



The Beatitudes

An Inductive Study

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Lesson #4

The inductive method is an investigative way of studying the Bible. It helps to provide an overall understanding of a passage of Scripture: what it says, the intended meaning to the original audience, and how it can be applied to today.

#4 BLESSED ARE THEY WHO DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS: FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED

Sermon On the Mount – In Review

Jesus' [Sermon on the Mount](#) begins with the Beatitudes, a list of blessings that describe the inner character of those who are true servants of God and the kingdom of heaven.

This teaching was part of Jesus Christ's intensive discipleship training for His twelve chosen apostles. The fourth Beatitude states, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" ([Matthew 5:6](#)).

The [Beatitudes](#) offer solid truths for living as a disciple of Christ. While each Beatitude can stand on its own, they aren't merely a collection of unrelated statements.

They are linked in an unbroken chain, each one building on the previous truth. The first several Beatitudes deal with the condition of the heart; the second set pertains to our relationship with the Lord; the final grouping treats our relationships with others.

Jesus always begins with the heart.

In this lesson we will learn that when He pronounced a blessing on those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, He touched on the inner state of our hearts.

The heart is our seat of emotions it is where we draw our thoughts and opinions.

The word *blessed* in the Beatitudes signifies deep, joy-filled contentment and an inner state of spiritual well-being.

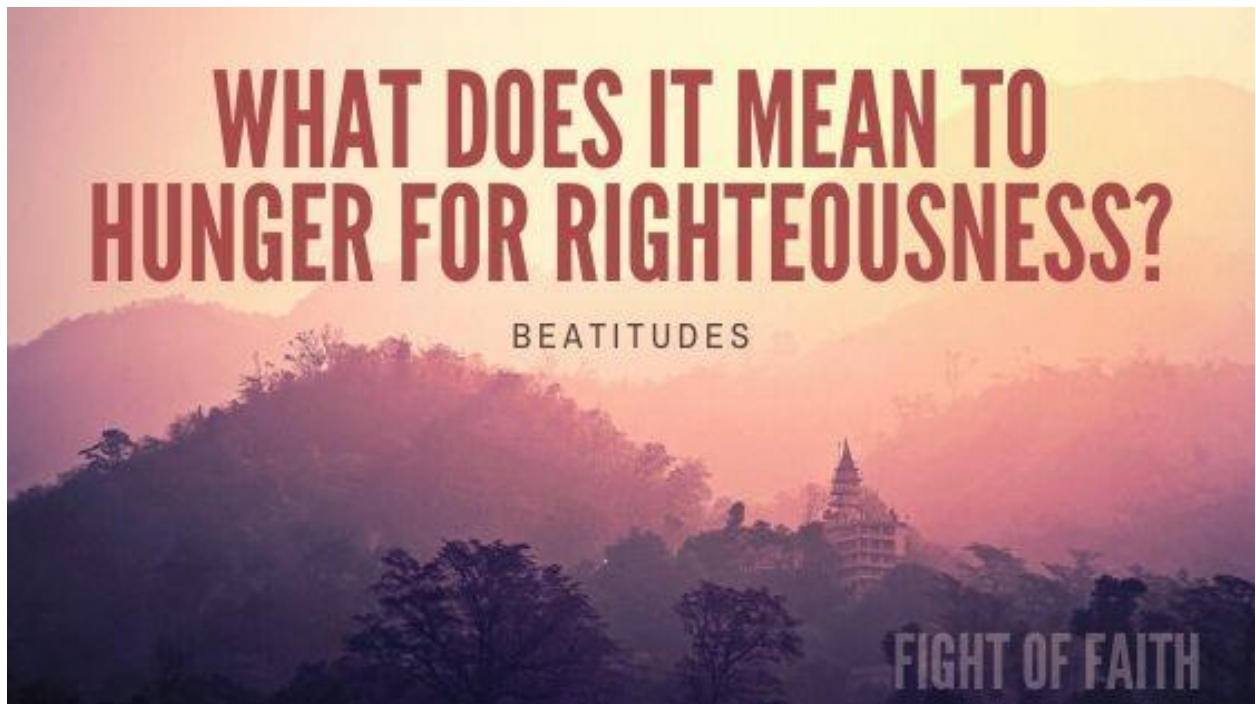
To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to possess an active spiritual longing: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" ([Psalm 42:2](#); see also [Psalm 63:1](#); [143:6](#); [Amos 8:11](#)).

This desire is not passive; it is a fervent seeking. The servant who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is the same as the one who seeks God's kingdom and His righteousness before and above everything else ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

Because of Christ, we can cling to the promise of everlasting righteousness in heaven. While we are called to live like Christ, we also have forgiveness of sin.

Christ gives himself to the soul that truly hungers for Him. When the world no longer has any hold on us, all we want is Him.

