

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - February 9, 2023

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Title: "The Sermon on The Mount" - Part V

The Beatitudes - Part IV

Scripture Reference: Matthew 5:6

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

I. Introduction

A. This beatitude speaks of a strong desire, of a driving pursuit, of a passionate force inside the soul. It has to do with ambition - ambition of the right sort - whose object is to honor, obey, and glorify God by partaking of His righteousness.

B. This holy ambition is in great contrast to the common ambitions of mankind to gratify their own lusts, accomplish their own goals, and satisfy their own egos.

C. Lucifer, the most beautiful of all the angels, basked in the splendor and radiance of God's glory. The name Lucifer means "star of the morning" or, more literally, "the bright one."

D. But he was not satisfied with living in God's glory, and he said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high." (Isaiah 14:13-14).

E. His ambition was not to reflect God's glory but to usurp God's

sovereign power - while forsaking righteousness. Therefore, when Satan declared his intention to make himself like the Most High, the Most High responded by declaring to His adversary, "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah 14:15).

F. As king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar ruled over the greatest of all world empires. One day as he walked on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, "The king spoke, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30).

G. Nebuchadnezzar lusted after praise just as Lucifer lusted after power.

H. God's reaction was immediate: "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." (Daniel 4:31,32).

I. Jesus told a parable about a rich farmer whose crops were so abundant that he did not have enough space to store them.

J. After planning to tear down his old barns and build bigger ones, he said, "... I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has

provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:19-21).

K. Lucifer hungered for power; Nebuchadnezzar hungered for praise; and the rich fool hungered for pleasure.

Comment: Because they hungered for wrong things and rejected God's good things, they forfeited both.

L. Jesus declares that the deepest desire of every person ought to be to **hunger and thirst for righteousness**. That is the Spirit-prompted desire that will lead a person to salvation and keep him strong and faithful once he is in the kingdom.

Comment: It is also the only ambition that, when fulfilled, brings enduring happiness.

M. Jesus says that the way to happiness, the way to being truly **blessed**, is the way of spiritual hunger and thirst.

II. Exposition [Part I] – The Necessity For Spiritual Hunger

A. Hunger and thirst represent the necessities of physical life. Jesus' analogy demonstrates that righteousness is required for spiritual life just as food and water are required for physical life.

B. Righteousness is not an optional spiritual supplement but a spiritual necessity. We can no more live spiritually without righteousness than we can live physically without food and water.

C. Since the great famine in Egypt during the time of Joseph, and probably long before then, the world has been periodically plagued by famines. Consider the following additional historical events:

1. Rome experienced a famine in 436 B.C., which was so severe that thousands of people threw themselves into the Tiber River to drown rather than starve to death.
2. Famine struck England in A.D. 1005, and all of Europe suffered great famines in 879, 1016, and 1162.

Comments: In our own century, despite the advances in agriculture, many parts of the world still experience periodic famines.

3. In recent years Africa has seen some of the most devastating famines in the world's history.
4. In the last 100 years, tens of millions of people throughout the world have died from starvation or from many diseases that accompany severe malnutrition.

Consider this: A starving person has a single, all-consuming passion for food and water. Nothing else has the slightest attraction or appeal.

D. Those who are without God's righteousness are starved for spiritual life. But tragically they do not have the natural desire for spiritual life that they do for physical life.

E. The tendency of fallen mankind is to turn to itself and to the world for meaning and life, just as "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:22b; Prov. 26:11).

F. The heart of every person in the world was created with a sense of inner emptiness and need. However, mankind does not recognize what the need is or know what will satisfy it.

G. Like the prodigal son, men will eat pig's food, because they

have nothing else. Why, God asks, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And you labour for that which satisfieth not? (Isa. 55:2a,b).

Point: Though God has created men with a need for Himself, they try to satisfy that need through lifeless gods of their own making.

H. Seeking satisfaction only in the God of heaven and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ is a mark of those who come into His kingdom.

I. Jesus' call to spiritual hunger and thirst also follows logically in the progression of the Beatitudes. In **poverty of spirit**, we turn away from self-seeking; in **mourning** we turn away from self-satisfaction; and in **meekness** we turn away from self-serving.

J. The first three beatitudes are costly and painful. Becoming poor in spirit involves death to self. Mourning over sin involves facing up to our sinfulness. Becoming meek involves surrendering our power to God's control.

Point: The person who has no hunger and thirst for righteousness has no part in God's kingdom.

III. Exposition [Part II] - The Meaning of Spiritual Hunger

A. Most of us have never faced life-threatening hunger and thirst. We think of hunger as missing a meal or two in a row, and thirst as having to wait an hour on a hot day to get a cold drink. But the hunger and thirst of which Jesus speaks of here is much more intense.

//I want to share with you my personal story of being hungry for almost eight and a half days - 1970 - Tennessee State Univ.//

//Consider the following historical account.//

B. During the liberation of Palestine in World War I, a combined force of British, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers was closely pursuing the Turks as they retreated from the desert.

C. As the allied troops moved northward past Beersheba they began to outdistance their water-carrying camel train. When the water ran out, their mouths got dry, their heads ached, and they became dizzy and faint.

