

The King's People: Hungry and Thirsty

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[0 : 00] Again, we turn to the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5. This morning we're looking at verse 6, so I'm going to start at verse 1. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

He opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth, our text. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Thank you, praise team, once again. And for my Baptist friends out there, we had a believer's baptism today.

That young man, Andrew, that was a believer's baptism. He put his faith in the Lord Jesus, and we had the privilege of welcoming him into the church officially. I think for a lot of people, righteousness is like alcohol, to be taken in moderation.

[1 : 24] Being good is okay, but being bad is better, or at least more fun. Only the good die young. If you talk too much about righteousness, you are dull.

A buzzkill. Boring. Yet people want to be treated right. And righteousness becomes very important when we believe we've been treated badly, or with unrighteousness.

What do we say? That's not fair. Somebody has a standard of righteousness. We say that's wrong. We say that's evil. That's wicked. Somebody has a standard of righteousness. What do you desire? What do you desire for you? If you have children, what do you desire for your children? Are you satisfied that your children go to school, get a good degree, and get a good job?

[2 : 38] I think some of us are. I've seen it time and time again. We're not, we're too easily satisfied.

And that makes us like the culture around us. We're worldly. And all we want is success for our kids. But there's something missing if they're just successful.

Actually, they're not successful. Not before God. What do you want for this country?

Is the answer to all those questions righteousness? Are you just satisfied with being successful? Being comfortable? Being good people? Our Lord uses the imagery here of hunger and thirst.

[3 : 49] Because they were basic realities of the people to whom he was preaching. They were the working class poor. Drought or dried up wells could make water very difficult.

Food would then become scarce if there was no water to irrigate the crops. Nobody in their right mind would see hunger and thirst as signs of God's blessing.

And we don't today, do we? We say blessed is the one whose fridge is full and can eat at the best restaurants. We have an entire theological, I will say false theological system, called the faith prosperity gospel.

But is it a hunger and thirst for righteousness? When we speak of hunger and thirst, what he's talking about here is a deep desire.

An intense desire. Like a person who's starving or dehydrated in the desert. As such a person would desire food and water, Jesus says his kingdom people desire righteousness.

[5 : 13] It's not a momentary desire. It's something that aches in us. Something that overwhelms us. Something that's on our mind.

Because listen, if you were dehydrated or starving, what would be on your mind all the time? Food and drink. Jesus says his people, I like that.

But about righteousness. Righteousness. Ultimately, we hunger and thirst to look like Jesus.

First of all, God is righteous. Right? I mean, the Bible is clear on that.

When you look at one person like Psalm 116 verse 4, it just simply says, verse 5, gracious is the Lord and righteous. Our God is merciful.

[6 : 19] It is God's nature to be righteous. Because righteous simply means that which is right.

God in himself always does what is right. And he is also the standard for that which is right.

God is a righteous judge. Amen. Psalm 71 says this. God is a righteous judge.

And a God who feels indignation every day. Why does God feel indignation every day?

The King James says it this way. He is angry with the wicked every day. Do you get it? God who is righteous, who always does what is right, and the standard of right is in indignation every day because the world is full of people who don't do right.

[7 : 32] According to him who is the standard of what is right. So when you are brought into the kingdom by Jesus, we have to understand, therefore, that the king's people have a deep desire to be right with God.

Right with God. Now many scholars agree that the type of righteousness our Lord is talking about mostly in the Sermon on the Mount is actually what we call practical righteousness.

Doing right. In chapter 5, verse 10, we will be persecuted for righteousness. In chapter 5, verse 20, the righteousness of those in the kingdom have to exceed that of the Pharisees, the religious leaders of their day, and they were known for our acts of righteousness.

In 6.3, we are to beware of practicing our righteousness in order to be seen by others and get pats on the back. And of course, in 6.33, you know this one, the priority of our lives as the people of the king is to make the kingdom of God and his righteousness the greatest pursuit of our lives.

Seek first, he says. God's kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness. Romans 14, for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace, we sang it, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

[9 : 18] Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. To serve God in righteousness, he says you are approved by him and he even says people.

