looks more and more like Jesus in his attitude and his actions. That is holiness.

Holiness is being made right with God, and then God setting things right inside of us. We begin to live right according to God's word. And then on the other side, you have justice. And if holiness is about our relationship with God, justice is about our relationship with others. Justice is caring about the people and the issues that God cares about.

It's making right the things that sin has made wrong in our world. It's stepping in to be a part of what God is doing to restore the brokenness in our world. Broken systems, broken lives. And these two things go hand in hand. And I know that word justice has kind of created a little bit of a bad taste in some of our mouths, because when we hear justice, we think of social justice warriors.

Now, that's immediately where your mind goes. You're not thinking about righteousness, because with justice, there is holiness. And if all that you think of righteousness is just moral purity and doing right and being right, you're not thinking about righteousness because you're leaving out an important part, which is justice. The two of holiness and

justice come together to form righteousness. And when these two things come together, our personal holiness and our pursuit of justice, that is when you get righteousness.

According to the Bible, if you want to have one of those apart from the other, you're gonna have something, but you're not gonna have righteousness. Righteousness is a character and actions of someone who is pursuing personal holiness in their life and caring for those who are experiencing the brokenness and pain of our sinful world. And so when Jesus says, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, he is talking about people who have a deepen spiritual longing for more of God in their life. But he's also talking about people who are outwardly expressing their faith by pursuing justice for others, people who are desperate for God's will to be done in their life, but for God's will to also be done in our world. He's talking about people who have this deep longing to be right with God and to do right with others according to God's word.

And I think an expression of our righteousness is that we, as God, brings us into a right relationship with him, and we are seeking to live a life that is holy. We will desire the things that God desires. We will long for the things that God longs for. We will care about the things and the people that God cares for. As our hearts align with him and we begin to live out our faith.

An expression of that ought to be that we are caring for those that God cares for. We will care for the poor, the outcast, the widow, and the orphan. We will care for the immigrant.

These are the four categories from Old Testament all the way through the New Testament. If you look at who does God call his people Israel and his people the church to care for? That's it. Over and over. It is the poor, it is the widow and the orphan, and it's the immigrant.

And for the last ten years, Iglesia Hispana has demonstrated a deep hunger and thirst for this kind of righteousness, this kind of holiness. And justice. And it is making an impact for the kingdom and in our community. Let's check out this video of Iglesia spun Escherwood Oaks. Over the past ten years, we've been able to touch the lives of many, many people who've come to our community to make it their home.

By offering this to people who didn't speak English yet, or their heart language was Spanish, we were able to serve people who are here, but wanted to worship in their heart language. We've been able to do that for many, many people along the way. So from the beginning, we wanted Iglesia Spana to be more than just a Sunday morning gathering. We have interfaced with many of the agencies in the community who also needed help with spanish speakers. And it's provided opportunity for us to serve many in many different ways.

As scripture says, we're supposed to welcome the stranger and love them as if they are our own.

I remember that we were a group of six people, maybe eight. We were meeting for a study of financial peace in Spanish. There wasn't as much of a latino community as there is now, and we all had the desire to continue meeting, to find a place where we could learn about God and worship God in Spanish, the language of heaven. Iglesia Spana is very, very important now in the city. For all of the new families arriving here and finding Iglesia Spana, it's like, wow, here I'm going to find the loving care that I'm looking for, because many of the families arrive without having anyone else here in Bloomington.

So the love that we offer is comforting. We help everyone we can in every way we can. For me, it's a very good place to send people to connect with the community. When I start, I found them, and I found a group of people who wants to help. Iglesia Hispana benefits the community greatly through the families first neighborhood pantry at Heatherwood.

About 60% of the families that come to the Heatherwood pantry are Hispanic or Latino. It's a very warm, welcoming, friendly environment at the pantry with the Sherwood Oaks volunteers and spanish speaking volunteers helping to make everyone feel comfortable and take the nervousness out of accepting help. Iglesia Spana has connected me to a group of people that I might not have met otherwise, people who are very interested in serving others. And to me, that shows how willing they are to live out their faith. Their translation and interpretation services mean that language is no longer a barrier for people applying to our program.

