

Famished unto Fullness

Matthew 5:6 - NCBC, June 9, 2019

Main Point: **Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to those who crave righteousness.**

- **Craving righteousness is not:**
 - Optional, but Necessary
 - Natural, but Supernatural
 - Living by rules, but Desiring to Truly Live
 - Pursuing Happiness, but Pursuing Holiness
- **Craving righteousness is:**
 - Aching for all to be right – just as God intended
 - Outside me – Socially righteous
 - Inside me – Personally righteous
 - Longing to be free from sin in all its forms
 - Justification – Positionally righteous
 - Sanctification – Practically righteous
 - Glorification – Perfectly righteous
 - Yearning to better know & enjoy Christ
 - Continuous – Progressively righteous
- **Craving righteousness receives:**
 - God's gift of perfect righteousness
 - Entrance into God's kingdom rule
 - Rescue from eternal dissatisfaction
 - Immediate forgiveness & union with Christ
 - Eternal perfection in fellowship with God
 - Happy and complete satisfaction from God
 - Wholeness with God's will
 - Freedom to really enjoy earth's goods
- **Craving righteousness comes by:**
 - Feasting on the person & work of Jesus
 - Jesus is the Bread of Life
 - Jesus is the Living Water
 - Fasting from worldly "fillers"
 - Passing on all substitute satisfaction
 - Praying for all to be made right

Opening Announcements:

- Exit offering today for Pastor Humberto to strengthen the national church-planting efforts among the Huaorani tribe in Ecuador

<<Lord I Need You>>



Holiness is Christ in me! What a triumphant victory song of the redeemed! May we always be a people who sing about our own neediness and our God's sufficiency.

Please open God's Word to **Matthew chapter 5**, as we continue our verse-by-verse study of the Beatitudes today.



If you don't have a Bible, simply raise your hand as people are coming now with Bibles for you to use, and even take home as our gift to you.

Can you believe we're almost halfway through 2019? Are you seeing any spiritual progress in your soul so far this year?



Today's a good time to just recall our church's Strategic Focus on Stewardship for 2019. You will remember that the first 3 months of this year was filled with some excellent training on *How to Navigate Your Finances*

God's Way. Now we've had a few months to begin practicing what we learned. So how are you doing in your pursuit of stewardship? Are you making progress on God's path towards sacrificial generosity?

Remember what we learned several months ago: Christians don't sacrificially share their resources because God needs their money. Christians sacrificially give away their resources out of worship, understanding their own soul needs to be reminded that God alone is our sufficiency. We give sacrificially to thank God for being the One who alone is able to satisfy us, and secure us, and provide for all our needs.

So this summer we are going to be invited to give sacrificially to a number of our Global Outreach Partners. Today we have an opportunity to invest in what God is doing to plant new churches among the Huaorani tribes in the rain forest of Ecuador. On June 30th we will have an opportunity to invest in short-term trips that strengthen churches in Grenada. In July we will have a special opportunity to help spread God's Gospel among closed peoples in North Africa.

Some might question why our leadership would invite our church family to consider so many special offerings during the summer months which typically are the leanest for church donations? And yet this fits our strategic focus for this year. The only way to grow a culture of sacrificial generosity is to practice it – and to praise the Lord for how He supernaturally provides as we together worship Him.

Now if you would honestly confess to not making much progress since hearing the Stewardship teaching back in March, please know that you're not alone on this journey towards stewardship that glorifies God. There are people in this church who would love to privately and gently come alongside you to help you take practical steps towards biblical stewardship. Simply reach out to the church office, and ask to be put in touch with one of our financial advocates. Let's not lose momentum towards God's glory in our stewardship this summer. Let's keep walking together and celebrating God's sufficiency as we honor Him through our sacrificial generosity.



Now today we focus on the fourth beatitude, found in **Matthew 5, verse 6**. It's the first of five uses of the word "righteousness" in the Sermon on the Mount, and that's important since Jesus used this sermon to redefine what it means to really be righteous in an unrighteous world.

Please stand as I read from **Matthew 5 verse 3**, in the English Standard Translation:

³ *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴ *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

⁵ *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

⁶ *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

⁷ *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

⁸ *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

⁹ *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

¹⁰ *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

This is God's Word. Please be seated.