Some people actually like righteousness. This is practical righteousness. Simply put, R.C. Sproul says, real righteousness is simply doing what is right.

We're going to come back to this, all right? That was the setup. We're going to come back. Because here's the thing. Here's the thing. Adam and Eve fell from the righteousness that God gave them in their rebellion against God.

The garden of Eden was a fall from righteousness. This means that all their kids and their kids' kids and their kids' kids' kids and you're going down the line until we get to you.

All their kids have a spiritual allergy to righteousness. We go into spiritual anaphylactic shock when told to be righteous according to God's standard.

[10 : 25] Because technically speaking, righteousness is being in conformity to God's law. You drive the speed limit, as it were.

That means you are righteous before the state troopers. Conformity to the law. But we naturally hate God.

In and of ourselves, we hate God and His law. That's why in Romans 5 we're called enemies of God. We hate Him.

We don't want that God. We don't want His righteousness because it convicts us. So how in the world can we hunger and thirst for righteousness if we hate Him and we hate righteousness?

Paul said it, there is none righteous, no, not one. something has to happen before we can have an intense desire to do right by God.

[11 : 31] We have to be right with God. And that brings us to the first three Beatitudes, doesn't it? Because those early marks of what it means when Jesus draws us into the kingdom, He causes us to recognize our spiritual bankruptcy.

That we are moral failures. That we have nothing to offer God. That we're not good. We come before God recognizing that we're not good.

And we mourn over that. Blessed are those who mourn. That breaks our hearts. It kills us, as it were. That, oh, we're not but God. Well, we should be before God because we recognize God is good.

That causes us, therefore, to submit ourselves to God. Whatever you want, your will be done. I've done my will long enough. My will has got me where I am.

Lord, thy will be done. Thy, not mine, your kingdom come. You see? It flows. It's only those folk who then know what it means to hunger and thirst after righteousness because it isn't the way they were.

[13:00] They hunger and thirst for what they did not have. They hunger and thirst to be satisfied with God's righteousness. I want to do what is right before you.

More than that, I want to be right before you. Because you can't desire to do right unless, of course, you've been made right.

Come on, somebody. Come on, somebody. We call that being right before God a positional righteousness.

That's our position, as it were, before God. We stand before Him because of Jesus. We stand before Him righteous in His sight.

It's His work. How do we receive? How do we get this righteousness in our standing before God? Do we have to earn it? Well, we know we can't do that because we recognize our spiritual poverty.

[14:08] Then how do we get this righteousness? We must receive it from the King by faith as His gift. Romans 5, 17.

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man as Adam, much more will those who received the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

The free gift of righteousness is of grace. You didn't earn it. The free gift is a gift. It's free. God is not coerced to give it. He did nothing and twisted his arm.

I have to save you, Leonard, because you're so good. Well, no, because Leonard was not so good. So it's a freedom. God is free to dispense it or not dispense it.

He chose to dispense it because of grace. He didn't earn it. He doesn't deserve it. But how does he receive it? Faith.

[15:15] Faith. Faith. This cord at some point is connected to a power source, I'm sure. It's in there. I can't see it. This is the microphone.

The microphone works because of the power source. Power has to get from that socket to the microphone. That power is the power of God.

The microphone is you, your soul. How do you get the power? We have a cord. The cord is not the source of the power.

It is only a conduit of the power. We don't praise the cord. We praise the source. So faith is not a work.

It's just a conduit. It's also the free gift of God God. So that you and your soul and the power of God connect.

[16:24] Hallelujah. This is a positive stance before God. It is called side A, people. Side A.

It is called the doctrine of justification. Westminster Confession. Westminster Larger Catechism. Question 70. Here it is. What is justification?

Answer. Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners in which he pardons all our sins, accepts, and accounts their persons righteous in his sight, not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ by God imputed to them, personally I count, imputed to them and received by faith alone.

Side A, good theology. Justification is a legal act of the divine God, the holy God. He does something in the heavenly court. He declares you righteous.

