

Hungry and Thirsty

Matthew 5:6

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Before I get to today's passage let me first tell you what I did last Sunday afternoon. One of my most enjoyable family activities is to make home-made pizza. How I love getting out



the frying pan, peeling back the wrapper from the bacon and as it cooks hear the sizzle and smell that beautiful aroma! And if this doesn't make my mouth water and stomach cry out to be fed certainly the ground beef, sausages, sautéed onions and green peppers certainly does the trick! It is not just the exquisite smells that make this event so special but the fact that my wife joins in with the cooking while my daughter skillfully piles all

those delicious ingredients one upon the other, topping it with boat loads of mozzarella cheese to give us a pizza that is a

whopping inch thick! I had my mother and father-in-law over whom I dearly love, and everyone ate until satisfied except for me who ate until it truly hurt. And yet despite stretching my stomach to beyond what was natural, next morning I got up and guess what ... I was once again hungry! What is true in our physical lives is it not also true in our spiritual lives as well? Even though the mouth watering, gut busting, pizza was a whopping inch or so thick I would never dream of it keeping my body fueled for an entire week so why would Christians think that deep meditation on God's word, passionate prayers, and joyful worship for an hour or two would keep their souls fed for the rest of the week? We wander out into a hostile, world that is not our home (Hebrews 13:14) with every intention of being more like Jesus but instead of letting our light shine (Matthew 5:16) we run out of spiritual fervor and become drunk in the wine of their vain wanderings of self-satisfaction! So, we are left with the perplexing question: how does one who has found such a great treasure and pearl in the field (Matthew 13:44-46) become so hungry and thirsty for righteousness that one seeks and becomes a reflection of the Master who purchased one at the price of His very life (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)? Let us now turn to Matthew 5:6 and hear Jesus' glorious promise on this matter.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.”

Blessed are Those

Jesus' promise begins with the word **μακάριος** or blessed which can be defined as "pertaining to being happy, with implication of favorable circumstances."¹ Being blessed is not to be mistaken with the delusion that through the "trespass of omission"² one can obtain not only the envied



riches of this world such as money, fame and power but also spiritual blessings as well by practicing a form of religion³ that does not

adhere to the truth in which its blessing are derived.⁴ Blessedness is not receiving what Isaiah called "illegitimate food," of worldly pleasures (55:2)⁵ but is being approved of by God because one is filled with a desire⁶ to do what is right in His sight!⁷ A blessed believer tends to have "nothing in the world, nothing at all, but everything with God."⁸ For example,

though they had no property to call their own were not the disciples truly blessed?⁹ And does not Jesus at the beginning and end of the Sermon on the Mount clearly state that blessed are those who are poor in spirit, who mourn for the sick, who are meek and persecuted for righteousness sake (verses 3-5, 10-12)?¹⁰

The truly blessed Christian rejoices that the Holy Spirit is working in and through them to help them throw off the "craving of the lust, the greed of avarice, the passion of hate and the pining of ambition"¹¹ of their sinful nature so that they might partake in God's menu for the soul, righteousness!¹²

Despite trials, tribulations and injustices blessed Christians continuously rejoice that they have gone from darkness to light and death to life¹³ not by their own merits but by grace and through faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Son. Unlike their old earthly dreams and treasures that never satisfied or

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 301.

² C. H. Spurgeon, "The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 488.

³ C. H. Spurgeon, "The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 487.

⁴ I am not sure where I got this quote from but it is not my own.

⁵ Tony Evans, "Blessed Are the Spiritually Famished," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Mt 5:6.

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 74.

⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, "The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 487.

⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "On the 'Extraordinary' of Christian Life," in *Discipleship*, ed. Victoria J. Barnett, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss, Reader's Edition., Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 70.

⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "On the 'Extraordinary' of Christian Life," in *Discipleship*, ed. Victoria J. Barnett, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss, Reader's Edition., Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 71.

¹⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 74.

¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, "The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 487.

¹² Tony Evans, "Blessed Are the Spiritually Famished," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Mt 5:6.

¹³ C. H. Spurgeon, "The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 487.

gave them any hope¹⁴ the spiritual blessings they have received are unshakeable and eternal! They are blessed because even though they continue to wrestle with their sinful nature they know that through their hunger and thirst and by overtures of grace and the power of the Spirit they can approach God's throne and with each step they take they will draw nearer to He who is their heart's desire and portion forever!

