

# Blessed Are Those Who Hunger

by Tim Conway

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**Scripture:** Matthew 5:6, Isaiah 55:1, Romans 6:13, 1 John 1:9, John 4:14

**Topics:** "Hunger for Righteousness", "Pursuit of God's Will"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Matthew chapter 5, we now find ourselves facing the fourth beatitude. Matthew chapter 5 verse 6, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Let's pray once again.

Father, it does seem almost a strange thing that one man should stand up and say things out of his mouth and the rest of the people gather round and listen. Somewhere we even read something about the foolishness of preaching. It's just an odd thing that you should so design your kingdom that your people would sit and listen on a regular basis to a certain book being preached from and by that means your people would be helped, strengthened, encouraged, grow, sanctified, press on.

One of the mechanisms, one of the manners in which the people of God are fed and helped to endure to the end. It is a strange thing. We recognize that much like the word of God itself, unless you empower, make it living, cause the noises that come out of my mouth to make sense in people's minds and to be used of the spirit of God to increase faith, to increase conviction, to increase a knowledge of God, to increase that in our thinking that is necessary to have those things happen within our thinking processes

that would result in us being better for it and going forth from this place changed.

That's something that we're absolutely dependent upon you to make happen and I pray that it indeed would in these next few minutes. I pray in Christ's name, Amen. So, this fourth beatitude, you see it there, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.

Now, I'm going to speak for myself here, I can't speak for you on this, but I know what I feel. I find it extremely helpful and enlightening and comforting that God gives us so much clarity in His word as to what genuine Christianity looks like. I mean, I hope you all can recognize what our Lord is doing in these beatitudes.

He's describing Christians and that is so valuable to us. Why? Because when God saves, God saves a certain way. God does certain things in people that He saves.

And He does it, look, we may have differences. God may make some of us shorter and some of us taller and some of us more outgoing and some less outgoing. But I'll tell you this, there are certain aspects of what it means to be a Christian that are absolutely the same in every single one of us.

There may be varying degrees, that may be true. But you know what, there are certain things that are absolutely essentially true for every Christian. This is key.

Why is it key? Because what does the devil do? How does the devil get victory over us? Ultimately, the devil gets victory over us by deceiving us in such ways that we rebel against God and in the end, God damns us. And that's how he gets the victory over us, by having God ultimately reject us and cast us away. That's exactly what he did to Adam and Eve, right in the very beginning.

What does he do? He's a deceiver. And you know what is so valuable is when we have truth. Listen, you can be wrong about what the weather is going to be tomorrow.

No big deal. Okay, so you get your head wet. You British have no problems with that.

In Texas, we've run from the rain. But listen, if you're wrong about whether or not you're a Christian, that's not a minor thing. And when you've got, listen, false prophets, false apostles, false Christ, false teachers, false brethren, we could go on.

What happens? False doctrine, false teaching, which is meant to do what? Deceive. And there's these servants of the devil who come masquerading as angels of light, which we shouldn't be surprised because the devil himself does it. Listen, if you've got an enemy that's, by the way, a fallen angel, and a third of the angels, and they're going around trying to deceive people so that they end up in hell.

You know, that's exactly what he's doing. He wants to deceive us so that in the end we miss heaven. And when we've got an enemy like that, you should be grateful.

Listen, we should not be afraid of the truth of Scripture. Now, people get afraid, and here's the problem. If we go to Scripture and we find out what it says about genuine Christianity, and we see that we don't line up, well, the devil's right there to tell us, you know, well, it's not that big a deal, or you really are like that.

He wants to press us into some kind of deception. Just don't worry. Yes, it's true you're not like that, but you'll take care of it tomorrow.

That's another deception. Just get right tomorrow. Or, this is classic.

He'll do something like this. Oh, don't you know Christianity is entirely defined in Romans 7? Oh, wretched man that I am. Don't worry about what the Bible says anywhere else.

It's okay for you to think that you're going to heaven and just living on in sin. There's no problem with that. Listen, we have a deceiver that wants to damn us.

And you know one of the problems? By nature, we love the lie. Isn't that what 2 Thessalonians says? They loved a lie. They didn't want to believe the gospel and so be saved.

You see, this is the problem. We have an enemy that actually caters to what we like by nature. And I am so thankful that the Lord has given us this kind of truth.

And there could be no more urgent question at this present time than just this. What is a Christian? That is one of the most essential questions on the face of this planet. Why? Because Christianity is our only hope.

We have no other hope. We have none other. The message of the gospel is the only hope.

It's not like there's several. It's not like there's choices. Listen, when you dissect the Christian.

This is what Jesus is doing. He's dissecting the Christian. He says, when you take out the scalpel.

You ever dissected something? When I was in the 9th grade science, we dissected pigs. We have a doctor amongst us. You dissected things? You start cutting them apart.

What are you looking for? You're looking for the pieces and the parts and the organs. And what makes up this thing? Jesus is actually bringing out the scalpel with Christianity here. And he begins slicing.

He says, you know what you're going to find? Here are the organs that make up this animal that's called a Christian. What are they? Well, they're poor in spirit. And they groan and they shed tears over their own sinfulness.

And there's a meekness that's wrought in them. And they hunger and thirst for righteousness. You see, the Christian is not just merely drifting aimlessly upon some empty sea of religion.

That's not where we're at. This isn't about plain religion. This is not about just making it to church on a Sunday.

That's not where Jesus goes deep. He shows us true Christianity reaches into the deepest recesses of who we are. Right down to what the appetites are.

Right down to what we hunger for. What we thirst after. Touches the appetites.

It transforms desires. I'll tell you, one of the things you see here is if there's anything that's true about when God saves somebody, He gives us a desire for things that we formerly did not desire. The deepest yearnings of the heart.

You just have to look at that level. Listen, it's not, you know, you hear this thing. Oh, he got religion.