Let's Pray.

Whatever you believe will satisfy you will become the greatest pursuit of your life.

Some of us believe that money and status will satisfy, and so we are willing to mortgage our time, our rest, and our relationships in order to climb the slippery ladder of success. Some of us believe that pleasure is what will ultimately satisfy us. So we give ourselves to sex or to extravagant spending or to all kinds of adrenaline-rushing experiences in our attempts to find lasting satisfaction.

Some of us believe satisfaction is found in comfort, so we eat too much, we medicate ourselves with drugs, or alcohol, or mindless video games ... all in pursuit of satisfaction.

Some of us are profoundly frustrated, because we believe that we will never be satisfied until we get married, or get healthy, or get a new boss, or finally get the respect from others that we believe we deserve.

What do you believe will ultimately satisfy you?

Whatever you believe will ultimately satisfy your inner desires – is what you will pursue with the greatest passion of your life. Your life is ultimately controlled by whatever you believe will bring you the greatest satisfaction.

But Ecclesiastes warns us that all the pleasures of this world are unable to satisfy the deepest longings of the human soul. All is vanity!¹

And as CS Lewis said, “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”

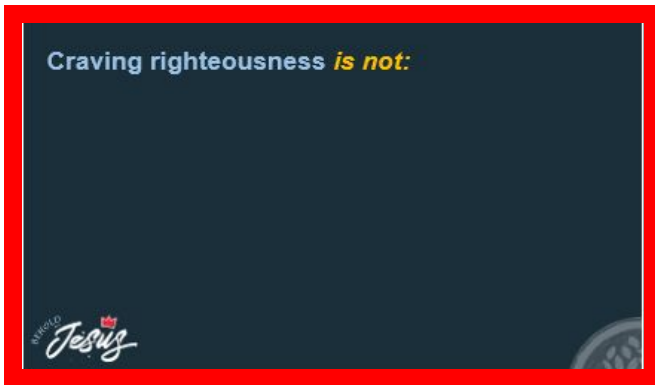
You see **verse 6** makes an astounding promise to our hearts today. Real lasting satisfaction is possible for your soul. But it's not going to be found anywhere here below. The satisfaction your soul seeks is only found under the Lordship of King Jesus, for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.



Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to those who crave righteousness. Those who are starving for righteousness. Those who are suffering the hunger pains of righteousness. In a profound paradox, only those whose souls ache and crave for righteousness will be the ones who are actually satisfied for all of eternity.

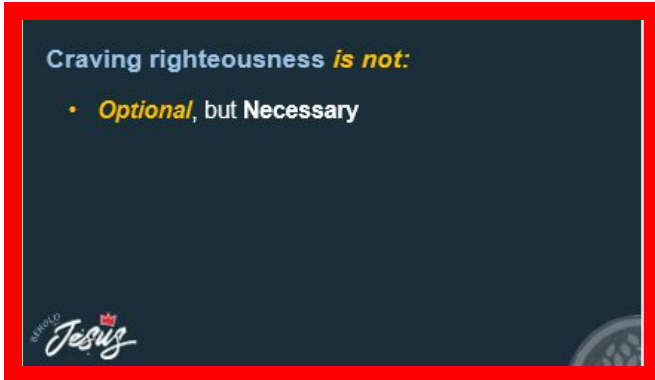
So please listen carefully today. I don't know of any other verse in the Scripture that is more important for you to understand than **Matthew 5:6**. For here Jesus describes the happy acceptance of those whose souls experience forever the blessed state of truly being satisfied. If you get this right, all the desires of your soul will be satisfied forever in the presence of God Himself. But if you get this wrong, the eternal hell of dissatisfaction and torment will be your future. Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to those who crave righteousness, so let's first get some misconceptions out of the way and observe what,

¹ Ecclesiastes 12:8
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Craving righteousness *is not*.

