

“Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. 5:6)
 - 1. “This beatitude prompts a look at our heart's desire. What hungers and desires operate within us? Which of them commands our utmost loyalty?” (John W. Miller, *The Christian Way*)
 - 2. “It is the desire for God which is the most fundamental appetite of all, and it is an appetite we can never eliminate. We may seek to disown it, but it will not go away. If we deny that it is there, we shall in fact only divert it to some other object or range of objects. And that will mean that we invest some creature or creatures with the full burden of our need for God, a burden which no creature can carry.” (Simon Tugwell, *The Beatitudes*)
 - 3. “To be hungry is not enough. I must be starving to know what God’s will is for me. When the prodigal son was hungry, he went to feed on the husks of the pigs; but, when he was starving, he went to his father.” (Darby)
- B. A beatitude rich and powerful in meaning
 - 1. A desire, the object of that desire, the satisfying of that desire
 - 2. Blessed - makarios - “supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off; blessed, happy” (Strong's)
 - 3. Hunger - peinao - “the idea of pinching toil; pine; to famish, to crave; to hunger” (Strong's)
 - 4. Thirst - dipsao - “to thirst for; be parched, thirsty” (Strong's)
 - 5. Righteousness - dikaiosune - “equity of character or action; especially Christian justification; the state of righteousness” (Strong's)
 - 6. Filled - kortadzo - “to fodder, generally to gorge; supply food in abundance; feed, fill, satisfy” (Strong's)

I. A DESIRE – HUNGER AND THIRST

- A. How can one hunger and thirst for righteousness when the body is hungry for food and suffering from thirst?
 - 1. In the Exodus, the Israelite women weren’t thirsty only; they needed water to facilitate lactation for their babies. Their milk was drying up and they were watching their babies die of starvation in their arms. Abraham Maslow and the hierarchy of human needs
 - 2. Are you so quick to criticize them now?
 - 3. Spirituality and maturity are processes only achieved by exercise, and I have no right to Pharisaically pronounce a brother unrighteous while he is in the midst of his trial trying to grow.
 - 4. God may do so, and I may come to see him as erring if he fails in his trial, but I must ask myself what I would do under the circumstances

- B. "The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops seeking" (Thomas Aquinas)
1. Psalm 63:1-8; John 6:28-35, 48-51, 4:9-15

II. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE – RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. Not our own righteousness - Isa. 64:6; Matt. 5:20; Phil. 3:8-10
- B. Righteousness from God - Rom. 10:1-4; Phil. 3:9; Rom. 1:16-17
1. Matt. 6:33 - Put the pursuit of righteousness above all other activities
 2. 1John 3:7 - Let God define righteousness; our part is to do it

III. THE SATISFYING OF DESIRE – FILLED

- A. What do you do when you are hungry? Eat! There is enough food and drink in the Bible to last one several lifetimes
1. 1Peter 2:2; Psalm 37:3-8; 2Tim. 3:15
 2. "The soul can do without everything except the word of God, without which none at all of its wants are provided for." (Martin Luther, On Christian Liberty)
 3. "We need to encourage new believers to feed on God's Word; it is nourishment for the soul. Faith grows when it is planted in the fertile soil of God's Word." (Graham)
 4. "Don't feed your body and keep your spirit starving. Butter bread for your body and living bread for your spirit; read the Bible every day and keep your spirit away from hunger." (Israelmore Ayivor, Daily Drive)