People said that about me when I got sick. You know, that's a common thing. He got religion.

Brethren, this is not just about getting religion. This is about a complete transformation. The deepest yearnings of the heart.

One of the things we need to recognize right away is Christianity is more than getting your sins forgiven. Now, it is that. Thank the Lord it is that.

But listen, there are verses, I mean our Bibles abound with verses like this. This is just an example. Listen to this.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. You know this verse. Old things have passed away.

Behold, all things have become new. What Jesus is pointing out is that this is one of the things that's altogether new in a person that knows the Lord. We hunger and thirst for things that formerly we didn't hunger and thirst after.

Because listen, the thing is, Job says this. It's said in Job. I don't remember if Job himself said it or if one of his three friends said it.

But men drink sin like water. But you know what happens? We drink righteousness like water. You see, it's a thirst issue when somebody becomes a Christian.

In fact, listen, spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst is such a hallmark characteristic of genuine Christianity. That again and again and again, Scripture actually addresses its promises to the hungry. Now, hear what I'm saying.

This is key. Do you realize how often the Bible addresses its promises to the hungry? Not to Christians. In fact, no place in Scripture can you find that says, well, if you're a Christian, you get these promises.

You get these blessings. Now, I know there's lots of places where it does talk about what people are like who get the blessings of God. That's what we're faced with in the Beatitudes.

But so often in Scripture, it's not to the Christian. It's to the hungry. Do you realize how much this comes at us? I'm not going to be exhaustive here, but I want you to hear this.

I don't want you to look at all these, but just listen to this. It's the deer pants for the water brooks. I know you're familiar with this.

This is Psalm 42. So pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God? And then the psalmist says, the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime. Who gets loving kindness? You have it connected with a man who's panting after the Lord. Or this.

Very similar psalm. O God, my soul thirsts for you. My flesh longs for you.

And then he says this. My soul shall be satisfied as with morrow and fatness. Again, what I'm showing you is that the promise of loving kindness is to the one panting.

The promise of satisfaction of morrow and fatness belongs to the one thirsting and longing for the Lord. Or this. Psalm 84.

My soul longs, yes even faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house.

It says shortly after that. So you see the blessing connected. Or this.

Psalms 107. He satisfied the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness. You see the promise.

Again, it's much like this beatitude. There's a satisfaction, there's a filling that is promised. He fills the hungry soul with goodness.

Or Mary, when she's speaking her Magnificat. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty. That's Luke 1. Psalm 17.

I shall be satisfied. You see, when you start talking about satisfaction, that means there's a dissatisfaction. You know what hunger is? It's a dissatisfaction.

When somebody needs to be filled with food or with water, there's a dissatisfaction. Something is making them uncomfortable. Something inside is yearning to have that hunger satisfied.

He says, I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness. And I can tell you this. This is a hunger right here for righteousness.

Because he's going to be satisfied when he awakes in God's likeness. In Christ's likeness. Psalm 145.

He will fulfill the desire. Again, that's what hunger is. Hunger and thirst.

Hunger and thirst are ways to express strong desire. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear him. He also will hear their cry and save them.

Or you have Psalm 36. They're abundantly satisfied with the fullness of your house. You give them drink from the river of your pleasures.

Proverbs 10. The desire of the righteous will be granted. Now see, the desire of the righteous.

What's the desire? Something you hung after. A hunger after. It's going to be satisfied.

Again and again and again and again in Scripture. What you find is the hungry are the ones who are filled. The hungry are the ones who are satisfied.

The hungry are the ones who are given. This is such a characteristic that Scripture doesn't even have to address us as Christians. It just addresses us as the hungry.

That's so often who the promises are made to. I know there are many other ways that Christians are described in Scripture. But this is a very prominent way.

I love this. In fact, even reading this made me feel like... I did a series of messages on the Song of Solomon. Now I know you previously had some messages that came from there.

And I don't know if that will ever happen. But the Song of Solomon is tremendous. Listen to this.

Eat, O friends. Drink. Yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones.

That's Christ speaking. Eat. Drink deeply.

Isaiah 41. The poor and the needy seek water, but there is none. Their tongues fail for thirst.

I, the Lord, will hear them. You see, there it is again. The promise goes to the thirsty.

That's how Scripture talks. I, the Lord, will hear them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

Isaiah 44. For I will pour water on him who is thirsty and floods on the dry ground. Isaiah 55.

O everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. I mean, you're being told, come. And you don't have to have money.

Come buy and eat. Yes, come buy wine and milk without money, without price. Isaiah 65.

Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat. Behold, my servants shall drink. Behold, my servants shall rejoice.

Isaiah 66. Feed and be satisfied. Drink deeply and be delighted.

Of course, John 4. Jesus says, whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst, but the water that I shall give him will become into him a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life. John 6. Where we were. I'm the living bread, which came down from heaven.

If anyone eats of the bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. And then John 7. On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He who believes in me, as the Scriptures has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. And then our Bibles end. Revelation 7. They shall neither hunger anymore, nor thirst anymore.

See, again and again, it's the hungry. Now see, this is key. Because hunger is not something that is vague to us.

You know, one of the beauties of hunger is we've all experienced it. So we're not, Jesus is dealing in a realm here that we can all readily identify with. So let's think very carefully.

Let's dissect this. Turn in your Bibles to John 6.44. This is actually a verse that we read during the Lord's Supper. I want to ask you a question here.

I want to compare two verses and have us just use some good logic. So John 6.44. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. Probably most of you have heard that verse before.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. Now that verse has gotten lots of mileage through the centuries. It can obviously be used to prove all sorts of things.

It also is a favorite, by the way, with Hyper-Calvinists. There is a way to twist it and make it into something that we should never make it into. But now, listen to what it's saying.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws. Did you get that? Draws. That means... Let me just tell you a little bit about that Greek word behind that drawing.