We must not misunderstand what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness. First, hungering for righteousness is not,

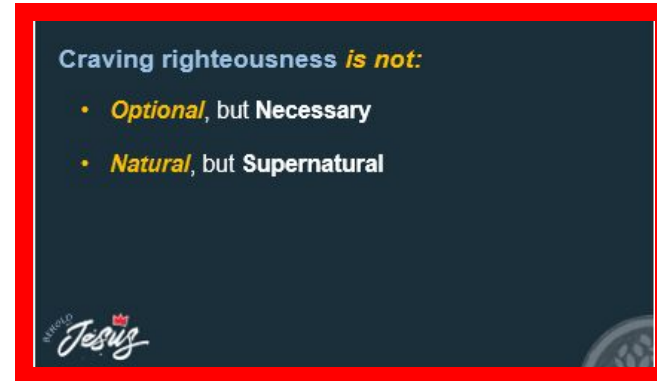


Optional, but absolutely **Necessary**.

Your spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness is just as necessary as your physical hunger and thirst for food and water. If you don't get food and water, you will die. So likewise, if you don't get righteousness, you will spiritually die. Hungering for righteousness is not a luxury

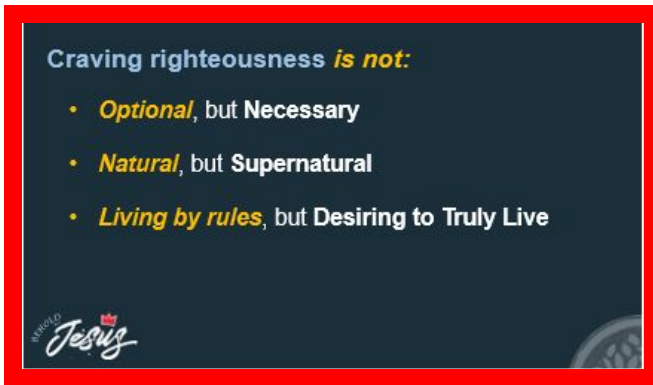
just for Green Beret Christians. This is a matter of spiritual life and death for all people.

Further, you're not longing for,



A **Natural** righteousness, but a **Supernatural** kind of righteousness.

Remember **verse 20**. Your righteousness must be better than the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. So Jesus isn't talking about some kind of natural righteousness here – some religious or moral human effort. The righteousness Jesus calls us to crave is not some conformity to a man-made system of,

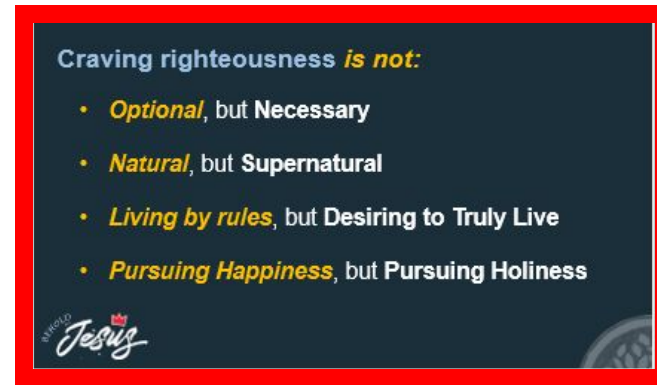


Living by rules. You see humans tend to define righteousness by what we are against, or what we won't do.

But Jesus is pronouncing a kingdom blessing upon those who crave a supernatural kind of righteousness – the kind of righteousness that is impossible for human effort – that perfectly satisfies God's law! This is not an optional nor natural, nor legalistic righteousness, but the kind of righteousness that truly grants life to the soul! This kind of righteousness is not defined by what we do, but who we truly are!

Finally, I want to highlight one more common misconception about **Matthew 5:6** before we unpack what it really means to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Craving righteousness is not about,



Pursuing Happiness, but Pursuing Holiness.

Notice the verse does NOT read,

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for satisfaction, for they shall be righteous. The verse doesn't read, *Blessed are those who crave to be blessed by God, for they shall become righteous.* Jesus is NOT saying that God blesses or approves those who make happiness their greatest pursuit. Those who come and demand God make them happy will never be welcomed into His kingdom. Jesus says clearly, *Blessed are those who crave righteousness, for they shall be satisfied and made happy.*

This is so important for us today! Which do you want more: to be holy or to be happy? Do you put your righteousness first, or do you put your happiness first? Are you seeking ecstatic spiritual experiences?

