

The Beatitudes 3 – Blessed Are They that Hunger for Righteousness

Where are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness today?

Matthew 5

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I. Introduction (Matthew 5:1-7)

- A. About 2,000 years ago, a Man named Jesus went around all the villages and towns of the region called Galilee (MAP), walking, and speaking to anyone who would listen...
- B. Preaching that “the kingdom” was coming back – that it was almost here, and just at the door if everyone would just get ready for it
 - 1. Luke 8:1 *And it came to pass afterward, that he [JESUS] went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.*
 - 2. Mar 1:14,15 *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*
- C. It excited absolutely everyone as He spoke about it
- D. And crowds gathered by the thousands around Him to hear Him teach about **the kingdom**
- E. Why?
- F. Because everything in the Old Testament had pointed to a coming perfect KINGDOM like David's, that would continue forever, and a Prophet like unto Moses that would come and would be able to give brand new laws, and new hearts to people
- G. And so here was this Jesus, from Nazareth of all places, talking about a kingdom based not on armies and borders, but on transformed hearts and lives
- H. And all those new laws, and new hearts are perfectly described in a series of lessons that we call The beatitudes

II. Background

A. What are the Beatitudes? (Found in Matthew chapter 5)

- 1. **Eight beginning truths about the kingdom of God – these are the first lessons in KINGDOM living for the Christian!**
 - a. **They are Gospel truths that are out of this world** – not from any culture! Not from any science book, or religion. They are NOT naturally learned. They are out of this world!
 - b. Jesus devotes THREE chapters in Matthew exploring and describing what it is like in His kingdom
- 2. **The necessary attitudes of a follower of Jesus going into that kingdom**
- 3. **Instructions on how we are to live HERE AND NOW while being a citizen of a greater kingdom**
- 4. Beatitude means **blessing, benefit, happiness, beauty**

5. **The opposite of Christ's beatitudes... is MISERY.** So I HOPE you realise how important it is to learn these, because the only alternative is how you already are - MISERABLE

6. **These be-attitudes and instructions are NOT for everyone**

- a. When people talk about Jesus, these are the teachings they talk about that they seem to like and respect, and yet never actually lived by!
- b. But they are NOT written to the busy company manager, or the successful football coach, or the ambitious politician
- c. Only written to those that gather at the feet of Jesus – those who seek to follow Him with all their heart!
- d. They are NOT a way to become holy, or religious, or godly like most churches teach
- e. They are written to people who have been born again and are already washed and clean on the inside

7. **The be-attitudes are NOT easy to live by**

- a. As proven by how few people actually love preaching, and love church
- b. It is not easy to change how you view affliction, troubles, success and prosperity
- c. In the kingdom of God, everything is backwards!
- d. No one will live by these things who doesn't desperately want to
- e. And those that want to live by these things will find that they are the hardest things to attempt imaginable!
- f. Because the devil will NOT allow you to just live this way. He will use your WIFE or your CHILDREN, or your husband or your culture, or your past to hinder you and frustrate you and stop you from being "blessed"! Press on anyways!

B. Eight Beatitudes show the Christian all the blessings of having kingdom attitudes, instead of worldly ones – they are exactly the opposite of what you would expect – that's why I refer to them as the Great Opposites of the Christian Life

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit - Be glad to be empty
2. Blessed are they that mourn - It's okay to be sad sometimes
3. Blessed are the meek - Taking Last Place, Wins First
4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst – Keep yourself Hungry for Good Things
5. Blessed are the merciful - Show Mercy and Compassion and Kindness a LOT
6. Blessed are the pure in HEART - Prize Purity of your own Heart
7. Blessed are the peacemakers - Seek to Make Peace
8. Blessed are you when persecuted - Rejoice in ALL Persecutions

C. So far we have learned about the first three

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit - Be glad to be empty*
2. *Blessed are they that mourn - It's okay to be sad sometimes*
3. *Blessed are the meek - Taking Last Place, Wins First*
4. Sounds like a strange kingdom doesn't it?

D. This morning we will take a look at the next one

1. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst...*

2. Did you know that you can live every day of your Christian life now rightly, godly, instead of filled with every sin and dark thought and desire?
3. Do you want to know how?