It basically carries the meaning to move an object from one place to another by pulling it. And the assumption is that the object being moved is either incapable of moving itself or unwilling to move itself. Where all the pulling comes from the mover.

That's the idea that we have here. The object itself is incapable of propelling itself or unwilling. That's the issue.

In either case, there's an exertion on the part of the mover. Okay, you see what it says. No one can come to me unless the Father moves that object, which is people, moves them to Christ.

Okay, another verse. John 7. Now listen to this. Jesus stood and cried out.

I've already quoted this one to you. Jesus stood and cried out saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Now here's why I'm saying both of these verses.

Both of them have to do with coming to Christ. Jesus says this, You can't come to me unless my Father draws you. He also says, pronounces on this last, this great day of the feast.

He says, everyone who thirsts, come to me. Now just compare those. You can only come if the Father draws.

He says, if you thirst, come. When we put both of these together, Jesus is teaching us that the pull of the Father is necessary. And yet, if you thirst, you go.

If you thirst, you will go. What's the conclusion in all that? When you put them both together. How does the Father draw? By making you thirsty.

By making you want to go. By giving you a hunger. You put them both together.

Jesus is teaching that very thing. He says, thirst is this. It's the pull.

You know what God does? It's kind of like a glass of water. God designed our bodies to get to the place that when we need to be hydrated, something in us. And isn't it an odd thing? Isn't it an odd thing that after you get done eating, you're not hungry? But then let enough time go by and you are hungry again.

What is hunger? How would you even describe it? But we all know it. It's like after you've had a big, juicy, dripping with cheese hamburger. When you get done with it, you don't want another one.

Or most of us don't. Why? Because something has been satisfied. Something has been filled.

But let enough time go by and now something kicks in. And we all know it. We all know what it means to be full.

You ever been there? We have Thanksgiving. We feast at that time of the year. You probably have your feast here.

You get to the point where it's like, no, I can't eat another bite. But then there's another time where somebody says, I could eat a horse. What's happening? We don't know.

I mean, I don't know what makes that work. But you know what? Something in the spiritual realm in the same manner happens to us. Jesus is saying, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after

righteousness.

That is something that is a reality. Something kicks in. Something that needs satisfying.

Something that is dissatisfied. And what we're being told is this. This hunger, God has to pull an individual.

How does He pull them? He doesn't pull them with strings. He doesn't pull them with chains. He doesn't pull them with ropes.

He pulls them by their appetites. He pulls them by hunger and thirst. That's the issue.

You see, that's really the issue with the people that walked away from Christ. And why Peter didn't. Why Peter would say, where are we going to go? Because he had a thirst for something that he recognized that only Christ could answer to.

And so he wasn't going to leave. Why will people walk away from Christ? Because they don't possess that hunger, that thirst that is being described here. Brethren, what I want you to recognize is this.

That for you to have a hunger and thirst after righteousness. For you to have a hunger and thirst after God. It's very special.

It's very unique. It's not natural. It's not inborn.

It's very supernatural. And listen, Scripture speaks this way. And it really, if you have ears to hear, it's saying the same thing.

Listen to these two verses. So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. In other words, how somebody is saved.

How somebody actually ends up being a vessel of mercy. A recipient of God's compassion and mercy. How do you get there? It's not of him that wills.

And yet, Scripture says, it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure. You see, again, you put those two together. What it helps us to do is recognize this.

It's not of him that wills, and yet it is of him that wills. But see, it's not ultimately of him that wills, because it's of God who wills. And when God wills, He makes us will.

You see, it's all got to do with the ultimate cause here. That's the real issue. I'm just saying this.

This is supernatural. And it is very unique. It is very special.

When you find people that hunger and thirst after righteousness, it's really a rare commodity in this world. And I hope this helps everyone just to realize how special, how supernatural this is. I don't know a better test that anyone can apply to himself or herself.

In this whole matter of our Christian profession than a verse like this. I mean, what a statement. What truth are we hit with? Now, I just want to talk here.

Righteousness. Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Now, this requires a bit of a word study.

The term righteousness. There is a root word there in the Greek that is really behind imputed righteousness. It's behind imparted righteousness.

Or let me say it different ways. It's behind a legal righteousness. It's behind a moral righteousness.

It is used other ways. There are times that righteous in our Bibles is actually used of self-righteous. I didn't come to call the righteous.

There are more ways than just what I'm going to give you right now that this word is used. The term, it's a decay word group behind righteousness. It also sometimes in certain forms is translated justification.

But I want you to see and be very clear on this. Because there are two main ways that righteousness is used in Christianity. And these are both fundamental Christian realities that we need to be really clear on.

So, I want to strive to help us be clear on these. Okay, first, let's go with the legal righteousness. By legal, I'm talking, let's just be plain.

I'm talking imputed. What I mean by that is Christ earned a righteousness by His own law keeping. By His own doing of the will of His Father.

By His own obedience. He is righteous. And that righteousness is accounted.

That's an accounting term. It's counted to my account. Just like my sins are counted to Him.

This is an imputed righteousness. Which means I didn't work for it. I didn't earn it.

He did and God counts it to me. That is an imputed righteousness. It is an accounting concept that actually translates into a legal reality.

A courtroom reality. Because justification is part and parcel of this kind of righteousness. Justification and righteousness, they come from the same root word.

What is justification? It is to declare righteousness. As a courtroom, the opposite of justification is condemnation. You're either justified, that means you're not found guilty.

Or you're condemned, you are found guilty. So, turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 4. I think the greatest verse on justification. Helping us to recognize what it is about.

An imputed righteousness. What that concept is like. I think the greatest verse in our Bibles is Romans chapter 4 verse 5. I think it is one of the most expressive.

Now there are others. I want us to be very clear on this. Because there is confusion with regards to this.

