



Our Appetites Will Determine Our Destiny

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

I. INTRO

A. We are what we eat...

1. The same is true of our spiritual life -- if we feed on materialism, or sensuality, for instance, we will become that...
2. The Bible has countless references to the idea that you and I will become what we worship.
 - a. "All humans have been created to be reflecting [worshiping] beings, and they will reflect whatever they are ultimately committed to, whether the true God or some other object in the created order...we resemble what we revere, either for ruin or restoration."¹ --G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship* (See Psalm 115:8 and 135:18)
 - b. Here's what we need to see as we begin our study: Our appetites and desires will determine our destiny.

B. Last week I said the Beatitudes are THE most profound section in the whole Bible for self-examination and analysis.

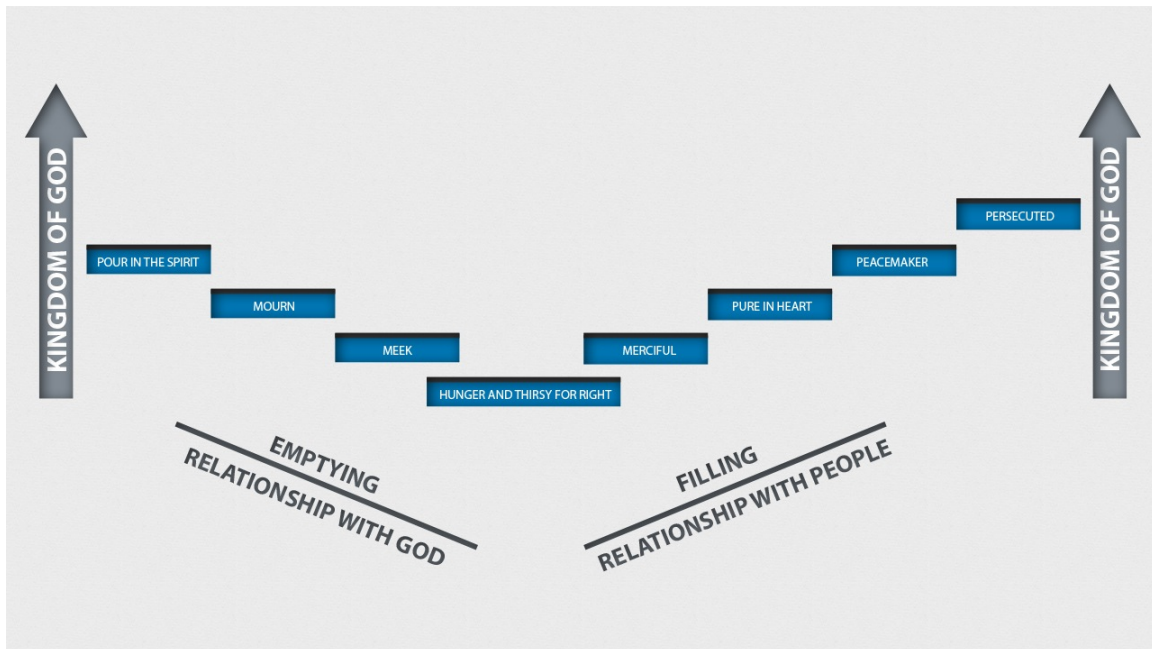
1. If we really want to see our own heart for what it is, then we must look closely at the Beatitudes for the Beatitudes are intended to help us confront the most brutal facts of our current reality.
2. The Beatitudes are a spiritual formation process taught by Jesus Himself. The Beatitudes tell us what individual renewal looks like, and our hope is that individual renewal will lead to church-wide renewal.
3. Review:

¹ G. K. Beale. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*, IVP Academic 2008: 49. (I would not suggest buying this book because it's so academically rigorous. Buy *Counterfeit God's* by Tim Keller instead.)

- a. **Poor in spirit:** Admitting we do not have the spiritual resources necessary to carry out God's will and requirements.
- b. **Mourn:** Sorrowful repentance over both the selfish corruption in my own heart as well as the corruption in the broken world around me.
- c. **Meek:** A humbled learner (i.e., an authentic disciple)

II. BODY

- A. Let's look at and read Matthew 5:1-10: *"Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:*
- ³ *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- ⁴ *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*
- ⁵ *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*
- ⁶ *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*
- ⁷ *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*
- ⁸ *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*
- ⁹ *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*
- ¹⁰ *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. --Mathew 5:1-10 (Emphasis added) [Verses 11-12 are extensions of v. 10]*
- B. Let's take note of the use of repetition in this passage...[Pray]



- C. Our passage today is: “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*” --Matthew 5:6
- D. Mat 5:6 describes the *appetite* (hunger & thirst) as well as the *menu* (righteousness) that will lead us into spiritual health. It tells us **WHAT** to eat and **HOW** we should eat it.
- E. We will ask three simple questions of our text: 1) What does *righteousness* mean? 2) What does it mean to *hunger and thirst*? And 3) What does it mean to be *satisfied*?