What Does it Mean to Hunger for Righteousness



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

Those who are Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness Lesson #4

Text: Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

Companion Texts: Psalm 42:1 – 2; 63:1; Philippians 3:6 – 10

Principles of Text:

In a land of plenty it is hard to imagine such a condition, being hungry and being thirsty! Jesus was talking to people who understood what it means to be hungry and thirsty.

The Greek words in this verse are very powerful. “Peinao,” means to be needy, to suffer deep hunger.

The word “dipsao” carries the idea of genuine thirst. This verse speaks of a very strong desire, a driving pursuit, a passionate force in us, an ambition to seek after God's way.

In seeking God, we should be moved to make this our life's goal to become more like Him.

This is different from having career goals or financial/relational goals.....hungering and thirsting after righteousness is a way of life.

Blessed are Those who Hunger and Thirst

Jesus puts the strongest physical impulses in a continuous action. Literally, what it means is the ones who are hungering and the ones who are thirsting. As everyone knows food and water are necessities of physical life.

Just like physical food and water are essential for physical life, spiritual hunger and thirst are essential for spiritual life. The promise for those hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied.

The word means you are absolutely satisfied. What a paradox! You must be continually hungry and thirsty in order to be satisfied.

Key Concept: To be spiritually satisfied, a deep craving for righteousness comes first.

True Hunger and Thirst is to Be Right With God

Jesus says that in order to experience fullness, a hunger and thirst for righteousness must be present inside a person.

Put another way, the people who experience true satisfaction in life are those who have a deep, driving desire to be right before Almighty God.

Desiring to be a moral person is not the same as hungering for righteousness; this beatitude is much more than that.

The first three beatitudes focus on our lack. In [poverty of spirit](#), we realize we have nothing that can contribute to our good standing before God.

In our [mourning](#), we lament that fact.

We no longer rejoice in our sinful autonomy; instead, we weep because we know what it deserves.

In [meekness](#), we stop struggling against God and begin to submit to Him because we have no way of salvation in ourselves. In our hunger for righteousness, we turn our eye away from our lack, to the One who can provide what we need.

This beatitude is not hard to define. We know we do not have the righteousness required for a right-standing before the Lord.

We also know we are unable to provide that righteousness by anything we do.

Through the Holy Spirit's continued work, we begin to desire that righteousness.

Discussion Question: What would be the character qualities of a person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness?

Hunger Defined

The word “hunger” is defined as a strong craving or desire. Most of us here today, if not all, do not know what real hunger or thirst is.

We may miss a meal, but we have always had access to food and drink whenever we needed it. But much of the world struggles with severe hunger.

It is estimated that some 800 million people in the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Every 3.6 seconds someone dies of starvation, mostly children.

Jesus uses terminology that his audience could relate to. They knew what it meant to hunger and thirst for something.

It was also terminology that had O.T. roots. The Psalmist David used this image to portray a deep desire for a deeper relationship with God. “Thirst for God”

- **Ps 42:1-2** – As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?
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- **Ps 63:1-2** – God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. 2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.

One misinterpretation of this beatitude, however, is to see it as a pang of hunger after a morality that is natural and godless.

This is a morality that is driven by the desire to please people, and to have a clear conscience, but, in the end, has no regard for God.

Another misinterpretation is to hunger after righteousness in a way that believes if we could be good enough, God would be happy with us.

This is similar to the error Christian made in Pilgrim's Progress when he tried to climb the hill of morality to remove his burden.

A true hunger for righteousness is to seek after holiness. First and foremost, it seeks imputed righteousness from Christ.

There is only one righteousness that pleases God, and that is the perfect righteousness which only Jesus possesses.

What Is Righteousness?

Righteousness is an attribute that belongs to God, the Lawgiver, and is manifested in His laws.

No man can be justified by his own works apart from God's ordinance. Therefore, righteousness is a wonderful gift from God to humanity through His love: it is the God-given quality imputed to man upon believing in the Son of God.

In its deeper [spiritual meaning](#), righteousness is the quality of being right in the eyes of God, including *character* (nature), *conscience* (attitude), *conduct* (action), and *command* (word).

Righteousness is, therefore, based upon God's standard because He is the ultimate Lawgiver ([Isaiah 33:22](#)).

For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.

Jesus Helps us to become Righteous

We cannot become righteous unless we are right with God.

Discussion Question: What does it mean to be right with God?

Scripture testifies to this very truth:

The LORD . . . satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:5)

Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. (John 4:13-14)

I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (John 6:35)

And yet we often don't live like we believe Jesus' words are true. We gravitate toward the world's pleasures, enjoying them in both healthy and unhealthy ways, seemingly unaware of the richness—the true fullness—that is offered to us in Christ.

For those of us who place our faith in Him, our sins are imputed to him and the punishment He bore on the cross in our place, and His righteousness is counted as ours.

This double imputation is the only basis of our right standing before a holy God, even while we continue to struggle with our sinfulness.

This imputed righteousness is the first aspect of righteousness for which we hunger.

If we do not hunger to possess this righteousness, all other pangs of hunger for righteousness will be misguided and sinful.