E. Let's review... The Meaning of "Blessed"

1. The state of being blessed by God
2. 'Blessed' describes someone who is actually **happy, fortunate, well-off, well-to-do, helped, encouraged, "rich", thriving, successful** even though they are
 - a. Empty failures in life
 - b. Grief-stricken people
 - c. Last-place people
 - d. Hungry and thirsty people
 - e. Kind people when they SHOULD be mean
 - f. Clean people, even though the entire world around them is chin deep in muck and filth
 - g. Peacemakers, in a culture of war and hatred
 - h. And hated people
3. Jesus offers the people in HIS kingdom a better way to look at life!

III. Message 4-"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness"

A. Quote from JC Ryle (PICTURE) – brilliant quote!

1. The true Christian – not the faker, fraud, Christian in name Only – the true Christian hates sin, flees from it, fights against it, considers it his greatest plague, resents the burden of its presence, mourns when he falls under its influence, and longs to be completely delivered from it.
2. THAT is the attitude of the Christian towards sin, and it drives their hunger for righteousness!

B. Meaning of this Beatitude!

1. Hungry and thirsty are words that describe a natural drive in every one of us to satisfy a desperate need
2. The world will say we obviously should be hungry for food, and for love and for companionship, and for money and success, and purpose
3. But Jesus wants us Christians hungry, thirsty for something much more important than all that...
 - a. He blesses those that hunger for RIGHTEOUSNESS in their HEART
 - 1) Hungry like we used to be when we discovered we were in trouble with God, and lost, and on our way to hell!
 - 2) Hungry for righteousness like we have been hungry for love, and for purpose
 - b. Not just be RIGHT (like in an argument), but righteous in the sight of God
 - 1) Our deepest needs is NOT for success, though most people now hunger for this in their lives
 - 2) Or for love, or for pleasure, or even sleep
 - 3) But for being made RIGHT with God
 - 4) Righteousness is being holy in our hearts before God, being right with GOD, pleasing to God, and going in the same direction as God

4. Jesus said, “BLESSED are those Christians who LOVE righteousness, and hunger and thirst for it instead of for sin – because THEY will be filled with every good thing imaginable!”

C. So, what’s the big deal? What’s wrong with sin?

1. We love sin - We hunger for it - Sin thrills our old nature
 - a. Anger is an adrenaline rush
 - b. Pornography is like the most powerful drug ever invented
 - c. Laziness is so much fun to so many people
 - d. Shopping out of envy and covetousness is always more fun than hard work
2. There is NOTHING good about our sin – sin is living against design, against God. We call it “doing our own thing” but it is still sin when it is against God’s laws!
3. It destroys our lives
 - a. 2Thes 2:12 *That they all might be **damned** who believed not the truth, but had **pleasure in unrighteousness.***
 - b. Rom 6:23 ***For the wages of sin is death***
4. That’s why God hates our sin – it is only destroying us from the inside out!
5. And that is why WE need to turn from it, and repent of loving it, and instead hunger and thirst for righteousness
6. I am talking to Christians now!
7. The problem is trying to convince people who FEEL full, who think they are fine, to get them to become HUNGRY for righteousness! (PICTURE)

D. What’s Wrong with OUR own Righteousness?

1. Aren’t we all just basically good, with a few flaws from time to time? No!
2. Our own righteousness is the worst! (Isaiah 64:6)
 - a. Isa 64:6 *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...*
 - 1) That’s GOD’S evaluation – not mine, or your own
 - 2) FULL of the filth of selfish desires only
 - 3) Full of pride
 - 4) Full of the stains of failure upon failure to live right!
 - b. The apostle Paul described his own righteousness... (Philippians 3:6-9)
 - 1) On the outside, Paul looked pretty good
 - a) Php 3:6 *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*
 - 2) But just like the Pharisees, INSIDE he was full of filth and death and sin
 - a) Philp 3:7-9 *But what things were gain to me, those **I counted loss** for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,***

*but that which is through the faith of Christ, **the righteousness which is of God by faith:***