One of the things that I'm always impressed with at Glacier Espana is their focus on meeting the material and emotional needs of the people first, and then inviting them to walk down their spiritual path. It helps them become comfortable, it helps them better integrate with the community. And I thank you for being such a wonderful partner with RSN. They welcome everybody to join the Iglesia Spana, but not just as a member of the Iglesia, but also as part of the many projects that they have going on along the year, for kids, for families, for women in general, for the community. They have been doing an amazing job.

I have found so many great friends here that have been supporting me since I started working in this role, not just as a professional or in my career, but also in a personal level, which I appreciate, and I'm very thankful for that. God bless you, Iglesias Spana. That's great. Hey, can we welcome our Iglesia Spana team this morning up here with me?

So what does the phrase Iglesia Hispana, what does that mean? I'll take that one. Okay. Iglesia comes from the word ekklesia, which is a greek word that really means to call out or to call together. And Hispana means Hispanic, which includes all people from the 20 nations that claim Spanish as their first language.

It's a little bit of an insult for everyone here to be called Mexican, because most are not. But Hispanic covers the language, the spanish language, so it really means church for spanish speakers. Okay. And so you mentioned, I mean, we've got multiple countries that are

represented that have been kind of called out and are finding community and a home in Iglesia Hispana. So how many different countries are represented in Iglesia Hispana?

We have at least 20. At least 20. The 15 to 18 in total in Spanish is 20 countries. 20 different countries represented that meet in the 11:00, during the 11:00 service down in the chapel represented here. This is a little slice of heaven that is here on Sunday mornings gathered together.

That's great. And so let's just go around and do some introductions here. Sergio, why don't you start with you tell us a little bit about, give us your name, your family, and then maybe your home country and how long you've been here. Here. Okay, so my name is Sergio Lema.

I come from Bolivia. I have been here in Bloomington with Sherburn Oaks five years so far now. And I'm married. I have my pretty wife, Sarah, and two little boys, Benjamin and Josue. Yeah, man, and they're great.

We had a staff cookout on Friday night. And Benjamin and Josue, they're just like, running around and playing. And my girls went to school with them, or Nora still goes to school with them. We love them. Yeah, they're great.

Nora. My name is Norma Langrav. I am from Bogota, Colombia, South America, and I have been here for 13 years. And my husband is there, Tom. And that's it.

All right. All right. And then, I mean, Brad, most of us know I've been here forever. You've been here forever? Yes.

And plan to be. And we are glad that you've been here forever, man. So when people ask me, what is Iglesia Hispana? It's a question I love to get, because I love to talk about the ministry and what's happening there. But I say it's somewhere in between, like a ministry of Sherwood Oaks and a campus.

And so it's a little bit more than like, connect group, which is a ministry of Sherwood Oaks, but it's not quite of Bedford, which is a campus of Sherwood Oaks. It lives somewhere in between those two things. And so how would you describe what Iglesia Hispana is? So we found the name as a missional community. A missional community.

Yes. That's how we developed the idea, and we understand the idea that Iglesia Hispana works. So we embrace the values, the vision, the mission of Cerbero, and just we apply them to our hispanic community needs. So that's how we work with all the ministers that we have here in Sherwood. We do it for the hispanic community.

Yeah. And so, I mean, when, when you guys are worshiping during the 11:00 service, it's very similar. I mean, we're on the same teaching series where you do a lot of the same practices in terms of groups and serving. And so it's. But it's like a missional community of

Sherwood Oaks where not only for people to come and be a part of, but missional in that you all are going out and making a difference in the community.

What are some ways that you are, that you're doing that? Well, as you can see in the videos, we try to approach and be partnership with most of the services in the community. So we are able to reach more people from the hispanic community. You know, the people who came to Bloomington, they arrive and they don't know anything, so they found someplace and they connect with us immediately. So it's really nice because we are able, with Norma, have done an amazing job during these whole years, having on building these connections.