That's a judgment. It's a legal term. That's a judgment. God sees you positionally standing before his bar of divine justice, divine righteousness, and he says, you're good.

[17:44] You deserve death for your sin, you say, but how is it possible? Romans 1.32, though they know God's righteous decree, those who practice this thing deserve to die.

They not only do them, but they give approval to those who practice them. That's how we are. So how can he declare us righteous and be a good judge? That's a, what, faith? Because of faith in Jesus, our sins have been paid for by, as the catechism said, by another.

One who never sinned, and that person's righteousness is imputed to us. That's a Bible word. It means it's, it's placed on our account.

It's placed on your account. Your, see, before that happened, your account was in the red. You were overdrawn. You had no do re mi for heaven.

Your currency didn't work. Heaven's currency said it was this way. It was like, it's like coming to America and trying to spin yen. It don't work.

[18:56] We don't accept it here. You see, your good works is a currency that heaven can't accept because your, your good works are messed up. So God has to then give you a new account.

He's got to fill your account with the right kind of currency. The currency of heaven. And the currency of heaven is none other than the righteousness of Christ. You see, when you have his righteousness, you are rich. Ha ha ha. For your sakes, he who was rich became poor that you through his poverty might be made rich. You are now rich in righteousness. When you stand before God, you, your account is fat, baby. You stinking with money in heaven. You are set. You are justified just as if you had never sinned. Hallelujah. You are satisfied. [20 : 03] You're right with God now. Not because of you, but because of Jesus. But this righteousness is not only a spiritual or positional righteousness, righteousness, it is righteousness that can be seen.

And that's the big point here. The king's people have a deep desire to do what is right and to treat others right. Side B. Righteousness covers A and B. That's what Carl and Karen have been teaching us in their classes. So if you were in a class, you know what I'm talking about. Side A, side B. I'm sorry, alpha and beta. We changed it because it got corrupted by some other folk. So it's alpha and beta. Thank you. Sorry about that, guys. Beta here is practical or imparted righteousness. You see, it's not enough to hunger for a right relationship with God. That desire has got to come with a desire to obey him. Romans 2.13, for it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. [21 : 20] You see, when God declares you positionally righteous, that causes a practical righteousness to be seen or you have neither.

If you're, if you are claiming positional righteousness, but then you decide God, you're going to do what you want to do and not obey God, you have nothing. You're still broke and you don't want to die in that condition. Christ is our righteousness. Whether we speak of being or doing, of imputed or imparted, of positional or practical, it doesn't matter. Christ is our righteousness. We still fall, so we need his righteousness, his good behavior to be put on our account too. His good behavior. We talk about his active and passive righteousness. This is his active, Christ's active righteousness. He kept the law that you broke. He always kept the law that you and I always break and that righteousness too is imputed to us so that when you fall, your position is not moved. [22 : 37] Come on. If that's not true, when you fall, your position slips. But because Christ is your positional and your practical righteousness, when you fall and you do, when you fall, even though you're seeking to do what is right before God, because that's now your heart, you love, you hunger, and thirst to do what is right before God.

Amen? Because that's true. But you're still human. You're still falling. We ain't in heaven yet. You fall. And when you fall, his righteousness still covers you. It still covers you. So you don't lose anything with God. You don't, you may have to listen, there may be consequences for your fall. I'm sorry, Christians, but sometimes we don't want to accept that. we don't want to accept the consequences for our fall. But Jesus loves me. I'm saved. Yes. Your position has not been touched, but there may be consequences for that fall. You may lose something. You may have to, dare I say it, you may have to go before the court, the magistrate, and it may not go well, but your position before the heavenly court has not been touched. [24 : 01] So you'll be, you'll be saved and in jail. You'll be saved and in the hospital because of your foolishness.