1. What does *righteousness* mean?

- a. We must first say what righteousness is NOT referring to here:
- 1) This verse is not speaking of righteousness that is related to the doctrine of justification but has more to do with the doctrine of sanctification.
 - a) **Justification:** (NCC-Q 25) “Because Christ’s death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin God graciously *imputes* Christ’s righteousness to us as if it were our own and will remember our sins no more.”
 - i. *Imputed righteousness* means the perfect righteousness of Jesus is ‘imputed’ (or credited or reconciled) to the believer. It’s not our

righteousness but Christ's and we receive it by grace through faith (see Romans 3-5).²

ii. "He has covered me with the robe of righteousness." --Isaiah 61:10)

b) **Sanctification:** (NCC-Q 32) "Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness, made possible by the Spirit's work in us."

2) The righteousness that Mat 5:6 is speaking about is more the Sanctifying Righteousness: An ongoing pattern of intense desire to conform to God's will. Our desire, or longing to please God and honor God grows and becomes more intense.

b. The word righteousness is used only one other place in the other three gospels (Lk 1:75), yet righteousness is used seven times in Matthew – and five times in the SOTM and each time it means the idea of conformity to God's will, which includes pursuing after God and wanting to become more like God.

c. So, the first three Beatitudes speak of an emptying and this fourth turns the corner with a deep desire (or longing) to know, love, and please God.

2. What does it mean to *hunger and thirst*?

a. The terms *huger and thirst* are descriptions of the strongest impulses of any human being. (Our market-driven western culture would have us think our strongest impulse is our sexuality, but that's because we take *hunger and thirst* for granted.)

1) The average Palestinian in Jesus' time often lived on the edge of starvation and/or dehydration. They knew, much better than us, what it meant to be physically hungry and thirsty.

2) Many of them may have been in the throes of severe thirst and hunger pangs even as Jesus spoke – which makes what Jesus is saying all the more intense!

² As opposed to *infused or imparted* righteousness wherein it becomes "ours."

- 3) Jesus is not describing the kind of polite hunger that hits us at about 3pm every day, Jesus is talking about a desperate and continuous hunger that is seeking to honor and please God.
 - a) *“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”* --Psalm 42:1-2a
 - b) *“O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”* --Psalms 63:1
 - c) *“I humbled my soul with fasting.”* --Psalms 35:13b [We have an all-church fast coming up Jun 15-17]
- b. Let me provide you with a silly (and embarrassing) illustration of hungering after something...
 - 1) My favorite ice cream is Ben & Jerry’s Coffee Heath-Bar Crunch.
 - 2) I can only buy it once or twice a year because when I do it never lasts more than an hour or two.
 - 3) When we are hungry for something we really enjoy one or two or three bites is simply not satisfying. The mere taste causes a continual hunger.
 - 4) This is what Jesus is saying will happen to us as we hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- c. *“To be hungry is not enough; I must really be starving to know what is in His heart towards me...when the [younger] prodigal son [Luke 15] was hungry he [ate pig’s food], but when he was starving he turned to his father.”*³ --Martyn Lloyd-Jones (quoting John Nelson Darby)

3. What does it mean to be *satisfied*?

- a. Let’s read our verse one more time: *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”* --Matthew 5:6
- b. There is a gospel promise contained in this verse.

³ *Studies In the Sermon on the Mount*: 81.

- 1) Walking in glad submission to Jesus doesn't mean we will avoid problems and pain, but it does mean that we can have God's presence and peace in the midst of problems and pain.
- 2) We are never to reduce the Christian faith to a matter of demands or resolutions or willpower.

III. **CONCLUSION** (2 thoughts as we close...)

- A. Here is the BOTTOM LINE BIG IDEA of this passage: **Spiritual health will come from spiritual hunger (for God's righteousness).**
- B. "If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."⁴ --C.S. Lewis

⁴ *The Weight of Glory*: 1-2.