Feeding our Souls with the Right Food

To be blessed by God the believer needs to fill their soul with righteousness. To the church of Philippi Paul wrote



that despite God having taken the "righteousness of Christ and credited it to the believers"¹⁵ they are still obligated to work out their "salvation with fear and trembling" (2:12). Being right in the sight of God is the spiritual food of someone who is born again.¹⁶ Pursuing and being consumed by the lusts worldly

ways is like a baby sucking on a pacifier, it gives a pretense of great satisfaction but never truly satisfies the soul! As babes in Christ we start out craving milk but are expected to spiritually grow so that we might take in and apply the meat of the Gospel message (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). To grow spiritually requires not only grace and the power of the Holy Spirit but also an insatiable desire to be fed by the Master! How does coming into church view but not feeding upon the grace of God to be continually transformed into His image help a person to become more like Jesus? Just like the physical body needs to eat and drink numerous times a day to function well,¹⁷ our souls need to be nourished by God's word and prayer to fend off our sinful nature that still wants to rule our hearts and make us imitators of this world!

Too many Christians are being pacified by the pretense of holiness while inside their souls are whimpering, crying, and screaming¹⁸ to get into the presence of the Lord so that they might be filled with what is holy, right and pleasing in His sight!

O that we would refuse to live unsatisfied lives of creating our own cisterns that do not carry living waters (Jeremiah 2:13) but instead humbly but in Christ boldly approach God's throne

¹⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 74.

¹⁵ Tony Evans, "[Blessed Are the Spiritually Famished](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Mt 5:6.

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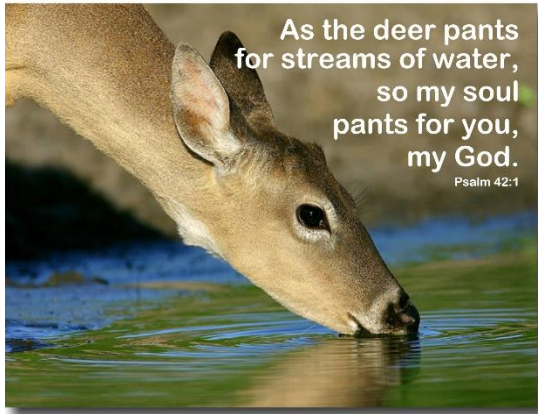
¹⁷ Tony Evans, "[Blessed Are the Spiritually Famished](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Mt 5:6.

¹⁸ Tony Evans, "[Blessed Are the Spiritually Famished](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Mt 5:6.

of grace (Hebrews 4:16) and be fed by the Master who alone can fulfill our heart's desire to be more like Him!

Becoming Hungry and Thirsty for Righteousness

To be blessed by God the believer needs to be hungry and thirsty to be right in His sight! While righteousness is imputed or implanted upon one's heart by God¹⁹ this does not absolve the believer's duty to do everything they can to draw nearer to their Lord, Savior and King! This means joining Apostle Paul and not just crying out, "oh wretched man (woman) I am"²⁰ but also pleading with God to change one's "thrill of lust that



leaves the sediment of guilt and loneliness²¹ into a genuine desire to avoid the "gutters of life"²² by abhorring,²³ mourning, and repenting of one's sins! "In other words, after pronouncing a blessing upon those who recognize their emptiness and grieve over it and don't try to justify or defend themselves, Jesus now makes a transition from emptiness to fullness by saying that hunger and thirst for righteousness is also blessed."²⁴ Once the temple of the Spirit is divinely swept clean the next step is to pray without ceasing that one might join the Psalmist and as the deer pants for the streams of water (Psalms 42:1-2) one's soul might fervently and joyfully long to "live out one's days in conformity to God's will."²⁵

Spurgeon rightly describes a panting soul as, "Your soul is hungry, and your heart is thirsty. You feel an insatiable longing for something. You are restless. Almost everywhere you turn, the grass is greener than where you stand."²⁶

Knowing one is made for another world and for God Himself,²⁷ the righteous "crave to know, obey, pray, praise, and love God"²⁸ and by their" integrity, kindness, and mercifulness,"²⁹

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 482.