D. Their eyes became bloodshot, lips swelled and turned purple, and mirages became common. They knew that if they did not make it to the wells of Sheriah by nightfall, thousands of them would die - as hundreds already had done. Literally fighting for their lives, they managed to drive the Turks from Sheriah.

E. As water was distributed from the great stone cisterns, the more able-bodied soldiers were required to stand at attention and wait for the wounded and those who would take guard duty to drink first.

F. It was four hours before the last man had his drink. During that time the men stood no more than twenty feet from thousands of gallons of water, to drink of which had been their consuming passion for many agonizing days.

G. //Please don't miss this next piece of recorded history.//

It is said that one of the officers who was present reported, "I believe that we all learned our first real Bible lesson on the march from Beersheba to the Sheriah wells. If such were our thirst for God, for righteousness and for His will in our lives, a consuming, all-embracing, preoccupying desire, how rich in the fruit of the Spirit would we be?" (E.M. Blaiklock, "Water" Eternity (August 1966), p-27).

Comment: I know that was a long story but that is the kind of hunger and thirst of which Jesus speaks about in this beatitude.

H. The strongest and deepest impulses in the natural realm are used to represent the depth of desire that those who are called of God and redeemed have for righteousness.

I. Those who truly come to Jesus Christ, come hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and those who are in Him, continue to know that deep longing for holiness.

J. David declared - "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;" (Psalm 63:1).

K. Peter expressed his own great desire and hunger when he counseled those to whom he wrote "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18).

IV. Exposition [Part III] - The Object of Spiritual Hunger

Note: As with the other beatitudes, the goal of hungering and thirsting for righteousness is twofold. For the unbeliever the goal is salvation; for the believer it is sanctification.

For Salvation

A. When a person initially hungers and thirsts for righteousness, he or she seeks salvation, this is the righteousness that comes when one turns from sin to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

B. In poverty of spirit the person sees their sin; in mourning

they lament and turn from their sin; in meekness they submit their own sinful way and power to God; and in hunger and thirst they seek God's righteousness in Christ to replace their sin.

C. When a person abandons all hope of saving themselves, all confidence in self-righteousness, and begins to hunger for the salvation that brings God's righteousness and the obedience that God requires, that person will be **blessed**, and be made divinely happy.

D. The Jews' greatest obstacle to receiving the gospel was their self-righteousness, their confidence in their own purity and holiness, which they imagined was created by good works.

E. Because they were God's chosen race, and as keepers of the law - or, more often, keepers of men's interpretations of the law - they felt heaven was assured.

F. The Messiah told them, however, that the only way to salvation was by hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness to replace their own self-righteousness, which was really unrighteousness.

For Sanctification

Definition and Usage:

The word sanctification (Greek - *hagiasmos*) means "to set apart." The same root word is found in the English words **saint**, **holy**, and **holiness**.

There are primarily three aspects of sanctification:

- (1) **Positional Sanctification.** This is the believer's position or standing before God, based on the death of Christ.

- a. In positional sanctification the believer is accounted holy before God; he or she is declared a saint.
- (2) **Experiential Sanctification.** Although the believer's positional sanctification is secure, his or her experiential sanctification may fluctuate because it relates to their daily life and experience. (See 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:16; Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2).
- (3) **Ultimate Sanctification.** This aspect of sanctification is future and anticipates the final transformation of the believers into the likeness of Christ. At that time all believers will be presented to the Lord without spot or wrinkle (i.e., without any blemish). (Eph. 5:26-27).

Point: For believers, the object of hungering and thirsting is to grow in the righteousness received from trusting in Christ. That growth is sanctification, which more than anything else is the mark of a Christian.

V. Exposition [Part IV] - The Result of Spiritual Hunger

- A. The result of hungering and thirsting for righteousness is being filled (Gk. - **Chortazo** - which means **satisfied**).
- B. This word **chortazo** was frequently used when referring to the feeding of animals until they wanted nothing more. They were allowed to eat until they were completely satisfied (i.e., **filled**).
- C. Jesus' divine pronouncement is that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be given total satisfaction. The giving of satisfaction is God's work, our part is to seek; His part is to satisfy (i.e., fill).

VI. Exposition [Part V] - The Testing of Spiritual Hunger

A. There are several marks of genuine hunger and thirst for God's righteousness.

1. The **First** is dissatisfaction with self.

Point: The person who is pleased with his or her own righteousness will see no need for God's.

2. **Second** is freedom from dependence on external things for satisfaction.

a. A hungry man cannot be satisfied by an arrangement of lovely flowers, or beautiful music, or pleasant conversation.

3. **Third** is craving for the Word of God, the basic spiritual food He provides for His children.

Points:

1) The more we seek God's righteousness, the more we will want to devour Scripture.

2) Feeding on God's Word increases our appetite for it!

4. **Fourth** is the pleasantness of the things of God. "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. (Prov. 27:7)

5. A **final mark** of true spiritual hunger is **unconditionality**. When our spiritual hunger and thirst are genuine they will make no conditions; they will seek and accept God's righteousness in whatever way He chooses to provide it and will obey His commands no matter how demanding

they may be.

Point: The spiritually hungry do not ask for Christ and personal satisfaction, or Christ and popularity.

I trust and pray that this lesson has been a blessing to you, and you will continue to hunger and thirst for the things of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the Master's Service

Pastor Austin