And we don't want to be confused. Especially as it's got to do with the Sermon on the Mount. We do not want to be off on this.

Or else you're going to misinterpret the Sermon on the Mount. And how we need to apply the teaching there to ourselves. So, I'll be more specific about that in just a second.

But look at Romans 4 verse 5. Now I know we're picking up mid-stream in Paul's argument. Really the larger argument of the whole book. But look at how God is described here.

But to Him. Now that Him is you and me as believers. But to us who do not work.

You see we don't earn it. But we believe on Him who justifies the ungodly. You see what happens? This is not a person that works.

This is not a person that earns their own righteousness. They trust the God who justifies the ungodly. And to that person His faith is accounted for righteousness.

You see the accounting term. It's accounted. It's imputed.

This person is pronounced righteous. But look at this. They're not righteous.

They're ungodly. You see that? How do you get a person who's ungodly? That means they're guilty. That means they're guilty of crimes.

How do you get a person to stand in a courtroom? God's courtroom. And actually have them declared just when they're ungodly. Well there's only one way.

You have to impute it from somewhere else. And thank the Lord God works that way. That actually we can be found righteous.

Brethren this is the heart and soul of the gospel. That this can even be the case. That I an ungodly wretch can be declared just.

I can be justified in the courtroom of God. And it happens by an accounting of righteousness to me that is alien to me. It's not my own.

It becomes my own. But it was earned by somebody else. And again we see this truth again in the very next verse.

Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from work. Don't you love that? Imputes. We've seen.

Now I'm reading from the New King James. But we've got this accounting term in verse 5. We've got this imputation terminology in verse 6. Now jump over to the next chapter. Romans 5.19. Now we really could start at verse 12.

We just don't have time to develop that. I mean the logic and the reasoning of Romans 5.12 through the end of chapter 5 is just some of the most amazing logic. And discussion about imputed righteousness that we can find in our Bibles.

It is phenomenal. But let's just settle with one verse. Verse 19.

Romans 5.19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. And so there you see it. I mean, look this might be a hard pill to swallow.

But you do realize we are guilty by imputation. Just as well as declared not guilty by imputation. You follow my meaning? We are counted sinners based on the federal headship of Adam.

If you're in Adam, you're guilty and you're condemned because of that connection. And that is the argument of this portion of Scripture. And you don't want to get away... Look, there's a deeper reason for our condemnation than just our own sin.

And it's got to do with that headship of Adam. And before you find fault with that, be glad God works under federal heads. Because if He didn't, then we wouldn't have the truth that Christ's righteousness is able to be imputed to us.

And that's what's said. See, one man's obedience. Well, that's not mine and it's not yours.

It's Christ's. And by His obedience, many are made righteous. Don't you love that truth? Anyways, that is imputation.

But, you full well know that the Bible often is not speaking about us being ungodly, receiving a righteousness not our own, alien to us. Often times, righteousness is simply talking about our own moral uprightness. Us doing right.

Not Christ doing right and imputing it to us. But us actually doing right ourselves. Right? You would agree? Scripture often talks that way as well.

Then speaking about us conforming to the will of God. I'm talking about the righteousness of character, the righteousness of conduct that pleases the Lord. I'm talking about the righteousness that involves right behavior on your part and my part.

So, basically, we're talking about not succumbing to sin. That's what right behavior is. Well, let's see that.

Because here's what happens. You need to recognize the argument of Romans. He goes on this, oh, detailed teaching in chapter 5 about imputed righteousness.

But then he says this. Well, because our righteousness is imputed and grace is that great, do we just go on sinning? And he says, nope. Now I'm going to deal with you about practical righteousness.

You can't. And in fact, he is going to teach them that the way you can know that a person is actually received the righteousness of Christ is because you see righteousness of their own in their lives. See, they go hand in hand.

If you've got somebody that's living an ungodly lifestyle, what he says in Romans 6 is repeatedly, he says that sin will not have dominion over you. And he says it in various ways, but let's look at it. Romans 6.13 Here we're going to see righteousness used of what we might call not imputed, not imputed, but imparted righteousness.

It's imparted. God actually works this out in us. Look at verse 13.

Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness. You see, it's very practical. This has nothing to do with the imputed righteousness of Christ.

That's not what he's talking about. He says, do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. You see what righteousness means here.

It's not imputed. It's got to do with you conforming your life to the will of God, to what pleases God. And you see, righteousness is used both of these ways.

And so we need to be very clear. Do you know something? This is common. There's lots of words in your Bibles that can be used different ways and mean different things.

How can you tell when you have a word that has different meanings what meaning it carries in any given passage? How can you tell? Context. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Hermeneutics. Bible Interpretation 101. If you want to understand what words mean, you've got to pay very careful attention to context.

Here's another example. Romans 6.19. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

You see, righteousness there is the opposite of what? What's it the opposite of? Uncleanness and lawlessness. And so this is law keeping. This is righteousness.

This is holiness. This is doing the will of God. Now you see, very clearly you can see that the word is used both ways.

It's used both ways right in Romans. I mean, one of the things that you need to be really careful when you're reading Scripture is that you're interpreting these words correctly, because if you don't interpret correctly, you can end up with an entirely wrong meaning. The reason I went through and did that word study right there is because righteousness is obviously used not just once.

Not just in Matthew 5.6. But it's used repetitively throughout the Sermon on the Mount. And so the question is this. How is righteousness used in Matthew 5.6? Well, context.

Context is the key. So, go back to the Sermon on the Mount. Go back to Matthew chapter 5. I want us to look at context.

Certainly, Matthew 5.6 all by itself might... I mean, I guess you could begin by asking this question. What does it sound like Matthew 5.6 is referring to? An imputed righteousness? Or a practical righteousness? Does it sound like I'm hungering and thirsting for something that only Christ can give me? Or does it sound like it's actually a hungering and thirsting for righteousness myself? Maybe you could say, well, it could probably go both ways. Perhaps.