²⁰ Tony Evans, "[Blessed Are the Spiritually Famished.](#)" in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Mt 5:6.

²¹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²² Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 99.

²³ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 483.

²⁴ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁵ Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 40.

²⁶ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁷ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

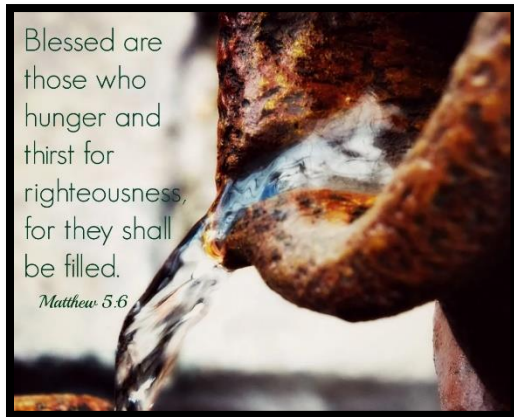
²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 483.

²⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 483.

they share the love and compassion they have received with their neighbors while they live His words, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven!”³⁰

Being Filled by the Master

To finish the promise Jesus boldly declares that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled! If you are no longer satisfied with being pacified³¹ by the pretense of



religion barren of fruit, then believe that who came to give us the bread of life and living waters provides what the fervent and thirsty soul needs: every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3) and an abundant life (John 10:10) filled

with His glorious presence! When Jesus says one will be filled with righteousness through one's hunger and thirst this is not a one time but lifetime endeavor. Spurgeon explains this

³⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 484.

³¹ Tony Evans, “[Blessed Are the Spiritually Famished.](#)” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Mt 5:6.

³² C. H. Spurgeon, “[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 489.

apparent paradox by explaining that “grace fills, and then enlarges. Increase of grace is increase of capacity for grace. Cry still, “Lord, increase my faith, my love, my hope, my every grace! Enlarge my soul, that I may take in more and more of Thee!”³² And even though one will still have to “cry out with the leper unclean, unclean, one can stand not condemned but justified in Christ, accepted in Him and in Him complete.”³³

Though the believer cannot vanquish the sinful nature³⁴ one certainly can and must struggle against it and by faith present oneself as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing unto one's Creator (Romans 12:1-2)!

Those who are right in God's sight are never satisfied with their spiritual walk but as those who see dimly now (1 Corinthians 13:12) they constantly and fervently yearn to take one step after another in the Master's footsteps in hopes that one day they will hear the words, “good and faithful servant” (Colossians 3:12-13)! In the meantime, may God's own never stop meditating and submitting to His right to rule over their hearts not only as those who must but those who want too because He alone is their Pearl, Treasure and Portion forever and ever, Amen!

³³ C. H. Spurgeon, “[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 490.

³⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, “[The Hunger and Thirst Which Are Blessed.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 35 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1889), 490.

Answering the Call

Today we stand at the crossroads of choice, either to remain spiritually bankrupt lukewarm Christians or become the good and faithful servants we were created by His grace and our hunger and thirst to be! There is more to living in the Vine than the mere pretense of holiness without any effort! Being blessed does not come from the trespass of omission of practicing a form of religion by denying its power. It is not the



riches of this world such as money, fame, or power that we seek but the very presence and approval of our Creator that one can boldly and joyfully state it is well with my soul! May Christ's sacrifice ignite within us guilt from our indifference and may His comfort and love spark a never enduring fervent desire to be fed by the Master and sustained by His grace to walk

in His very footsteps. Even though righteousness is imputed and imparted by our Creator this does not this does not absolve the believer's duty to do everything they can to draw nearer to their Lord, Savior and King! And while we often will have to cry out "O wretched man or woman I am" for the blessed this is not a cry of defeat but an invitation to receive divine strength. It is precisely in our abhorring, morning, and

repenting that our temples are swept clean, and we transition from emptiness to fulness in our Lord! May those who yearn to be right in God's sight never be satisfied with their spiritual walk but as those who see dimly now may they constantly and fervently yearn to take one step after another in the Master's footsteps in hopes that one day they will hear the words, "good and faithful servant"! So, let's answer the Lord's call and with thanksgiving let's invite Him to continue to plow furrows of righteousness in our hearts and may we live with eternity constantly in our sight! Until Jesus returns may our hearts desire be to never stop meeting and pleasing Him in this land that is not our home!