Come on, somebody. I'm trying to help somebody. I don't know who it is. You're out there somewhere. I'll find you. Where we fail, he covers our failure and his victory. Where we are disobedient, his obedience covers us. It's funny, the first person to be described as righteous was a man named Noah. Remember Noah? The boat builder? Built a boat with no water in sight. They thought he was crazy. Genesis 6, 9 says, Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. Righteous and blameless. But after the flood, what happened with Noah? Noah got so drunk. [25 : 02] Boy, I guess he said, we survived. Woo, we made it. I need a drink. And Noah, he didn't just drink, he guzzled. Man pulled out the man of Shevitz.

You know, that's the ugly stuff. And he was guzzling, he was rejoicing, he was so happy. He drank himself into a stupor. Boy, they, boy was naked in his tent.

Now, you know that's drunk, y'all. And because of that, one of his grandsons, one of his sons found him and ended up causing great problems in their family.

God said of Noah, knowing that Noah would do that, he said of Noah that he is righteous and blameless in my sight. Why?

Because Noah walked with God. Noah had faith in God. God had drawn Noah to himself. God went after Noah. And that's why Noah walked with God, not because Noah was wise and smart.

[26 : 03] No, he walked with God because the Bible says Noah found grace. Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord. When all his generation were falling down and sinning against God and living their lives the way they want, it was a corrupt world.

And God said, I'm going to have to wipe this thing out. I got to start over. And he said, but the Bible says Noah found grace. Noah found favor. That was a gift. And God called him righteous and blameless even though he knew, Daryl, that Noah would get so drunk and cause a whole people to come from that drunkenness.

That drunkenness led to something called the Canaanites eventually. Horrible situation. But God still said, because why?

Noah's position was secure. Ultimately, Noah's sins were forgiven in Jesus. You see, that's, you can understand it. The old covenant saints were not saved by their works.

They too were saved by faith. Faith in God. Faith in the covenant God. But ultimately, but their sins were atoned for. You see, in the old covenant, he covered their sins.

[27 : 15] But in the new covenant, our sins are washed away in Jesus. See, that's where Noah's righteousness ultimately came from even though he knew nothing about Christ. God did.

But still, we have this hunger and thirst because let's be honest, we've been used to doing the wrong thing. Even though, listen, you may have been saved 40 years like me.

81. So how many years is that? I'm in the 40s, right? Yeah. I'm in the 40s. Somewhere in the 40s. I still have my flesh.

I still have this. I want to do right before God. I want to honor him with every breath I take. But you know something? Kevin Smith rises up in me. Not Jesus.

Kevin Smith rises up. And though I hunger and thirst for righteousness, yes, I have to hunger and thirst because I see me.

[28 : 20] I hunger and thirst because I don't want Kevin Smith to rise up. I want Kevin Smith to sit that down boy. Let the Spirit of God have free reign.

That's what you want, isn't it? We hunger for that so that we walk worthy of the Lord each and every day. We hunger to live as children of light because we are children of God through the Son.

1 John 2, 20 and 29. Now little children, abide in him so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. Has been born of him.

If you practice righteousness in the name of Jesus, you have been born of him. If you hunger and thirst to do right before God for the sake of Christ Jesus, you have been born of him and you are waiting for that day when he comes.

[29 : 29] Now what does that look like? Well, it means, righteousness means that we are people of integrity. We are people of truth. We are people of honesty. We are people who are trustworthy.

But it doesn't stop there. Because practical righteousness of the kingdom of God is not only personal, it's social. You know how I know?

Because the word for righteousness in Greek, Hebrew, Old Testament, New Testament is also translated justice. Righteousness and justice are the same thing.

Just two different words describing the same reality. And justice is always social. That's the nature of justice.

It's social. So if you are pursuing his right, if you are hungering and thirsting for righteousness, you are hungering and thirsting for personal righteousness to do right before God, but that must also mean you are seeking to do justice before other people.

[30 : 37] The righteous man is a just man. A righteous woman is a just woman. That's why Micah 6, 8 is our passage, right?

He has told you, O man, what is good and what does the Lord require of you? What does he require? But to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God. That's righteous. To do justice is to do righteousness. So we take our stand against what is wrong and we promote what is right.