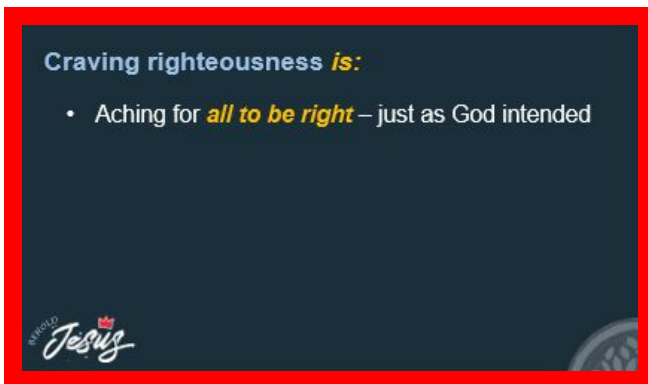
We must not twist this verse in how we seek to apply it in our lives. Jesus' teaching is clear – *Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will*

*be added to you.*² There is truly no greater way to be happy than to pursue holiness. But listen, if happiness is your primary pursuit, you will neither receive happiness nor holiness. For both will be forfeited as you pursue the lesser gifts of God more than a right relationship with God Himself.

So what then does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness?



Well first, we could say that **Craving righteousness is:**

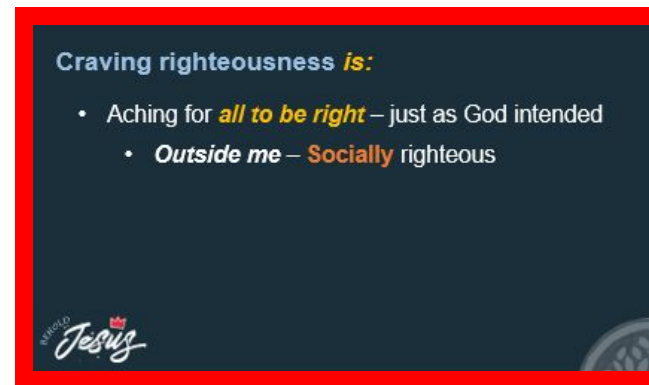


² Matthew 6:33
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Aching for all to be right – just as God intended.

When you think of biblical righteousness, think more broadly than just right actions or right behaviors. Biblical righteousness describes when everything is just as God would have it to be. To be righteous is to be right with God, right with others, and right with the world. To exist in perfect conformity to God's will.

In other words, to hunger and thirst for righteousness is to experience the inwardly increasing ache of your own soul for all to be made right – just as God intended.

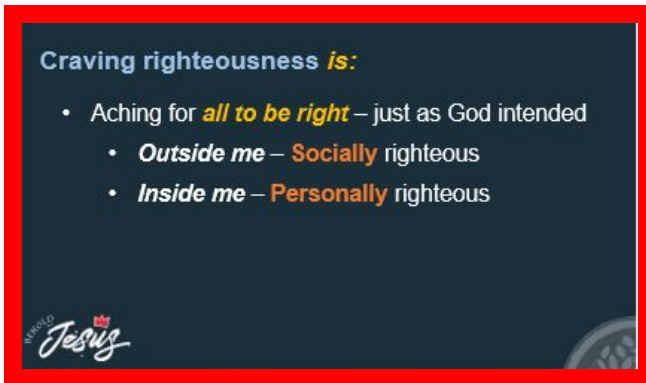


Now most first experience this aching for everything to be made right **Outside me**. Craving for **Social righteousness**. For God's kingdom to come. For the reign of Christ to be literally fulfilled in the world so that cancer and drunkenness and abuse and starvation and human trafficking are no more! Perhaps this is how the Jews first interpreted Jesus' teaching.³ They expected

³ At least until Jesus clarified in 5:20 and 6:1 where his focus becomes clearly on the personal righteousness inside my own soul.

God's Messiah to come and get rid of the Romans and make everything right on the earth!⁴

This is certainly a valid understanding of what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness...but it's more than just aching for all to be made right outside of me. It's also most importantly for all to be made right – just as God intended,



Inside me. To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to also crave to be made **Personally righteous** before God. For if the world out there is right with God, but the world in here is unacceptable to God, what good is that for me?