Let's look at the context. Just consider this. Consider the first beatitude.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Well, you see, this has to do with me. Poor in spirit.

That's me. Or verse 4. Blessed are those who mourn. That's me.

This isn't talking about anything about what Christ does. This isn't talking about anything that Christ earns. It's talking about me.

It's talking about what's true in me. Verse 5. The meek. Again, it's me.

It's my conduct. Listen, meekness, me being meek, is righteousness. Me mourning for sin, that is an expression of my own righteousness.

Me being poor in spirit, again, that is an expression of my own righteousness. And if you jump past this fourth beatitude, let's pick up after it. Blessed are the merciful.

You see, that is a characteristic of my own righteousness. This doesn't have anything to do with Christ being mercy and me being ungodly and His righteousness being imputed to me. Nothing about that.

This is me being merciful. Or the next beatitude. This is me being pure in heart.

Or the next, peacemaker. Well, again, that's me. This has nothing to do with Christ and what's being imputed to me.

This is all about me. Now, if we jump down to verse 17, this is where things really become crystal clear. Don't think that I've come to destroy the law or the prophets.

See, this is so important to the whole Sermon on the Mount. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Now, see, a lot of people would say, oh, they see imputed righteousness here. They see Christ in righteousness. Christ came to fulfill the law.

See, Christ did it in our place. That's not what's being taught here. And the reason we know, again, is context.

Look at this. See, He's not talking about Himself, and He's not talking about He Himself earning this. He says, You see the kind of righteousness He's talking about is not imputed.

It's not something earned by Him for us. What He is speaking about here is whoever does and teaches, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. And then He just launches into verse 20.

For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Nothing at all here about imputed righteousness is all practical. And then you have to ask yourself this.

As soon as He says your righteousness better exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, what does He say? He says this. When it comes to anger, there's a way I expect you as my people to live. When it comes to resolving conflict, if you've got conflict with one another, you leave your gift at the altar and you go make it right.

You see, this is all practical all the way through here. He deals with adultery. He deals with lust.

He deals with divorce. He deals with swearing. Let your yes be yes, your no be no.

See, it's all practical. He just moves through here borrowing, loving one another, greeting, giving. You know, when you get over to chapter 6, it's all practical righteousness.

See, it's got to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. He says, I'll tell you how the scribes and Pharisees give. They give to be seen.

I'll tell you how they pray. They pray to be seen. I'll tell you how they fast.

They fast to be seen. See, it's all practical. It's when you fast, you fast this way.

When you pray, you pray this way. When you give, you give this way. When you give, store up treasure in heaven, by the way.

And then he deals a bunch with anxiety. He deals with judging not. He deals with, what's the golden rule? Do unto others.

You see what's happening? And then here's the thing about the Sermon on the Mount. As it's wrapping up, look at two verses. Look at Matthew 7.21. You see, as he's wrapping up here, he says, verse 21, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

You see, there's absolutely nothing about imputed righteousness. Christ is not teaching on that subject matter here. He is saying this.

He's saying that, look, if you're the real deal, you're going to have a righteousness that shows you have some kind of earnestness in your life to conform to the will of his Father. And if you haven't, he's going to say, depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. And then the Sermon on the Mount basically ends with this picture, Matthew 7.24. Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I'll liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

You see, the righteousness is clearly that desire to be free from sin, conformed to the word of Christ. It's that desire to act right in the sight of God. It's the longing to be positively holy.

The person thirsts for conformity to the will of God. That's what's happening in the Sermon on the Mount. That's clearly what he's addressing.

Brethren, just think with me. He has said, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek. What's the use of lamenting and confessing our sins and acknowledging the truth about ourselves in some meek fashion, if that's where it all ends? If that's where we finish? I mean, he who truly sorrows and mourns for sin, is going to long to be rid of sin.

Show me that sorrow that's genuine. Show me somebody shedding a tear today over sin, who runs out and drinks it like water tomorrow. And I'll show you somebody whose sorrow is sham.

It's not real. It's a put-on. It's no good.

I mean, this is where we can see the vast difference between those... Listen, you know this. The Bible speaks about a godly sorrow and a worldly sorrow. Do you know people can shed tears for sin who are not legit? Who will run right out and go back after their sin tomorrow and show that they have no hunger and thirst.

People can mourn. People can have a worldly sorrow. Listen, what can possibly make somebody regret sin when they really have no desire for righteousness? When it costs them something.

You see, the guy's cheating on his wife and he gets caught and she leaves him and divorces him and takes the house. And now he kicks himself. Well, that happens all the time.

People lose reputation. People lose health. Somebody can regret their heavy drinking their whole life when suddenly they're found to have liver cancer.

Suddenly they'll weep tears. But I'll tell you what, you restore their health, they'll be back in the bar. You see, it's no good.

It's sham. It's fake. You can know the difference right at this point.

He who sheds a tear today over his wicked deeds but loves them just the same tomorrow, it's all no good. He only dislikes what the sins have cost him. It's a sham sorrow.

The person who possesses a godly sorrow will long to be rid of that for which he sorrows. If you're mourning over sin, you want to be rid of it. You see, those very... What we have to recognize is those early beatitudes, they naturally take us here.

And you can't... If a person is going to weep over this thing, he has an earnest desire to get rid of this. There's some kind of hatred for it. He can't go along without righteousness.

It's important to him. It consumes him. That's what hunger is.

His supreme ambition is spiritual. It's not physical. You know, we've got people all over this world who they want stuff.

They want stuff physical. They want possessions. They want money.

They want achieved success. They want things. They want a family.

They want a wife. They want a husband. They want approval.

They want... People are longing for these things. This is a person who Christ says has a burden in their heart, in the depths of their being, to conform to that standard that is pleasing to the Lord. Listen.