It's not just negative. We don't just say that's wrong. We promote what is right. We display what is right. You can't tell people they're wrong if you're displaying unrighteousness.

We take a stand. We pursue. We hunger and thirst so we pursue right justice for others as well.

[31 : 38] Okay, I'm going to finish this up real quick but Jonathan Dobson, it's a good book I recommend it. It's called Our Good Crisis. Subtitle, Overcoming Moral Chaos with the Beatitudes.

Found it in my library. I know. Here's how it looks. Check this out. Someone gossips about your co-worker or your classmate or your church member or your pastors.

Do you confront the gossip and stand up for those people? Or just listen? Gossip is one of the great sins of the church.

Because too many of us listen to gossip. It's evil. Why don't you stand up and say that's wrong.

Why don't you stand up? Come back to this. Your boss asks you to do something unethical for the good of the institution, for the good of the company. Do you take an honest stand? Respectfully.

[32 : 45] Respectfully and refuse. refuse. You see your neighbors are not being treated ethically or legally by their landlord. Do you report him?

The landlord? You see an obvious injustice in your face taking place and you have the means to address it. Do you? Do you?

Do you? I don't want to get involved. That's the world. Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness?

If we, if not, why not? Why don't we get involved? The writer says because we lack moral courage.

C.S. Lewis called us men without ches. That is people who lack conviction and moral fiber.

See, when we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we have conviction and we have moral fiber. We don't just sit back and watch evil in our face and we can do something about it.

[33 : 47] Why does this, why does this happen to the people of God? He says the modern self prefers values over virtues. Values over virtues? He says transparency, kindness, and authenticity are preferred over honesty, goodness, and truth.

values drive success. Virtues forge character. Virtues are firm. Values are soft and mushy.

Say it, family. Righteousness is a spirit-produced virtue. It is not a value. It's a virtue that stands upon and pursues what God says is right against what he says is wrong.

Are you hungry and thirsty yet? Or just a little? Or maybe not at all? Well, my time's up.

He says those who experience this hunger and thirst will be satisfied. but we fail. So when will we be satisfied?

[35 : 05] At the appearing of Jesus. 1 John 3, beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who hopes in him like that purifies himself as he is pure. We are waiting. We hunger for his coming because finally we will be righteous.

Finally, there will be total confirmity to his law in our practice. Our position and our practice will match. You can't get more positionally righteous than you are right now.

That will never change. You can't do better than what you have right now in Jesus. But your practice, oh yeah, that can improve. And it will be perfect when Jesus comes.

It will be perfect and I love what John says, if we hope for him, if we hope for that coming, we will purify ourselves now. If you are trusting in Jesus and his coming, right now, you'll deal with sin in your life.

[36 : 08] Right now, you won't settle for being unrighteous. Right now, you won't settle for being a gossip. Right now, you won't settle for being the chicken. Right now, we won't settle for just letting people, watching people suffer and we can do something.

We won't be those people who just walk away and say, that's those, those people always get in trouble. Our hearts will break and we will do what we can in our sphere of influence.

No one's asking you to go save the world in your sphere of influence. Hello, in your neighborhood, in your family, in your job, in your school, where you hang out.

That's your sphere of influence. Are you pursuing righteousness there so that people will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven? Are you hungry yet?

Are you thirsty yet? God, has your heart been broken by the sacrifice of Christ for you? Because his death means you were that bad.

[37 : 23] If the Son of God had to die for us, that's because we were that bad. We were that lost. It took the blood of Jesus to make us righteous.

And now we have everything. We have everything. Father in heaven, bless your word to your people's hearts. Deliver us from unrighteousness.

May we pursue your will be done. May we pursue your word, your truth. May we pursue it with all of our heart. May we make plans, even, Lord, to follow you where we have not been following you.

Help us to plan to follow you rightly. Knowing that only by the power of your spirit and your word working in us, can we do it? We can't do it without Jesus.

We can't do it without you. Help us. Help us. And may this church be full of your righteousness and may our people go into their spheres of influence full of your righteousness that we might influence those who walk in darkness.

[38 : 34] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.