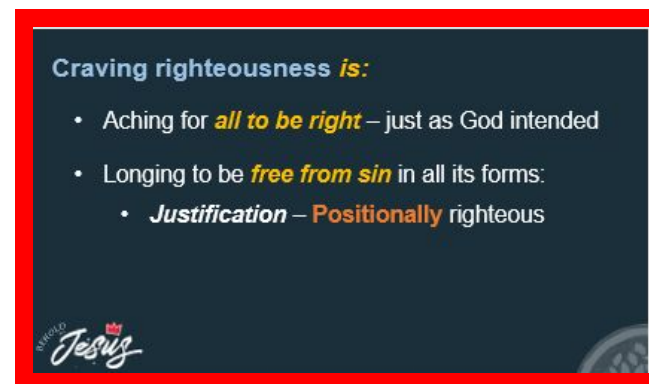
In other words, to hunger and thirst for righteousness means,



Longing to be free from sin in all its forms

Please be honest with yourself this morning. Is this the greatest longing of your heart? Is this where you believe true satisfaction will eventually be found? Do you honestly yearn to be free from sin in all of its forms?

You see freedom from sin first occurs through,

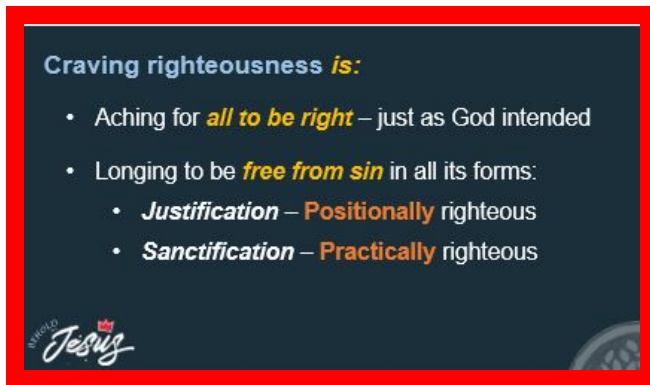


Justification, where the sinner is made **Positionally righteous** before God.

⁴ Isaiah 45:8; 61:10-11; 62:1-2; Jeremiah 23:6; 31:14; 33:14-16; Daniel 9:24
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This is so simple it is hard for sinners to believe. But God sent Jesus to save us from our sins by substituting Himself into our death penalty that our sins deserved. Jesus didn't sin, so Jesus didn't deserve death. But God made Jesus who knew no sin to become sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.⁵ Do you hunger and ache for God to declare you to be perfectly righteous – perfectly conformed to His will in all your thoughts, actions, words, and desires. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst to be positionally free from sin's penalty, for they shall be satisfied!!

But the other uses of the word "righteousness" in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount seem to indicate that Jesus is not speaking of our justification as much as our,



Sanctification or Practical righteousness.

And of course these two kinds of righteousness always go together. Now one who has been granted the righteous standing of Christ Himself will not also desire to progressively practice right living for His glory. You see,

⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:21
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in the positional righteousness of justification, we are set free from sin's penalty. But in the practical righteousness of progressive sanctification, we are set free from sin's power and pollution. We no longer have to sin! We are now slaves to righteousness!⁶ All until the day when we meet the Lord in,



The perfect righteousness of Glorification – when the very presence of sin will be removed from us and we will finally be entirely freed from all sin in all of its forms!⁷

This is the three-fold expression of righteousness that God's kingdom citizens sincerely crave more than anything else in life. For to hunger and thirst for righteousness simply means,

⁶ Romans 6; Galatians 5

⁷ 1 John 3:2



Yearning to better know & enjoy Christ.

To hunger for righteousness means to want to become more like Jesus – to live holy just as God created you to live – in perfect conformity to His good and perfect will.