And we are, you know, we are the reference to receive someone from Bloomington who is arriving to Bloomington. So that's something good. So many different community organizations, when they come across someone who speaks Spanish from a latino community, they reach out to you all to help get them connected with different things that our community provides. So we celebrate the ten year anniversary today. Talk about how Iglesia Hispana got started.

Okay. Iglesia Hispana starts in a house, in the frat house. We have a meeting, a supper. We are always eating, and we have a supper there. And they were six families that we were talking about, start a church, start a group for the Latinos.

And this is the way that we start. We have, after that, the song classes, the financial classes, and we decided that, yes, we are going to start the iglesispana. So every good thing starts with a meal. Yes. So you guys got together, you had dinner, and you started doing some classes together, and you said, this could be more, and this could really be a meaningful community for people.

Yeah. I would say, too, that it was really born out of a compassionate heart. There were several couples who. One spoke English and was able to attend the service here, but the other spouse didn't speak English well. So there was a desire to share who we are and what we are with those who speak only Spanish.

Knowing that this community was growing in our. In Bloomington, and so there was a lot of compassion, a lot of doubt, and I'd say, almost fear that could this really work? And then Sherwood Oaks was so gracious to say, yes, the chapel is empty. Let's use it. We started on a Saturday night and found that more people worked Saturday nights, so we tried Sunday morning.

We still miss a lot because they're always working at times when others don't really want to. So we miss people that way. That has also forced us to connect with people through other means, through all the agencies in town. And so the broader ripple effect of Iglesia Spana is quite broad to a lot of people in the community who we won't see on Sundays, but we see other times during the week. Yeah.

And you guys, you meet in the chapel, like we said, but you're actually getting ready to outgrow that. I mean, it's something that we're having conversations about. What's next for you guys? And we'll talk a little bit more about that soon. But, Norma, you have a very interesting story.

You were a professional architect. You worked at a firm in Bolivia, Colombia. You were on the rise. I mean, you were telling me the other day, like, you reported right to the president. I mean, you were high level in this architecture firm that you worked for, and you had the opportunity to come to the US to do a little bit of study.

And when you got here, you were, you thought, oh, this is America. It's a christian nation. And you came to Bloomington, and you're like, where are all the Christians? And I'm not, like, experiencing that. And the Lord actually put it on your heart to come back to be a missionary from Columbia to America.

And not just like spanish speakers, but just to this region. And the Lord kind of connected you with Gail Pontius and then Bradley. So tell us just a little bit about your involvement with Iglesia Hispana. Yes, thank you for the good that you did. Perfect.

And yes, when I came to study English, my heart was like, how here, this country that I know that is Christian, and the people, they don't speak about Jesus at the university. And I was like, who is talking about Jesus? And I start feeling something in my heart. And I said, I want to come back. I have been traveling for tourists travel here, and I didn't have this feeling.

And when I came back to Colombia, went back to Colombia, I said, in a year, I will come back. I will save all my money and I will come back to Colombia, to United States. I will quit my job and I will come here to see what God wants because my visa was tourist visa. And I said, if God have something for me here, he will do everything in the right way and he will bring me in the right way. And I decided to do that and organize everything.

And a year after that, I was here and doing as you said. I met with Gail Brad, and we started all of these parts Hispana. And yes, I just feel like in Romans, people need to hear about God. Who is going to tell them the truth? Who is going to show the lie?

You forgot to say that God used Tom as your husband to bring you back to the US as to be a missionary here, right? Yes. My plan was to just to quit my job on September 20, 2012 and come here and to see what God was going to do. And. But God has a plan before me and he, we have a conversation.

We started to just email with my husband and it was, something happened and he went to visit to me. And I didn't come here on September 20. Twelve. I was here in January 1, 2013. It was the plan from God that he used for this story.

We're grateful that it is because, Norma, you are a ministry powerhouse. You have made a difference in so many people's lives, leading Bible studies and outreach events and just ministry flows through you. And you certainly are living as a missionary here in Bloomington, serving both the latino and the american population. And we're grateful for you. And because my job, I was a project manager in construction, in building houses.

