

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

Eat, Drink, and Be Happy.

Beatitudes – Blessed are the hungry – Matthew 5:6

It is amazing to think through all the selections we have when we walk into the grocery store.

There is a cereal aisle, a beverage aisle, and an ice cream aisle. There are different brands, different flavors, different sizes, and different packages. It can be very confusing and overwhelming. To make matters worse, there are two scoops of raisins in every box even though there are different sized boxes. I am still working on that one.

We have a hard time fathoming this particular beatitude because there is so much stuff in the world today. We hunger and thirst after possessions and materials. We crave relationships and religious experiences. We seek after more money, more power, and more prestige.

We have the opportunity to take our fill on everything, but only one thing truly satisfies, and it is the very thing that many of us do not feast on.

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

What are some of the things that we have labeled as needs (but really aren't)?

Why do we find it so easy to run after these perceived needs and forget our need for God?

Ambition and drive are not a bad thing. It is okay to have ambition, and it can be used in many ways. A pastor can be ambitious in evangelism. A CEO can be ambitious in research and company planning. A student can be ambitious in his or her studies. There are those, however, who pervert ambition: Lucifer, Nebuchadnezzar, Saul, Judas, Hitler, and the list continues.

What do you think righteousness means?

Jesus uses words that describe an intense hunger and thirst. This is not just a casual feeling of hunger like when you miss breakfast. This is a hunger that comes from intense craving and need. Again, some of us have a hard time grasping that kind of hunger unless we have practiced the spiritual discipline of fasting.

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”
Romans 4:5

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification...”
1 Thessalonians 4:5

There is another side to this. Not only is it an intense craving, hunger and thirst are the basic needs of man. There is a daily need to eat and drink. Health professionals will tell us that we can go about three days without water and seven days without food, but most of us eat at least once a day. If we skip a meal, we realize it and may even grab a snack to “hold us over.”

Yet, when we miss time with God, we figure we can catch up the next day. Before we realize it, several days have gone by and we have only prayed here and there to “hold us over.” Jesus explains that we can find happiness when we hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Righteousness is the condition acceptable to God or right living as outlined in Scripture. We were declared righteous (Romans 4:5), but there is also the aspect of sanctification through which we are being made more like Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Sanctification is a work in progress. Paul explains,

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

Think of when you were first saved. Is there anything since then that you have given up because you knew it was not right?

There is this aspect of doing what you know is right, but let’s remember what Jesus said. Those who crave or are starving for righteousness will be happy. This is embracing a mindset that you are continually searching the Scriptures to understand how to better imitate Christ. It is not listening to the occasional sermon or walking forward from time to time. This is daily hunger to be more like Christ.

Some days are harder than others. Some days we are able to really seek after God, but other days it seems there is just a dry desert before us. Look at the result of hungering after God. You will be satisfied. The word used here means to be completely satisfied. It is not a satisfaction that does not alleviate the hunger and thirst, but leaves you wanting more. You are satisfied, but wanting more. Consider the following verses:

Psalm 107:9 – “For He satisfied the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

Psalm 34:10 – “they who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.”

Psalm 23:1 – “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

Jeremiah 31:14 – “My people shall be satisfied with goodness, saith the Lord.”

John 6:35 – “Jesus said, ‘I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger’.”

Describe the last time you were satisfied from God. How did you feel?

It comes back to cravings. What are you craving? There is the temptation to find satisfaction in things other than righteousness. There is also the temptation to satisfy the craving with what you choose. You take only the parts of Scripture that you can stomach. You leave other parts alone because you know it will demand a change that you are not prepared to make.

There is only one way to satisfy. Happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Eat, drink, and be happy.

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