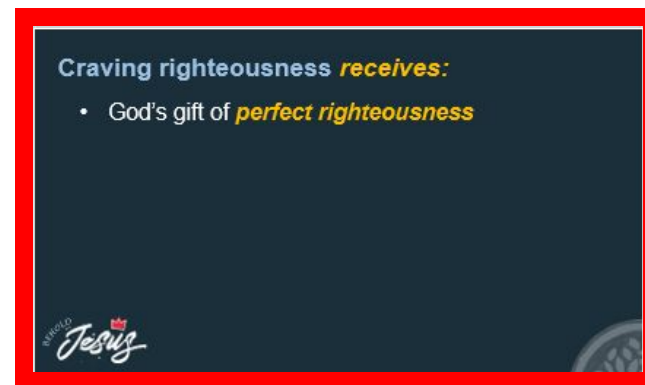
Listen, there's no greater joy or happiness or satisfaction that your soul was created for than to know and enjoy God Himself! And here's the wonder of it... the more you come to know the beauty and sufficiency of Christ, the more you desire to know Him.



Hungering and thirsting here are present active participles – which signifies **continual seeking**. The more you eat, the hungrier you get! The more practically righteous you become, the more you will desire to become like Christ!

So do you understand what it means to crave righteousness? It's not wanting to be better than others or achieve some religious goal. It means to have an increasingly profound awareness of your need for all things to be made right – just as God intended. Longing to be free from sin's penalty, power, and presence...yearning to better know and enjoy God Himself.

Now hold on to your hairpieces, because Jesus shockingly teaches here that,



Craving righteousness **receives** satisfaction. Some translations say, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.* In other words, what craving after God's righteousness receives is the desire of your heart: **God's gift of perfect righteousness!!**

Now this is more wonderful than I have words to express to you this morning. **Matthew 5:6** is concentrated good news!

If you ache for all things to be made right outside of you and inside of you – and you long to be free from sin – that means first of all that you are not satisfied with your own self-righteousness. You know that you are not right with God. You know that your efforts are not sufficient to gain His approval. You long to be free from sin, but all you know to do is sin. To you – dear soul who is starving to truly be made right with God, to you God grants perfect righteousness, meaning first:



Entrance into His kingdom rule! To you is given the imputed righteousness of Jesus Himself! Simply by faith in Christ, your soul receives perfect righteousness! Welcome into God's home. And,



Rescue from eternal dissatisfaction. After all, hell is the place where desperate thirsting will *never* be quenched. It is impossible to satisfy the human soul apart from God-given righteousness! And so when you hunger and thirst for God's righteousness, **Matthew 5:6** pronounces that you will receive satisfaction.



Immediately receiving forgiveness from your sins & union with Christ. And then ultimately at the end of your days,



Eternal perfection in fellowship with God

There is no greater satisfaction possible than to be perfectly righteous. To be just as you are supposed to be before God – in perfect wholeness with His will.

O church, wake up from your foolish pursuits of seeking satisfaction in this world. The dog who returns repeatedly to his vomit has a sense of fullness for a time.

⁸ But only those who hunger and thirst for perfect God-given righteousness shall receive,



Happy and complete satisfaction from God

You sabotage your hope for lasting happiness every time you seek to pursue happiness for yourself. Eternal satisfaction – blessedness, contentment, all being just as it should be – is only given to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. For when you receive God’s gift of perfect righteousness only then do you experience,



Wholeness with God’s will. And only from that posture of your contented union with Christ can you ever experience the,



⁸ 2 Peter 2:22

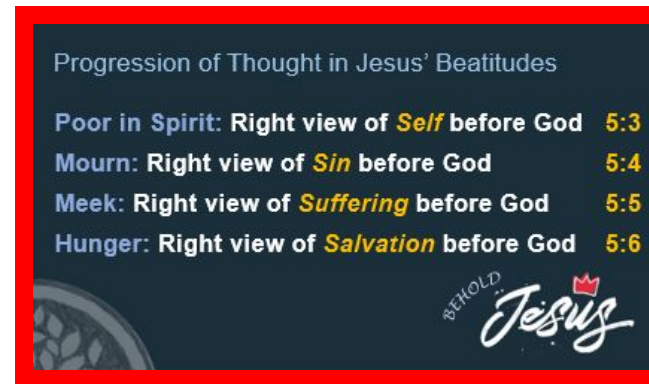
Freedom to really enjoy earth's goods, without them becoming your master and you becoming their slaves. Don't you see church? God *richly provides us with everything to enjoy* on this earth,⁹ but never in order to satisfy us. Only souls who have first been satisfied in Christ have the freedom to enjoy earthly pleasures like work, and marriage, and money, and food the way God intends. Only those who hunger and thirst to know God more and more are the ones who will truly be happy and completely satisfied both now and for all of eternity.

