

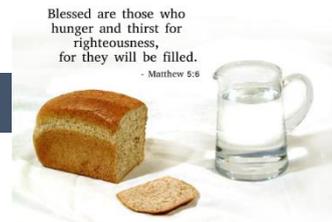
“Nuggets” For Today
(Study Notes on Pastor’s Sermon for today)

SERIES: “BLESSED: A REFLECTION ON THE BEATITUDES”

Sermon 4: “BLESSED are those Who Hunger and Thirst For Righteousness”

TEXT: MATTHEW 5:1-10

Pastor Wayne George
13th August 2017



Some years ago, American Psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow drew up a model known as Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs.

We don’t have time to go into it in detail, but basically what its saying is that those various levels of needs have to be met in order for human beings to survive and maintain good health. Right at the base – two of the basic needs for survival is for food and for water. Of course, we don’t need an American Psychologist to tell us that do we. Skip a meal, and very soon your tummy will be letting you know loud and clear that it needs something to eat.

Hunger and thirst are two desires that God has placed inside all of us, not in order to hurt us, but rather to help us. When we hunger for food, that hunger becomes a force that drives us toward that which will give us the strength we need – food. Likewise when we thirst, we are driven toward the very thing that will cause us to live. So in other words, our basic instincts of hunger and thirst are actually there to cause us to seek out that which can sustain and give physical life – food and water.

Well, in this morning’s text, Jesus says: ***“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6)***

I. The Object of our Hunger

Of course, Jesus here is not referring here to hungering and thirsting for food or water. Rather He is referring to a Spiritual hunger. However the aim is the same. Just as with physical hunger and thirst, Spiritual hunger and thirst is intended to drive us to the very thing that can sustain us and give us life.

Here Jesus, is not just referring to a hunger pang, which we may feel when having skipped a meal, but rather the intense hunger that a person on the brink of starvation would experience.

The word used here for hunger (πεινάω peinaō) is the same word used to describe how Jesus felt after having fasted in the wilderness: ***“After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” (Matthew 4:2).***

The word for “thirst” διψάω dipsaō is the same word Jesus used on the cross after Jesus had been hanging there for 6 hours and says “***I thirst***” (*John 19:28*)

So, what is the object of this hunger which we are looking at today? What are we to be hungering and thirsting after? What did Jesus mean when He uses the word “righteousness” – a word which He uses five times in His sermon on the mount?

In a nutshell, “Righteousness” consists of three things:

1. **Right standing before God**
2. **Right relationship with God, others and ourselves.**
3. **Right behaviour**

So the person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is the one that recognises that something is missing in this area.

1. One is not in right standing with God.
2. One’s relationship with God and others is not what it should be
3. One’s behaviour is not right.

II. The Universality of This Hunger

The interesting thing is this: Just as physical hunger and thirst is universal to all of mankind - we all need food and water to live; so too is this spiritual hunger and thirst common to all of humankind.

The unregenerate heart, the unbeliever, may not be able to articulate it; or admit to his/her need for God. (*Read 2 Corinthians 4:4*) But, friends, whether folk are able to put it into words or not, whether they are willing to admit it or not, this hunger and thirst exists in the heart of every man and woman. The Bible says: (*Read Ecclesiastes 3:11*).

French mathematician and Christian philosopher, Blaise Pascal put it this way:

“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.”

So, this hunger is a universal one!

III. The Warped Satisfying of this Hunger

All men and women are hungry and thirsty; the problem however, is that we try and fill that “God-shaped vacuum” with things other than the righteousness of God.

The world says: “chase after the temporal; those things that satisfy for the moment”, but one soon discovers when that thrill wears off, one needs the next big thing. The pursuit of happiness and contentment continues.

The world says: “*drown your sorrows*”. However, when the high of the drugs or the hangover of the alcohol wears off, one comes crashing back to earth, only to find the emptiness is still there.

Read Jeremiah 2:12–13



In other words, everything we try and fill this void with outside of God, is meaningless, empty, a chasing after the wind.

“ We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”(CS Lewis)

How true these words are. How humankind has made the great exchange. That which is temporal for that which is eternal. All in an attempt to satisfy this hunger and thirst on the inside.

IV. The True Satisfying of this Hunger

Friends, so what is the answer? We've looked at this hunger and thirst that is common to all members of the human race. We've looked at some of the many ways that folk try and sate this hunger and thirst, only to find that it's still there. So, what is the answer? Where is Jesus pointing us to in order to be filled?

To answer this let's look at two Gospel accounts:

The one is recorded in **John 4 - The Woman at the Well**. Like everyone else, this woman was searching. She was hungering and thirsting. Her attempts at filling the void in her life saw her travelling down a path of one failed marriage after another.



But then she meets Jesus at the well, and what are His words to her? **Read John 4:13-14** _____

The second account, is recorded in **John 6**. Remember Jesus feeds 5000 men besides women and children with only 5 loaves and 2 fish. Some people are intrigued by this and they follow Jesus, mainly for what they can get out of Him. **What does He say to them? Read John 6:26-27.**



What is Jesus doing here? To both the group in John 6 as well as the Woman at the well in John 4; to both sets of people who were on the search for something to fill the God-void in their souls, Jesus points them not to a system, not to set of rules - but He points them to Himself.

Hungry? – I am the bread of life

Thirsty? – I am the fountain of living water

And there lies the true and lasting satisfaction, dear friends, of this deep longing of the soul! A relationship with Jesus Christ. Not just knowing about Him, but knowing Him. Being in a living relationship with Him.

We thank God this morning that every longing, every desire every hunger pang within our souls for righteousness, to be in right standing with God, is met in the God-man, Christ Jesus. **Read Romans 3:21-24.** _____



Friend, where do you stand this morning? I wonder if anything said so far resonates with you. I wonder if you find yourself chasing after the wind, in your attempts to placate the hunger in your soul. If that's the case, God's Word would have you know today, your searching stops at Calvary. Your searching need look no further than the person of Jesus Christ, who says to the thirsty soul this morning: ***"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink (John 7:37).***

A closing thought.

Someone may be saying: I hear you. This message is a good one for someone outside of the faith, perhaps, but I am a Christian. So what is there in this text for me?

I'll answer this way: If you have a solid lunch this afternoon. The full on roast and three veggies, plus desert, and a drink. Despite all the cook's best efforts – will that meal be enough to last you for the week? No. This evening you may well be feeling peckish again. By tomorrow your stomach will certainly be letting you know its meal time.

Well, the tense of these words used by Jesus is present active. In other words it could be read ***"blessed are those who continue to hunger and continue to thirst for righteousness"***

You see, the hunger for God and the things of God don't stop when we come to faith in Christ. Yes, we are saved. Yes, we are declared righteous. Yes, we are filled with all that Christ has purchased for us on Calvary. But

- Day by day we hunger and thirst for the Holy Spirit to fill us and empower us anew;
- Day by day the Holy Spirit continues to guide us into all truth (John 16:13).
- When we stray, He convicts us and calls us back into right relationship with God and with others, as we confess and repent.
- As we learn and grow in our relationship with Christ, those things that matter to God, grow increasingly important to us; His priorities become our priorities. In the words of John the Baptist – He increases; we decrease.

Wherever you find yourself this day, dear friend, on the continuum of faith. A follower of Jesus or one who is still seeking, may you hear the word of Christ loudly and clearly speaking into the restlessness of your heart, calling you by name, pointing you to Himself.

- *Jesus the satisfier of every heart's hunger.*
- *Jesus, the quencher of every soul's thirst.*

Amen

God bless as you walk with Jesus this week.

Pastor Wayne