You have to recognize this. This beatitude does not say, blessed are those that hunger and thirst after blessing or after blessedness. Everybody wants blessing.

There's a big difference between wanting blessing, wanting a smile upon you, and really wanting righteousness. There's a huge difference. Listen, this is so important that we grasp this.

Those who make blessing their goal, they don't end up arriving at blessing. You do recognize this. Hunger and thirst after righteousness, you end up blessed.

You see, blessing is not the kind of thing to be sought directly. It's sought another way. There's a hunger for something else that leads to the blessing.

And I would just say this. I'm concerned about this in the church. You get people who hunger for the blessing, but not really for righteousness.

And you know you can discover these people. Because oftentimes there are people that are chasing the blessing. Rather than genuine righteousness.

Like, let's just say this. Okay, we've got a sermon on the mount that's dealing with practical righteousness. Let me just ask you something.

When you actually go to Scripture, and you begin to look at what is that practical righteousness that really impresses Christ, that really is emphasized in Scripture. You see, sometimes we get this idea, you know, we're going to go hear the preaching. We're going to go attend the service.

But you recognize the only reason you come here is to hear the standard of righteousness. To be equipped, so that you can fulfill this righteousness in whatever kind of ministry that God gives to you. When I come to Scripture, this is one of the things I wanted to emphasize in coming here.

You'll remember even last summer. Think with me about Scripture. What is righteous? See, we can be very ambiguous with regards to this term.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You pay tithe, mint, anise, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law. You see, this is where righteousness ought to... This is where a person that hungers and thirsts... You're not going to be partial. You're not going to be... The person that hungers and thirsts after righteousness doesn't just seek it out in one tiny area of their life.

They tend to pursue it across the board. Not only across the board, they tend to give special attention to that which God specifically emphasizes in Scripture is vastly important to them. And so, you've neglected the weightier matters of the law, which is justice and mercy and faith.

Now you see, here's the thing. You can find people that are after the blessing. You'll get people that will basically get on the conference circuit.

This is one of the dangers of producing another conference. I think some really good things can be achieved by them. But you know you get people that go where the action is.

They'll go where the preacher is. They'll go to the conference over here. People will travel around the world to hear Paul Washer preach or to hear John MacArthur preach.

But when it comes to really hungering and thirsting after righteousness... You see, what Jesus is looking for is not the guy that will travel half the way around the world to hear John MacArthur speak. What the Lord is looking for is this. He's looking for people who give themselves to righteousness, who are hungering and thirsting after that, who are giving themselves to the weightier matters, which He clearly spells out.

Or this, you know on another account, He said, Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice. Do you know what was said of Josiah? He judged the cause of the poor and needy.

Then it was well. Was not this knowing me? You see what God's saying there? You want to know what it is to know me? It's to go, search out, judge the cause of the poor and needy. You know, we can get to the place where we want the blessing.

We want to feel good. We want the experience. But the real issue is this.

Is there this longing after these things? Is there this real desire to imitate Christ? How about this? He's shown you, oh man, what is good. What does the Lord require of you? But to do justly, to love mercy, to walk. There it is again.

Mercy, justice, to walk humbly with your God. Pure and undefiled religion before God, before the Lord. We know what it is.

It is to visit the orphan and the widow in their affliction. It is to live undefiled, unspotted in this world. These are the things.

Do you know when I first came here, one of the things that I wanted us to do was go to Isaiah 58 and go to Matthew 25. Because, see, on judgment day, I recognize this. There's a whole lot of things that Jesus could have said that he's going to call out on judgment day.

And yet, isn't it amazing? He said, I was hungry and you guys over here on my right, you fed me. And over here on the left, you did not feed me. And I was naked.

You guys clothed me. You guys didn't. I was in prison.

You guys came. You guys didn't. You see what it is? We can have this idea that we hunger and thirst after righteousness.

All we really mean is we want to have the Puritans on our bookshelf. And we want to go to where the action is. We want to go to where the singing is great.

Do you know that there are close to 50 one another passages in the New Testament? You want to know something that God gives emphasis to? It's life in the church. I was talking about this on Wednesday. It's people that are committed.

It doesn't mean you can't go visit other places. It doesn't mean that kind of thing at all. It doesn't mean you can't develop some camaraderie and fellowship with people in other places.

But I'll tell you, when you have 50 one another passages, do you know what God is concerned with? He's concerned with we lay down our lives in love for one another. You really want to know? See, I was talking to somebody this morning just about this reality. You know, we can say we love God.

But the truth is that John hits the nail on the head. He said, you really want to see love? He said, you're going to love your brother. He said, you have people all over the place.

They're talking about loving God. But the reality is it really gets tested where the rubber meets the road. And see, this is the righteousness.

You see, what I'm asking you is this. Is this the kind of thing? Do you long for this? Does something resonate? It's like, yes, I want that. Yes, I want to be more like Christ.

Yes, those one another's. Yes, I want. I mean, what are the one another's? We use our gifts to love one another.

We comfort one another. We welcome one another. We edify.

We admonish. We encourage. By this, you're going to be known that you're His disciples.

Do you really long for that? Is that what we're longing after? We really have this hunger, this thirst that's ache within us. That we really want to be known by the world to be His disciples. By the love we have for one another.

Because we are serving one another. And we're giving ourselves to help one another. This is so much at the heart of being conformed to God's will.

The promise, they'll be filled. I mean, the promise is precisely this. Those who hunger like this will be filled with the very thing that they hunger after.

When you and I feel this deep need, this hunger, this thing burning in us, this kind of starvation. What happens? Well, Jesus is promising. God will come in and He'll fill you.

Where this kind of ache is. Now, can I do this in five minutes? I would just say, I would ask this question. How can we know whether we're hungry and thirsting after righteousness? How can we know? It's almost a ridiculous question, but it's not ridiculous.