- b) Act 22:3,4 *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.*
- c) 1Ti 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*
- d) 1Ti 1:13 *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

3. There is none righteous!

Romans 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.*

- a. Explain that to me!
 - b. Is there ANYONE, anywhere that is righteous on their own? No
 - c. Why?
 - d. Rom 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*
 - e. Sin ruins every attempt of ours to be good! Always makes an appearance!
4. Even though our hearts yearn deeply to be clean, and whole, and right and good, we can never find a way! (Job 25:4) *“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?”*
5. We all KNOW, that without perfect righteousness, we will die in our sins (John 8:24) *I said therefore unto you, that ye [PHARISEES] shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he [THE MESSIAH], ye shall die in your sins.*

E. GOD offers us a complete replacement of our sin with HIS righteousness – **Imputation** (swapping of accounts) – salvation!

- 1. **2Cor 5:17** *Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a [COMPLETELY] new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
- 2. **Rom 14:17** *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*
- 3. **Rom 10:4** *For **Christ** is the end of the law **for righteousness** to every one that believeth.*
- 4. **Isaiah 55:1,2** *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*

F. And God promises complete satisfaction – “they shall be filled”

- 1. It means, God will abundantly give you good things
- 2. To the point where you will be FULL, satisfied, spilling over!
- 3. The fullness of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18)
- 4. The fulness of joy (Acts 13:52)
- 5. The fulness of GOD Himself (Eph 3:18)
- 6. Wisdom (James 1:5) – God gives liberally, abundantly
- 7. The will of God – purpose for your life (Col 1:9)
- 8. Everything you will ever need (Luke 6:38)

9. I WISH you wanted all that!

G. Where do we get righteousness? How to Get God's Righteousness

1. It does NOT come from keeping the law – the LAW only exposes our lack of righteousness
 - a. Act 13:39 *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*
 - b. Rom 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*
 - c. Gal 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*
2. And NOT by being a part of some church! We used to believe as long as we were right with the Church, and the Bishop, we were right with God – Nope!
3. You start by HATING sin in you – STOP THINKING YOU ARE NOT THAT BAD! Your really ARE WORSE THAN YOU WANT TO ADMIT!
 - a. **HATE WHAT GOD HATES in you!**
 - b. Psa 97:10 *Ye that love the LORD, hate evil* – it's pretty simple!
 - 1) Hate the filth you allow yourself to watch
 - 2) Hate the entertainment you think is funny
 - 3) Hate the things you do in your head and heart
 - c. Rom 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*
 - d. Prov 8:13 *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*
 - e. Repent of wickedness in your own heart that you have always believed to be good and wholesome and now know to be filthy and damning! **THIS WILL BE THE HARDEST THING YOU EVER DO!**
 - f. REJECT the righteousness we think we have – MORE repentance
 - 1) What? That is SO opposite of what we would expect!
 - 2) Surely we should work on BEING more righteous, and more good
 - 3) But Jesus says hunger and thirst FOR righteousness – like it is something beyond them (OUT OF REACH)
 - g. Reject the righteousness you think OTHER people seem to have! Mat 5:20 *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
4. DESIRE only God's righteousness to be in you
 - a. That's why Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, to not seek our own righteousness, but to seek GOD'S righteousness!
 - b. Christ Jesus IS our righteousness! 1Co 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*