What an attention getter by King Jesus!! The happiest people on earth are those who possess an increasingly growing ache and yearning to be free from sin and all of its effects – and to truly know more of God! This is the mark of the true Christian. Any Pharisee who thinks himself righteous enough for God will be forever thirsty in hell – forever choking on the bitter dust of his own religious efforts. But for those who are poor in spirit, who mourn their own sinfulness, and who understand that their only hope is to submit to whatever God provides... O how blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall really be satisfied!!

Are you hungry for all things to be made right between you and God today? Do you see your greatest need as the righteousness that only God can give?

Don't miss the progression of Jesus' teaching here in the Beatitudes:

⁹ 1 Timothy 6:17
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In **verse 3** He taught us that those who are born again have a right view of *self* before God. In **verse 4** we must have a right view of *sin*, and last week in **verse 5** those who are filled with God's Spirit have a right view of *suffering* before God.

So then today **verse 6** has been clear. We must have a right view of *salvation* before God. We must understand the only solution to our neediness in **verses 3-5** is that God Himself would mercifully and graciously credit the very righteousness of Christ to our account.

So what if your spiritual appetite is lacking? Certainly only God can grant you the spiritual desire to know Christ,¹⁰ but let me offer two practical exhortations for you to fuel your spiritual hunger. First,

¹⁰ Romans 3:11; 8:8



Craving righteousness comes by: Feasting on the person & work of Jesus. Turn your eyes upon Jesus this morning! Look full into His wonderful face!!



Jesus is the Bread of Life¹¹ and Jesus is the Living Water.¹² No amount of fortune or fame in this world can ever satisfy a soul that was made to drink deeply from the supremacy of Jesus Christ! No small thrill from this world can fill your spiritual stomach that was made to eternally take in the glories of the person and work of Jesus Christ!!

¹¹ John 6:35

¹² John 4:13-14

You will only overcome the desire for wallowing in the muck of this world by feasting at the banquet table of God's grace!! I love **2 Corinthians 3:18**,

For we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

So yes, you will grow your hunger by gazing on Christ. For the more you come to know of our Savior and Lord, the more attractive He will become to you!!

And secondly, hungering for righteousness comes by,



Fasting from worldly "fillers"

You will never be starved for Christ while your stomach is full of this world's husks. So you grow your spiritual appetite for righteousness by,



Passing on all substitute satisfactions.

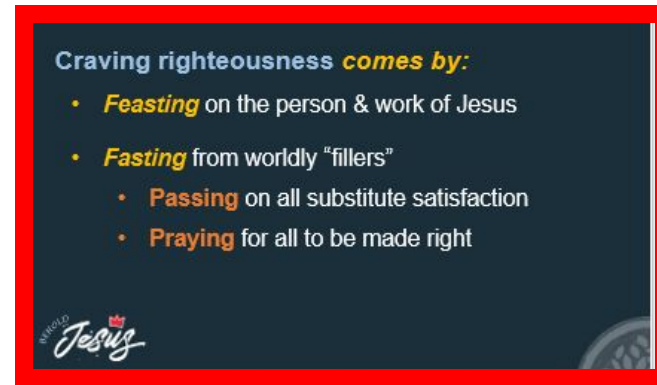
You must not settle for some form of man-made righteousness that is less than what God requires. You must stop spoiling your spiritual appetite by getting drunk on this world's goods.¹³

Some of us here today need to put our physical appetites for food, and sex, and money on a spiritual fast. You will never come to crave God's righteousness if you have never told yourself no. A soul who doesn't know the painful heartache of longing for sin to be defeated knows nothing of God's kingdom, and is not saved.

Is God calling you to fast this week? Go back and listen to the January 2018 sermon on "Prayer and Fasting" from this pulpit.¹⁴ Feast, Fast, and then

¹³ Revelation 3:17

¹⁴ "Prayer and Fasting – Hungering for God" preached on January 14, 2018.