I have experience with all the administration, coordination, all of these events and things. And it was a good match with Brad because everything that we planned, we said, I can do it, okay, we can do this, this. And he always, okay, I will talk with the church and he talk with the person in charge. And yes, we can do that. And we can go.

And we can go a party, we can make a christian party in the community with something soft. And we have a very good impact in the community. And this is the way that we can connect with many agencies in the community because I have the opportunity to help them. We have the opportunity as a church. We are very grateful that the share with us is always helping us to go further to the community.

Yeah. And she pushes us every day to do that. Yeah. So, and I guess to that point, like I, you all hunger and thirst for righteousness. I mean it when I say I see you all embodying and living out this beatitude for today, but you give so much.

And it is a. It is a lot. And there are sometimes you'll get a call late at night, early in the morning, you're going around to help a family, but it's because you want to be right and you want to do right and you want to help others experience the rightness, the righteousness of God. And so what motivates you to serve and to give the way that you do? Sergio yeah, sure.

That's the toughest one, you know, I was dealing with, as in my head. But when I was thinking about how to answer this, I think that Luke seven shares a story about Jesus sharing a story and the answer or something, that the story says that the one who is forgiving a lot loves a lot. And I feel that way. I feel that Jesus forgive me so many things in my life, and he changed so many things. And I love so passionately to God.

And loving him made me start loving the things that he. That are important for him. So he loves people. He loves the neat one. He loves everyone who is looking for him.

So that's how drives, that's what drives me and pushes me all the time to do all the effort. Yeah, that's good. Norma when I met a person and I see that maybe a person, they don't have a strong relationship with God, and they had many troubles and many things. And I said, you need God. You need Jesus.

You need the Lord in your heart. And when we start talking and we invite to the Bible study, and little by little, I can see the face of the person changing week by week. I say that now they are more committed with God, and they feel like maybe they have the same problems, but they know that they are not alone, that they are with God, that they are not. They don't

have to solve the problems by themselves. When I see the changes in this family, in this person, in this, I feel like this is something that encouraged me to do more because I feel it's just changing that life, but the generation, too.

And this gives me more energy to share the gospel because I want many people. We are everyone. We need God. And it encouraged me to say, people need God. We need to share the gospel.

Yeah. So it's what God has done for you, and you want to take that good, and you want to give it away to others. And that is righteousness. That is righteousness in action. So over the next ten years, when you guys think about what Iglesia Hispana is today and is becoming, and you think, ten years from now, and we're celebrating the 20th anniversary, what are some things that you envision Iglesia Hispana being?

I imagine this room full of Latinos in ten years in the service, in the 01:00 p.m. and 03:00 p.m. Sundays here. Wow, that was very specific. I mean, I love that God, let it be.

That is amazing. Worshiping God. Everyone here is like, I was telling you that I have a dream that I was counting how many people, because we report how many people came every Sunday in the beginning ten years ago, and I was counting and I come back and I cannot count. Oh, I need to count more. And I say, oh, I cannot count.

They are too many. I have so many. And I was like, okay. And it was twice. And I imagine that and something that I am, I would like ten years is to have a volunteers and leadership that they have the passion for the great, the grand commission.

Great commission. And they can have in our DNA the great commission that we can go for, the one with love, with care, with everything to serve them and to show Jesus and make Jesus famous. Amen. Let's mark it down. 01:00 03:00 service in here.

I love it is there here. You know, I think that I would love to see this grow, but also deeper in our relation, like, you know, you all embrace us and we also embrace you all together. You know, when we find in the Bible that Jesus says that we are one with the father and the father is one with him and he's one with us and we're one with him, and why not altogether can be one of the, in the church, you know, so I think in Iglesia Hispana in the future to be more deeply rooted with all the church. And we can work together because we are aiming all to the same community. You know, we are here in Bloomington, so why don't we work together more and more and more of one church mentality.

