

Cultivate Your Appetite

Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 5

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Matthew 5:6

The fourth beatitude is regarded as the final of a package of four **attitudes toward God** which He promises to bless. When we turn to the fifth beatitude we'll see a change. Instead of the response of the saved person to God, we begin to see the results of being saved in terms of how redeemed people treat others.

I. Who Is Blessed?

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

Blessed is the same word in each beatitude. It describes attributes inherent to God Himself. No one can be **blessed** in the sense of this word apart from God.

Hunger and **thirst** describe a **craving**, an intense **yearning**, a profound **sense of need**. Those words are perfect to describe the kind of desire we should cultivate.

After seeing the first few beatitudes it shouldn't surprise you to discover that **hunger and thirst** are both in that verb form which implies something that **goes on and on**. The more of the things of God you desire, the more God delights to fulfill your desire.

Psalms 107:8–9: *Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!
For He has satisfied the thirsty soul,
And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.*

Jesus is not teaching that the **way to salvation** is to hunger and thirst after it—you cannot achieve the righteousness He gives by any other means than by His grace and mercy. It comes only to those who recognize they are beggarly poor. If Jesus was saying you can achieve righteousness in the sense of being saved from your sin by merely hungering and thirsting after it, He would be contradicting Himself.

Look how Paul prayed for friends in Christ:

Philippians 1:9-11: *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness is something godly people have always known and always cultivated:

Psalm 42:1–2: 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; When shall I come and appear before God?

Psalm 63:1–4: 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. Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You. o I will **bless You as long as I live**; I will **lift up my hands in Your name**.

II. What Does The Blessing Include?

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

The person who genuinely hungers and thirsts for God's righteousness finds it so satisfying that he wants more and more. The grammar of the verse and the meaning of the word in this promise tell us four things about this blessing:

1. This is a satisfaction that **fills thoroughly** and **satisfies genuinely**.
2. This satisfaction which comes **only** to those who **hunger and thirst** after righteousness. As with the earlier beatitudes, the pronoun they is emphatic. It means **they and they alone**.
3. This is a satisfaction which comes from God Himself. The verb is in the **passive voice**. You cannot satisfy yourself; you **receive** the satisfaction, and obviously, God is the source of it.

James 1:17: Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

Jeremiah 31:14: "I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the LORD.

4. This is satisfaction which God guarantees to us **now and for all time** to come. As we saw with the future tense of the verbs in the promises of verses 4-5, this is the same. It is not future in the sense that the fulfillment of this promise is way off in the

future kingdom; it is future ***in relation to the hungering and thirsting***. Every time you hunger and thirst for righteousness the rest of your life, you will be filled to satisfaction. In the Kingdom of God, you will be satisfied. In the new heaven and new earth, you will be satisfied. This is part of the reason for the way Jesus taught the disciples to pray:

Matthew 6:10: *Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.*

God does **not** promise that we can always achieve a righteous outcome in every situation. That can be done only by Him.

Romans 12:19–21: *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “**VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,**” says the Lord. “**BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.**” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

In our enforced isolation these days, you might be lonely and discouraged and more than ever, want Jesus to return and rescue us. Don't despair! ***Hunger and thirst for righteousness!*** One of the most universal needs among Christians in our generation is to help people practice ***fasting*** from bad things, and ***feasting*** on good things.

I want to urge you to commit to a ***special diet***, at least for awhile, to take control of emotions and cultivate hunger and thirst for righteousness and the things it brings, which truly satisfy. The diet isn't about what we put into our mouths, it's about what we train our souls to desire. Here's the three-part plan.

1. **Continue** with the necessary things. People need to work, go to school, care for families, pay bills, eat, sleep, do chores, and handle the unexpected exigencies of life. We're not trying to become monks.
2. **Go on a 30-day FAST.** This fast is not refraining from food (eat healthy!). This is a fast from things that cause *distress*, *distract* from spiritual things, and often *exacerbate discouragement and depression*. I recommend staying away (total fasting) from radio and TV news, internet news, and political talk shows. All the better if you also stay away from all social media.
3. **Go on a 30-day FEAST.** Whatever time you would have spent on the things you fast from, spend it on ***feasting for your soul***. Everyone will be different, but it doesn't matter how you compare to someone else, only how you feed your own soul.

Some things you could do:

Commit to reading through a ***book of the Bible***, and reading all the notes in your study Bible along the way. Go at your own pace.

Commit to reading or re-reading a **good Christian book**. Most of you have a copy of *None Other*, the book on the character of God that we gave away at our last *Spreading The Heritage Conference*. Maybe you haven't read *Pilgrim's Progress*, or it's been a long time since you read it. Or you likely have one you haven't gotten to yet.

If you prefer listening, seek out good teaching. Go to sermonaudio.com and listen to good expository preaching—maybe in conjunction with reading through a book. There are many relatively unknown excellent preachers who use SermonAudio.com. Look for people like **Voddie Baucham** (who also has his own site packed with sermons), **Steve Lawson**, **R.C. Sproul** (who still speaks from the grave), **Allistair Begg**, **Kevin DeYoung**, **John MacArthur**, or **Phil Johnson**. When you've finished all that those guys have online, ask me for more.

You can use **YouTube**, as long as you **discipline yourself** not to be distracted. You'll find video of sermons by many of those same people there. **Justin Peters** posts a lot of his teaching on YouTube.

If you devote at least part of your 30 days of feasting to as much as you can find on **the attributes of God**, I promise you'll be encouraged and your faith will grow. The more you make yourself constantly aware that God is **sovereign** and He is **good**, the less you will need to remind yourself that you need **never to fret** (as we read in Psalm 37 last week), you **need not fear** (Psalm 27:1), and you **need not remain anxious** (Philippians 4:6-7).

You could do a 30-day version of our **64 Days of Truth** series from last year. Instead of taking a week on each topic, go at your own pace. One segment every three days will fill your 30 days.

You could include reading a **chapter of the Sermon on the Mount** every day, along with whatever else will fill the time created by your fast. Nothing bad could come from reading through Matthew 5-7 ten times in a month.

**When you finish the 30-day Fast and Feast,
take stock of what you
might want to incorporate into your life
for the long haul**