Pray for all to be made right.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. This is the cry for righteousness! This is the cry of the redeemed! These are the prayers of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... who end up receiving an eternal satisfaction that only God can give.



Church, **Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to those who crave righteousness.**

Whatever you believe will satisfy you will be the controlling pursuit of your life. Will you repent for

pursuing satisfaction from broken cisterns that can't hold water?¹⁵ Will you repent from being too easily contented with your own version of religious righteousness?

Only those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will ever be satisfied...and O how happy is that satisfaction that comes from receiving the very righteousness of God!!

Let's pray.

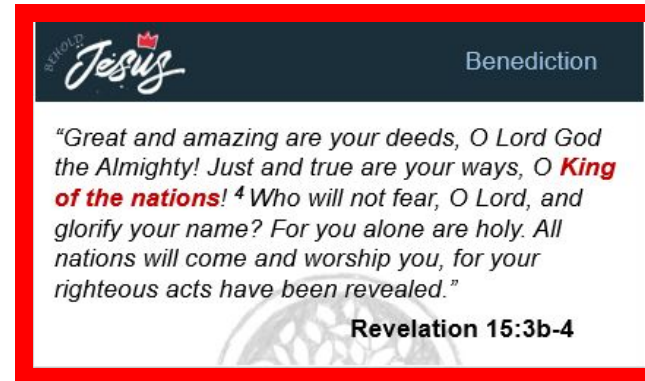


<<All to Us>>

Exit offering today for Pastor Humberto and His wife Nancy as they preach the Gospel to the Huaorani tribe in Ecuador. New Castle Bible Church is the only church to support him for the last 4-5 years. They have a special evangelism event planned for June 22 where they expect 300 Indians to be in attendance. Please pray for God to use His Word to bring great ingathering of souls among these people in Ecuador!

¹⁵ Jeremiah 2:13
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Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4



Recommended Resources on Famished unto Fullness:

- Psalm 17:15; 34:10; 42:1-2; 63:1; 107:9
- Isaiah 45:8; 55:1-2; 61:10-11; 62:1-2
- Jeremiah 2:11-13; 23:6; 31:14; 33:14-16
- Daniel 9:24
- Matthew 6:33
- John 2:17; 4:10, 13-14; 6:35, 48-71; 7:37
- Romans 1:17
- 1 Corinthians 1:30
- Philippians 3:9-10
- Revelation 7:16-17; 21:6; 22:17

- <https://unlockingthebible.org/sermon/blessed-are-those-who-hunger-for-righteousness/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/pursue-righteousness.html>
- <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2017/06/blessed-are-those-who-hunger-and-thirst-for-righteousness/>

- *Desiring God*, John Piper
- *A Quest for More*, Paul Tripp
- *The Hole in Our Holiness*, Kevin DeYoung

Discussion Questions:

1. Define the satisfaction of Matthew 5:6 in terms of Jesus' explanation in John 4:10, 13-14. What does it mean to really be satisfied in Jesus' sermon?
2. Review all 5 uses of the word "righteousness" in Jesus' sermon: 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, and 33. How do you understand this word's meaning in the context of this sermon? Is this righteousness social (i.e. the ultimate

fulfillment of God's kingdom purposes on earth), moral (i.e. the Christ-like ethic and character of Spirit-controlled hearts), or eternal (i.e. the positional justification of the believer before God through the imputed righteousness of Christ)? Or is it all three?

3. Read Jeremiah 2:13 and Romans 10:3. Are you seeking satisfaction from anything or anyone more than Christ Himself? Have you become too easily satisfied with your own kind of righteousness that will never please God? Confess your idols and pray for your desperate longing for God's salvation to be realized in your life.
4. Read 1 Corinthians 1:30-31. How can you be made perfectly and entirely righteous before God? C.f. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 55:1; 61:3, 10; Jeremiah 33:14-16
5. Is Christ alone enough to really satisfy you? Is there anything more satisfying to your soul than the righteousness of God? Explain your answer, and pray for one another to repent of any desires that practically compete with Christ for the allegiance of your soul.
6. Read 1 Timothy 6:11 and 2 Timothy 2:22. Consider the context for both verses to answer, How can you practically pursue righteousness this week?