- 1) You don't and won't get it from Mary, or a Pope, or a religious duty, or some meditation exercise
 - 2) But by believing God for it – believing His offer of it in His Son (not in His church, or in a feeling, or in a religious activity), but Jesus!
 - 3) 2Co 5:19,21 *To wit, that **God was in Christ**, reconciling the world unto himself, not **imputing** their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. For he [GOD] hath made him [JESUS] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*
 - 4) So, Seek GOD'S righteousness in the Life of Jesus Christ – He is the righteousness of God for everyone that would just believe it to be TRUE!
(REPEAT)
- c. And all the right ways to live and act and think are found in the Bible – from page 1
- 1) Everything good and holy and right is found in HERE
 - 2) But our culture has robbed generation after generation of learning what is good and right and holy by mocking the reading of the Bible and making people so busy and so full of sin and stress they have no interest anymore
 - 3) Dear Christian! Do NOT neglect reading and learning and memorizing your Bible
5. Don't JUST seek it – LIVE it!
- a. Righteousness is a **gift** from God, on Christ's account – He paid for it and offers it freely to anyone who believes!
 - b. Living right is a choice you make from that moment on!
 - c. So, start living deeply in the good things that God has given you, and become very simply concerning evil (Jeremiah 4:22)
 - 1) *For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish [STUPID] children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*
 - 2) Don't be stupid!
 - 3) Look what our western culture has done to our MINDS and HEARTS and FAMILIES – all the images and videos, and jokes, and fashion!!!
 - d. Concerning sex – do your discovery IN marriage, not before
 - e. Concerning fun
 - 1) find something to do that is NOT dark, and devilish, and illegal
 - 2) When was the last time you just played a game as a family, or watched a wholesome video that promoted one man, and one woman, married for life with a job and kids and honoured Jesus Christ?
 - f. What do you spend all your time THINKING about? Think on good things, and God will fill your thoughts with GOOD things (Philp 4:8) INSTEAD OF DEPRESSIVE AND OPPRESSIVE THINGS!
 - g. Concerning your purpose in life
 - 1) Seek to be faithful, honest, hard working, gracious, giving, meek, and kind

- 2) Seek to honour God and to do HIS will, and he will show you the paths of LIFE (Psalm 16:11) *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*
- h. So, don't just hunger and thirst for it to be a once off event, when you received the righteousness of Christ at salvation...
- i. But seek to LIVE that new life every minute
6. Make it a priority!
- a. Hungry people can do little else when they are starving – they work to eat
- b. Really hungry people will eat anything! (Pro 27:7) *The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.* But if you are NOT hungry, the sweetest dessert will not move you to eat!
- c. Seek righteousness DAILY – just as with any hunger or thirst! Ps 42:1,2 *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*
- d. Listen to John the Baptist... John 3:30 *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Old Me	New Man (Christ in me)
<i>Woe unto you that are full [OF YOURSELVES and YOUR SINS]! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. (Luke 6:25)</i>	<i>Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. (Luke 6:21)</i>
Loves sin Full of the devil I don't have to do anything and I sin Will be miserable	Loves righteousness/purity Christ in me now I need to STAY hungry - Hunger and thirst to be righteous Will be blessed!
Let it Starve Hate my love for sin (Rom 7)	Hunger for God's righteousness – you will be filled and satisfied! I need to Delight in righteousness

- e. Never stop yearning to be more clean, more holy in heart and thinking and feelings and desires and needs, and plans and you will be filled with godliness – He will help you live more godly! And will take away the sins that FILL your life dear Christian!

IV. Invitation

A. How hungry are you for God's righteousness?

1. It is not IN us – not going to find it in anyone here!
2. I grieve over how little we hunger for real righteousness
 - a. I wish you were starving for something MORE than the pleasures of sin in this life
 - b. I know how deceptive this world is to Christians
 - c. We westerners are dull of hearing, full of sin, and hard of heart
 - d. Our eyes, and ears and hearts are so full of filth – clogged up

- e. We fill our homes and our phones and our hours upon hours with worldliness and pleasures, and sin, and arrogant selfishness
 - f. And we don't really WANT God's righteousness – only to be able to brag about OUR righteousnesses
 - g. We do not WANT to repent – it is scary, and hard to let go of the devil we know
3. Jesus is constantly trying to MAKE you hungry – but, YOU need to GET hungry for this, or the kingdom of God will mean nothing to you!!!
4. THIS blessedness that Jesus awards, will show in your attitude towards sin in you, and in the world and culture around you
- a. It will show in your time spent getting right – almost never happens today
 - b. It will cost you dearly in your own honour and pride
 - c. It will succeed! You will be filled with it
 - d. It will show by your hunger for learning the Bible, reading it, meditating on it
 - e. It will show by fruit in your life that is lived so that ONLY Jesus gets all the attention by your life! Period!
- B. Maybe none of that is even remotely interesting to you
- C. It is because you have not been born again yet – still trusting in your own righteousness