I mean, when it's one of the hallmarks of Christianity, it is in the realm of not ridiculous. But it would be kind of like me saying to somebody when we get done. You know, okay, we're going to serve up maybe some snacks.

If I said to somebody, you know, how do you know you're hungry? You'd say, we all know how we know. It's almost like a redundant question. I mean, it's like, well, we know.

But, how do we know? I mean, let's just, because what we don't want to do is we don't want to fool ourselves. We want this. We want this.

We want a hunger and thirst. Why? Because those who hunger and thirst, they'll be filled. They'll be filled with the thing they hunger for.

God will give it to them. God, remember, God gives the hunger. He draws us.

What's going to happen is He's going to give us the very thing that we have an appetite for. So, I would just ask this. If you simply take the hunger and thirst, which obviously He's drawing from our hunger for food, and He's using it in a spiritual realm.

Well, let's just draw and pull. What happens when a person really gets hungry for food? What happens? I mean, you start fasting. Let me just ask you this.

What happens in your brain when you, because that's really what hunger is supposed to do, right? Hunger is supposed to trigger something in your head, in your brain, in your thoughts, to get you to do what? To eat. And God designed that. And what happens up here? What happens in the brain when you're hungry? What do you think about? When you're really hungry.

I mean, when you've fasted. I think some of us were talking and we come off a time of fasting. We all recognize this.

If you fast for multiple days, typically, the first day is the hardest. Things tend to get easier after that. But, I mean, when you're fasting and you're really hungry and your body's telling you all about it, what's happening up here? What do you think about? You thinking about the clouds? You thinking about the blue sky? You thinking about astronomy? You thinking about how bugs crawl? I mean, what are you thinking about? You think about food! In fact, that's all you can think about! And so, listen.

How do you know if you're hungry and thirsting? I would just ask you this. I just went through some things that deal with righteousness. How much are you thinking about it? How much do you lay in bed and think about your life being conformed to the will of God? How much do you think about becoming more like Christ? How much is that in your brain? How much is that upon your mind? And I'll tell you, there would be a direct correlation with how much you read your Bible.

Why? Because that's where it comes from. That's where the standard of righteousness is. That's where we see Christ.

You just think about, listen. When it comes to desires, when a young person does not have the gift of singleness, and the hormones are raging, and singleness is difficult, and loneliness is an aggravation, what are you thinking about? Cotton balls? Yeah, you're thinking about getting married. It's in your mind.

It's in your thoughts. If you want to ask this question, how can we tell whether we're hungry and thirsting after righteousness? I'd just ask you this. What do you think about? Because you cannot tell me that you're hungry and thirsting after righteousness when your mind is on sports all the time, or on cars all the time, or on the garden all the time, or on making money all the time, or on the world all the time, or this, that, and the other thing.

Don't tell me that. You can't convince me of that. I'll tell you what.

You get lost in the... Ruby and I, I think we watched this together. We saw some story about the Australian outback, and a father and a daughter. They went out there.

They were trying to find some fishing hole, and the guy went cross country in the outback, and he got flat tires, and he ended up stranded out there for days, and they were without water. You know what? When you're without water, and you're beginning to die from dehydration, do you think that the thought of water wasn't constantly on their minds? It obviously was. You take somebody that's been a drug addict, or even if it's been prescription drugs, and you're trying to wean yourself off of those drugs, you find a heroin addict who hasn't had their fix lately.

All they can think about is one thing. This is where desire comes in. You cannot tell me that you have a desire for something unless that is a reality.

And I'll just say this as well. Let's go further. I mean, you consider hungry people.

Think about active versus passive. We talked about this with the men on Friday, but passivity. I mean, what does a hungry person do? If you've got a person that's not fasting, and they're as hungry as you have been, everyone think about this.

And when you fasted, the hungriest you've ever felt when you fasted, if suddenly your fast was over, and you knew that there was some food in the kitchen, what are you going to do? You see, don't tell me you have any desire for food. I would not believe it. You cannot sit there and tell me, oh, I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse.

And then you say, dinner's on the table. And then they just sit there. You see, passivity is a real thing.

People don't remain passive who are starving, unless they're just so starved that they can't move anymore. Listen, the reality is, no one who's thirsty is passive. It takes activity.

It takes action. Hungry people do things other people don't. There's somewhat of even a violence to it.

You ever seen lions when they're really hungry? You ever watched any of those nature shows where they haven't had a kill for a long time? It's like the bad part of the year when everything is lean, and the lions are all skinny. You ever seen how savage they are? You see, that's what goes behind desire. If you had a lion just laying over there and there was no desire, you'd say, the thing is sick.

I mean, something's wrong with it. I mean, the reality is, there's an active element. Don't we say where there's a will, there's a way? And I'll tell you what, this is what appetites do.

They are meant to deal with the will, to get you to do things. There's activity there. Man who's hungering after righteousness.

The man who hungers after righteousness is kind of like blind Bartimaeus who hungered after sight. You know what he did? He put himself in the place to be healed. I mean, he knew Christ was there.

He wasn't going to run away somewhere else. He had a desire to get his sight, and so he sought to put himself in that place. You notice that about people that really hunger and thirst after righteousness.

They are going to seek to put themselves in the place where it's calculated that righteousness comes, where they can get that. Brethren, I'll tell you this, the person that really hungers and thirsts after righteousness is going to be cautious about who he hangs out with, because there are certain people, even in the church, that it's not in the best interest of righteousness to hang out with certain people, because they tend to be carnal, even though they're in the church, even though they may be a member of the church. When you're around them, it doesn't do anything for you as far as righteousness.

There are not good examples, even biographies. One of the ways you hang around with people, you really want to hang around with people that will help you in your way of righteousness. You get around the best guys that have lived, even though dead, they yet speak like we were talking about as far as able goes.