Imputed righteousness is not the only righteousness for which we hunger. We will also hunger for sanctification.

This desire is the hunger to grow in personal holiness. It is the hunger to mortify our sinfulness and begin to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Since it is a desire to be free from sin, if we do not have a hatred for sin, we do not have a hunger for righteousness.

God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. To hunger for righteousness is, in the end, to desire God himself.

It is a desire to be right with Him and to have fellowship with him.

So we must Hunger and Thirst to be right with Him!

Discussion : What Does it Mean to Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

The 4th beatitude is pivotal. The first three statements point out the necessity of looking at ourselves correctly (poor in spirit; mournful, meek).

This statement begins to show us how to turn to God. Of course, without a humble disposition, one would not ever turn to God, nor could he properly turn to God.

Are you hungry? Are you thirsty? _ I don't know if you ate breakfast, but I can answer this for you. YES, you are hungry and thirsty.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for Righteousness, for they shall be filled.

To help us understand this beatitude we first have to ask ourselves, what is meant by righteousness?

And righteousness means being in complete accordance with what is just, honorable, and Godly.

Righteousness are those things that are upright, virtuous, noble, morally right, and ethical. You could say that righteousness is a life style that is in complete conformity to the will of God.

It is a lifestyle that Jesus not only finds pleasing, but one that he approves of. Jesus Christ is the one leading the righteous person through life.

It is Jesus who is making the decisions that the righteous person will follow.

For the righteous believer, all his daily actions, everything that he thinks about, every decision that he makes, everything that he reads and looks at, will be done the same way that Our Lord would have done them.

The true believer will know immediately whether something is right or wrong, just or unjust, godly or ungodly.

How could the true believer not know that something is wrong when the Son of God is living within him?

Jesus Christ who is dwelling within the righteous person is communicating constantly with the person's heart, conscience, soul, and spirit.

The Lord is not going to let the believer just wander into sin?

Jesus Christ will be talking to the believer long before the sin is even thought about.

And while this is going on the Holy Spirit will be hard at work doing his guiding and his warning.

This is why when a righteous believer sins, it winds up being extremely painful, usually leaving the sinner with great sorrow.

Sin for the righteous believer is never worth the pain and dishonor he knows that he has brought upon the Lord.

For the true believer, righteousness saturates every single aspect of his life.

And every Godly believer knows that he has Jesus Christ living on the inside of him leading and guiding him.

Psalms 11:7 "For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness; And the upright will behold His face".

Hunger and thirst are appetites that return frequently, and they require that they be met often during the day.

Similarly, the true believer calls for constant meals of righteousness to do his daily Godly work, just as the living body calls for its daily food.

When a believer hungers and thirsts after righteousness he becomes a new man and this new man now bears the image of God.

This new man greatly desires to do the will of God for he now has great interest in Christ and all that Christ said and promised.

To hunger and thirst after righteousness can only be perceived by persons spiritually enlightened, and who have our Lord Jesus Christ living and dwelling within them.

Discussion Question: What keeps you from having a hungering and thirsting for righteousness?

In the sermon on the mount Jesus is referring to a personal righteousness that comes from pleasing God. It is much more than just a “moral consciousness” or a godly attitude.

The blessedness that Jesus describes for us does not come from a casual acquaintance or “experience” with God or His word.

This is the person who cannot live without righteousness and will be satisfied with nothing else. He craves to know about God and please Him.

Conclusion: We will take a closer look at Jesus’ words and consider the attached promised of being filled up or satisfied.

But let us resolve today, to focus our lives on earnestly seeking his righteousness. Not merely toy with the idea of discipleship, “I am interested in following Christ”, We need extreme discipleship – *“For me to live is Christ”*.

I hunger and thirst for God. How much do you want to be right with God? Are you hungry enough to obey Him today?

And a righteous life is what also fills the true believer with peace and joy.

And because of their spiritual enlightenment they realize that nothing can be more perfect, more pure, and more pleasing to our Heavenly Father than living a life that he totally approves of.

This servant is blessed because he or she experiences a satisfied heart. This servant can say, “It is well with my soul.”

Righteousness speaks of right relationship with God and with other people.

In summary, *blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled* could be paraphrased as follows:

“Deeply joyful and spiritually whole are those who actively seek right relationship with God and, in so doing, discover that He alone can completely save and satisfy their souls.”

As Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, those who hunger for this righteousness will be satisfied. In Jesus, we are justified. His imputed righteousness is counted as ours.

The Holy Spirit then begins the work of our sanctification, where He begins to mold us to His image, and He is faithful and just to complete that work.

Finally, on the day we see Him face to face, our glorification will be complete, and we will be like Him: Righteous. Hungering for righteousness desires all three aspects of salvation.

Discussion Questions:

What would be the character qualities of a person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness?

Describe a time when you felt a hungering and thirsting for God.

Relate to the group the last time you were full spiritually.

How do you develop an appetite for righteousness?

What keeps you from having a hungering and thirsting for righteousness?