I love that. All right, so we've got just a little bit left, but quickly, how can we pray for you individually and maybe even in the ministry? In the ministry, probably I will ask the preacher for the families, because arriving here to a new language, a new, everything new is really difficult for every family. So if you can keep the prayers on each family who arrives, because they are dealing with a lot of stuff, so they can be keep loving each other and working



together and asking and looking for help and have the opportunity to connect with Iglesispana, that would be an awesome prayer to embrace and at least for me, for wisdom as father, as pastor, as friend, as part of everything that I do, just ask for wisdom of God in every place. All right, Norma.

And for the, like I said, for the leadership that they had passion for the, for the one and this, it will make the gospel spread more. And for me, maybe for keeping, like you said, the wisdom and humility all the time serving goddess. But we see it in you guys. Hey, can we thank them for joining us today and for the ministry? And how about their English as well?

I mean, that was well done. Well done. They were worried, but you guys did great. You guys did great. Thank you so much for the ministry and for everything that you all do.

So the blessing of our beatitude today, as we wrap up, is that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, Jesus promises that they will be filled. And so the blessing is not that we hunger and thirst for something. The blessing is the promise that we will be filled, that we will be satisfied, that when we find that Jesus is all that we want, we find that Jesus is all that we need for both our holiness being made right with God being made right within, but then also for living holy, righteous, justice filled lives, going out into this world to do right for others. And there are a lot of things in my life that I hunger and I thirst for. And if I'm honest, it is not always righteousness, it's not always holiness, it's not always justice, it's not always God your will be done in my life and in my world.

Oftentimes it is God my will be done in my life and in my world. I want to love the people that I love, that the people around me love. But God is calling us to even more. He's calling us to stretch ourselves and love those that he loves, care for those that he cares for, to die to ourselves so that we can find life abundant in him. And when I hunger and thirst for the things of me, for more of me and my way, I never find myself satisfied.

If anything, I find myself hangry. I'm hungry for something else and I'm angry that I don't have it. And I think we live in a world that is very hangry because they're running after. They are hungering and thirsting for something that is not righteousness. But Jesus promises that when we hunger and thirst for more of him and more of his will in our life and in this world, we will be filled.

And so what is it that you are hungering and thirsting for this morning? What is it that you desire? I want to close us off with a time of congregational prayer. This is a read and response prayer. As we've been talking through these beatitudes, we've ended each week with this time of just being open and saying, Lord, I want more of this in my life so I can truly live the blessed life that you have for me.

And so we're going to have the words up on the screen, and I'll read the leader part, and then we'll say together the congregation part. But let's pray this prayer together. Heavenly Father, we come before you today with hearts longing to be alive. Your word tells us blessed

are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Lord, we hunger and thirst for your righteousness.

Make us a people who seek to honor you in everything. And, Father, we know that true righteousness is where holiness and justice meet. Help us to pursue personal holiness closely with you and to reflect your purity in our hearts and our lives. Cleanse our hearts, Lord, and make us holy. As you are holy, we desire to be set apart for you.

But, Lord, we also know that righteousness means loving others as you love them. So give us eyes to see brokenness and injustice around us and the courage to act, bringing your justice to our world. Fill us with compassion, Lord. Use us as instruments of your justice and peace in a world that needs your love. Father, may we never be content with anything less than your righteousness.

We long to be satisfied, not by the things of this world, but by walking in step with your spirit, living out your holiness, and working for your justice. Satisfy us, Lord, as we hunger and thirst for you. Shape us into the image of your son, Jesus Christ. As we leave this place, let us carry your righteousness with us into our homes, our workplaces, and our communities. May your holiness and justice be evident in every area of our lives.

Help us to live for you, Lord, to hunger for righteousness each day. Amen. When Jesus is all we want, we find that he truly is all that we need. He alone can satisfy that deep hunger and thirst in our soul. And if you find yourself today hungering for more, man Jesus.

Jesus is your answer. And he made a way through his sacrifice on the cross to make us righteous, to make us holy, and to be sent out into this world with a great commission that Norma talked about to help others know, love and follow Jesus, too. Would you stand with me? And we're gonna close with one more song before we go today. Lord, give us a hunger and a thirst for more of you.

More of what you desire. In Jesus name. Amen. I.