You're going to have your nose in the Scriptures. You're going to be on your knees in prayer. This is the reality.

There's going to be some measure of violence, amputation, gouging out eyes. That's violent. But that's what happens when people have an appetite.

And you know what you do? You avoid appetite killers. And you behold Christ. Why? Because beholding Christ, we get transformed.

If you really desire to have more Christ-likeness, then you want to put yourself in the place where historically, biblically, people have found that they grow most. There are places to put yourself that are calculated to increase righteousness in your life. And there are places that you just know it.

They kill righteousness. And they kill your appetite for righteousness. You'd want to avoid those kinds of places.

You know one of the things about this? You can never find it yourself. We can't produce hunger in ourselves. But you know what? There's good ways to produce it.

I mean you can go out and exercise. You can go out and do different things that are very healthy as far as this goes. People who sit back and do nothing, they never seem to get it.

It seems like the people that are always running the best and growing the most and have the greatest hunger, they're always doing what's calculated. I mean we have to remember what we're dealing with. All who lack this kind of righteousness, they're under the wrath of God.

But here's another thing. I know we've gone long. An hour and 15 minutes.

Can you bear with me? Just a couple more things on how you can know that you hunger and thirst after righteousness. One of them is this. Paul talks about this.

Don't touch, don't handle. I mean you know this. Don't taste.

And he says this is false religion. This is man-made religion. And he specifically says that there's no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

The point is this. When somebody really hungers and thirsts after righteousness, if you give them the imitation, if you give them the fake thing, if somebody's really... I remember when I was here one of the first times, Tim and I went over to some Muslim store and he was able to get a leg of lamb. We don't eat much lamb in the U.S., but that was good.

We went out to eat with him one time. You know what? If somebody brought me a plastic leg of lamb, get that thing away from me. Who wants that? It doesn't matter if you put gravy on it.

Nobody wants that who's hungry. And you know, when you truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, you're not happy with the imitation. You're not happy with the false righteousness.

You don't want any substitutes. You know, if you went to a man in the desert and he's dying of thirst, pulling out your wallet and handing him money is not what he wants. He doesn't want your lawnmower.

He wants water. Or there's this. Chapter 6 of the Sermon on the Mount deals with what happens in secret.

Give in secret. Pray in secret. Fast in secret.

It's interesting. The Sermon on the Mount takes us out of the sight of others. What does that mean? Just this.

Hungry people are hungry whether they're by themselves or in a crowd. You get some people, it seems like they're hungry only when other people are watching. But when you put them all by themselves, suddenly that hunger seems to dissipate and go right out the window.

One of the ways you can really know you're hunger and thirst after righteousness is because you hunger and thirst for it when no one else is watching but the Lord only. Or there's this. People that hunger and thirst for righteousness are more willing to suffer than to sin.

They will not easily sin. They will rather suffer. Why? Because that's what the hunger and thirst is.

You know when you're really hungry, will you crawl through a hedge full of briars to get to food? Well, you would. If you were dying of thirst, do you know what you would do? See, this is the same thing. People that really hunger and thirst after this, they would gladly choose the hard right over the easy wrong

because that's what they hunger after.

They want to be right, even if there's a cost, even if there may be mocking, slander, rejection, hatred, some kind of persecution. They'll suffer that before they'll suffer going the wrong way. Or there's this.

One of the things, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, you'll find it's a lonely way. Remember Noah? He was a preacher of righteousness. He was one that gave himself to righteousness.

He was one that walked with God. It's very lonely. Because you'll find that it's rare.

Lots of people hunger and thirst after religion. Lots of people hunger and thirst after preaching or after Puritans or after money, fame. People hunger after all sorts of things.

It's a very lonely path. And I'll tell you something. If you truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, you'll know the loneliness of it because you will find in family, sometimes even in the church, you'll find that the things you have interest in, others seem to not have interest in.

Another thing you can look at. If a person really hungers and thirsts after righteousness, you'll see confession. Why? Because what is confession? Agreeing with God.

Agreeing with God. If we're dealing with the will of God, we want to agree with God. We want to be in the will of God.

We want to be with what's pleasing. Confession is agreeing with God. That's just going to be something that's going to be evident there.

And I would ask you this. What is it about heaven that you desire? See, if a person really hungers and thirsts after righteousness and you ask them, what is it about heaven? You see, for massive amounts of professing Christians, do you know what it's all about? It's about escaping hell. Look, escaping hell is a good thing.

Hell is a fearful thing. But what does the person that hungers and thirsts after righteousness desire about heaven? They desire to be free from sin. They desire never to displease God again.

They desire to see Christ. They desire to have their sins forgiven. They desire to be in a place where they're pardoned.

They desire to be in a place away from hell. Absolutely they do. But one of the chief things that a person that hungers and thirsts after righteousness desires about heaven is to be free from sin forever for good, even the least ever displeasing God ever again.

And I'll tell you this. A person that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, hungry people, think about how to be filled. And one of the things that you come to recognize is this righteousness that I need to be filled with.

You sense your need of a Savior to do this. You've become keenly aware that this is no hunger that you can satisfy on your own. You can't go cook the burger up on the stove when it comes to this.

You recognize your utter helplessness. You see that if somebody doesn't come along and take hold of me and cause these things to happen, I'm going to be dead in the water. Somebody outside of me has to do

something to me.

Otherwise, I'm altogether lost and undone, forever starving. And so, I guess I end with this. Ask and you will receive.

Father, I pray that there might be something in this that might help someone. Lord, help us. Help us all.

Do in us. And create the desires that are good. Lord, we know that there are so many things about Christianity that we cannot make happen.

We cannot produce. We are not the initiators of. So, we ask.

Lord, make us into everything that we need to be. Make us right. Make us healthy.

Make us hungry. Please, for Christ's sake, we pray. Amen.

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