



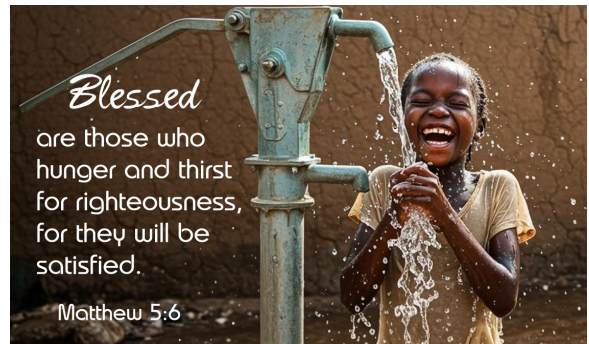
29 August 2025

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst

The fourth beatitude Jesus gives us is,

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied”
(Matthew 5:6).

I realize it may be a bit dangerous to talk about being hungry and thirsty—hunger pains and thirst may strike! You may tune out and get a snack. After all, we all get hungry and thirsty.



Of course, Jesus is not talking about physical hunger and thirst, but *spiritual* hunger and thirst, about an ongoing, deep hunger and thirst. He tells us, “Truly happy are those, and only those, who are possessed and driven by a genuine, consuming spiritual hunger and thirst for *righteousness*. Turning it around, you cannot be truly happy without a deep hunger and thirst to be righteous before God.

Righteousness. Being righteous. Whatever it means, it is important. Jesus points it to us a number of times after this in this sermon.

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (5:10).

“unless your righteousness far surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (5:20).

“Take care not to practice your righteousness in the sight of people, to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven” (6:1).

“seek first [God’s] kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you” (6:33).

The general meaning of righteousness is to meet a standard or satisfy a law. So it means to be *right* according to that standard or law. There are speed limits on our roads, there are standards in society for being polite and considerate of others. When we fulfill those standards we are *right*, we are *righteous* with respect to those standards.

What is first and foremost in Jesus' view here is being right with God. Righteousness speaks of our standing before God, of how we measure up to Him, to His perfect standards. An old and good description tells us that to be righteous is "the state of him who is such as he ought to be." We become as we ought to be, we become right with God through faith in Jesus Christ. On our own we are not righteous, but are sinners. When we placed our faith in Jesus as our Savior, God credited His righteousness to us. That is how God sees believers, in the righteousness of Christ.

Here Jesus is speaking of a present, ongoing desire for and then growth in living as *we ought to be*, living out God's righteousness, living out the character of Jesus.

Jesus has told us, "I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry, and the one who believes in Me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35). You may recall the old slogan "Fill it to the rim with Brim!" God fills those who hunger and thirst for righteousness to the rim with satisfaction. Satisfaction that comes from a rock-solid, real life knowledge of His faithfulness to us as we seek His righteousness. Satisfaction in seeing life more clearly, seeing it as we should, seeing it as God does. Satisfaction in seeing progress, growth, even if it is *three steps forward and two steps back* at times.

You will never be truly happy, really satisfied unless you are seeking God's righteousness. The more we grow in and experience God's righteousness, the more we will both dislike sin and seek to be more like Jesus. It is a journey, a path of growth that will continue as long as we are here on earth. Remember that Paul, toward the end of his life, told us that after all the years, after all the ministry, all the personal growth, after all the things God used him to accomplish, he had not yet *arrived*. His continued driving ambition was to know Christ better, to press on, to keep reaching forward to the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. He kept moving forward to keep growing in righteousness (Philippians 3:13-15). God satisfies those who are in this process of seeking His righteousness with satisfaction.

Yes, blessed, truly happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Pastor Lyle