



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

Kingdom Character - Those who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Matthew 5:6

Message #10 of 80 – S1038

Sermon given on March 26, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Kingdom Character - Those who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Matthew 5:6

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 5**
 - Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
 - Over the years Kelly and I have enjoyed watching the show ‘Alone.’
 - A group of people are dropped off in the wilderness and the one who can survive the longest alone wins.
 - The thing that causes most of them to struggle is getting enough food to sustain them through very harsh conditions.
 - The human body can go a remarkably long time without food.
 - Everybody needs a certain number of calories to operate at peak efficiency.
 - The longer you operate at a calory deficit, the harder things become.
 - Most contestants in that show reach some level of starvation, before they quit.
 - One contestant said that it was a competition to see who could starve the longest.
 - Most of us have never experienced that kind of hunger.
 - Jesus is going to tell us that there is a kind of hunger and thirst that is blessed by God.
 - Sadly, there are people in churches all around the world who call themselves Christians who are starving, but not with the hunger and thirst Jesus will tell us about in Matthew **Amos 8:11**.
- “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.”**
- Too many Christians act like they want to hear from God when they really don’t **2 Timothy 4:3-4**.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;* ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

- And while they may have the appearance of spiritual life – they are starving spiritually.
- God’s desire is that we would be filled.
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to stir up that desire within us. -
Pray

Teaching

• **Kingdom Character - Those who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness**

- The first three beatitudes focused on a sincere evaluation of self.
- First, a sense of our need for God.
- A deep sense of our utter nothingness before God.
- Second, the judging of ourselves as guilty before God and sorrowing over our lost condition.
- Third, abandoning all pretenses of merit and falling on our faces before God in humility.
- Those three then produce a sense of great need within us that causes us to turn our eyes more fully toward God.
- And because many Christians fail to allow God to do this work in their hearts, they can feel satisfied with their religious exercise and be oblivious to the fact that they are spiritually starving.
- Let’s look at the fourth beatitude.

• **Matthew 5:6**

- What is ‘righteousness’ – being in a right relationship with God.
- The Bible teaches that righteousness is inextricably related to salvation **Isaiah 61:10**.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

- Paul summarizes that truth **Romans 1:16-17**.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

- As sinners, we are destitute of righteousness **Romans 3:10-12**.

As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.”

- Our prideful human nature doesn't like that message.
- We want to believe that, “I am not all bad”.
- God disagrees, but then in love He pours out His grace upon those who will humble themselves before Him.
- We can't be righteous, God must impart Christ's righteousness to us.

Arthur Pink

“Just as the sins of God's people were all transferred to Christ, so His righteousness is placed upon them.”

- Paul also talked about that **2 Corinthians 5:21**.

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- God demands perfect righteousness to satisfy His righteous commandments.
- But because we are spiritual paupers, desperately guilty, and without merit, God imparts the perfect righteousness of Christ through faith.
- Jesus tells us that the blessing comes to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- ‘hunger and thirst’ – This expresses a great desire, of which the soul is acutely aware of.
- First, the Holy Spirit makes us aware of God's perfect, holy standards, which God can never lower.
- Jesus told us that it the Holy Spirit who is active in this process **John 16:8**

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment...

- The Spirit reveals to us that unless we our righteousness is perfect, we cannot see God or go to heaven.
- Then, our soul realizes and confesses our abject spiritual poverty and inability to meets God's standard of perfection.
- That painful discovery causes us to mourn and groan in grief as we understand our desperate position.
- It is then that the Holy Spirit causes the heart of the believer to ‘hunger and thirst for righteousness.’

- In humility, we turn to God and seek Him with our whole being because He is the only one who can meet our need.
- It is this hunger and thirst that originally brings someone to Christ.
- But it should not go away once someone is saved.
- It should be replaced by a hunger and thirst to be practically righteous just like Jesus.
- It should manifest as a growing need to walk closer with Him in this life.
- Turn to **Philippians 3**
- This is a warning against becoming complacent in your faith.
- ‘who hunger’ is a verb in the present tense, active voice.
- Do you, right now, sense you need more righteousness?
- Do you sense a heart-level need to be more like Christ?
- Or are you comfortable with where your faith is?
- Are you ‘good enough’ to get into heaven?
- Paul expressed the attitude we should have regarding being content with our spiritual growth.
- **Philippians 3:8-14**
- While God is calling us to be content with our material reality, He is calling us to satisfied discontentment in our spiritual life.
- Because we know that it is God the Holy Spirit working in us to grow us in righteousness, we can be satisfied with our current spiritual state.
- But at the same time we know that God’s goal is to make us more like Jesus, so we should never become content in our spiritual state.
- We can always be more like Jesus.
- That is where hunger and thirst for righteousness come into the picture.
- We can never be fully satisfied until we are fully like Christ.
- We will never be fully complete until we are completely conformed to the image of Christ.
- God fully intends to bring us to that place of completeness **Ephesians 2:10**.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- We are told in this beatitude that God blesses those who strongly desire to be filled with God's righteousness.
- 'they shall be filled' – God creates a need within us so that He can fill it **Psalm 34:10**.

The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.

- And in another place **Psalm 107:8-9**.

Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! ⁹ For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

- The humble believer who senses their need also realizes that only God can fill it, so they turn to Him and seek Him.
- Without God creating the need within us, we would not seek Him.
- 'they shall be filled' – Filled with what? Righteousness!
- Ultimately that points to heaven, but it includes a now aspect also **2 Peter 1:2-4**.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

- As we allow God to grow us in faith, and we respond to His work in humble faith and obedience, He fills us with more and more righteousness.
- And as we grow in practical righteousness, we experience more of God's amazing grace through His promises to us and we partake in the divine nature – we sense God more and more in us.
- So how do we do it? How do we hunger and thirst for righteousness?
- If you are a child of God, a Christian, then God has already placed a desire to seek Him in your heart.
- That desire needs to be nurtured.
- We do that through many of the practical Christian activities: prayer, Bible reading and study, worship, giving, service, fellowship with other believers.
- But it is not just about practicing spiritual disciplines – that leads to religiosity and legalism.

- We must humble ourselves before God before we do any of them and ask the Holy Spirit to use those disciplines to cause us to hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- Just reading the Bible or praying will not do it.
- It will be the Holy Spirit working through those things to stir up your hunger and thirst.
- We must at the same time clean up our spiritual house.
- If we are engaged in sin, we will not want to grow in righteousness.
- If we want to be filled with all the good God has promised to those who are His people, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us to make us hungry and thirsty for more of God.
- God is faithful – if you seek Him, He will help you to find Him and He will fill you.
- God is so good! **Amen!**