**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 10-4-2020
Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness**

Years ago, I remember leading a group of youth through an event called the 30-Hour Famine. Have any of you heard of it?

If you haven’t, the event is the idea of a Christian ministry called World Vision. And one of World Vision’s Goals is to eliminate the reality of people, and especially children, starving.

During this event, we planned several fun activities, not just because they are fun, but also to keep our minds off of food. This is because after finding sponsors to support them, groups take part in a 30-hour fast from food.

**\***And I vividly remember how excited everyone was to eat when we broke that fast. After the fast, even very simple food like saltine crackers become a delicacy.

And besides raising money for a great cause, one of the biggest triumphs of the event is simple appreciation and thankfulness for food.

So often people in America can say things like “Boy, I’m starving,” but they have no real idea what starving is.

But when we are truly hungry, we truly appreciate being filled.

Think about how the crowds were following Jesus and they had gone for a long time without eating. Following after Jesus was more captivating to them than making sure that they ate their lunch.

And we read of Jesus having compassion on this group. In fact, we read of Jesus doing this on 2 separate occasions in the Scriptures. Once when there were 5,000 men, not including women and children. And once then there were 4,000 men, not including women and children.

Jesus cares about our physical hunger. He doesn’t want people starving. He wants to fill them.

And this matters so much to God that miracles were done to make this possible. In fact, the Lord is still performing miracles to feed the hunger. And it is not just through inspiring the creation of groups like World Vision.

Several years back, my Mother-in-law was volunteering at Josh McDowell Ministries in an orphanage in Russia. And that actually led to her and my Father-in-law adopting 5 children from Russia. But that’s another story.

Today’s story is about how they had prepared just enough food to feed everyone in this orphanage. They measured it out and everything. But then, several other people arrived which they hadn’t planned on. And you know what? That food had to have multiplied, because then they had enough for them as well. Our Triune God hears the cry of the hungry and works to fill the hungry with food.

\*Today’s beatitude of Jesus is all about hungering and thirsting, but it is an even more profound way than physical hungering and thirsting.

Friends, we have been journeying through the statements of what a blessed life truly is from God’s perspective for about a month now. Everyone wants to have a blessed life, but so often people have the wrong conceptions of what living a blessed life really looks like. Thankfully, Jesus in His grace helps us to see.

Today we look through His spectacles once again. I invite you to turn with me to Matthew 5:6

Jesus says this, **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”**

Just as the Lord knows that our bodies need food in order to be sustained, our souls, our inner person, needs righteousness in order to be in right relationship with God.

And as the Lord is the One who truly provides satisfaction for our physical hunger, He is the only One who can fill us with righteousness.

There is a lot that we can talk about in this short beatitude of Jesus.

First, Jesus tells us that people are blessed if they hunger and thirst to be right with God. Being in right relationship with God and walking fellowship with God should be the most important thing in our lives.

Second, Jesus says that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. The Lord Himself is the filler.

Example - To put it another way, I could stare at pictures of food all day long, but that is not going to satisfy my hunger. In fact, it will probably make me hungrier. Especially if it’s something that I really enjoy. No, I actually need to eat to have my physical hunger quenched. I need to come to the food and receive it.

And likewise, we need to come to Christ. Christ is the One who fills us. Jesus said, **“Come to me all of you who are thirsty and drink,” and “I am the bread and life**.”

As we come to our Savior, He fills us with His righteousness. What an amazing exchange. We come to Him with our sin and He clothes us with His righteousness. That’s amazing.

I love how Paul writes of this, **“He who knew no sin became sin for me that I might become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.”**

But the grace of God, you and I stand right and righteous before Almighty God, because we’ve trusted in Jesus Christ and all that He’s done for us! Thanks be to God!

But I believe that in this beatitude Jesus is speaking about more than just a one-time experience of receiving Jesus and being filled with his gift of righteousness.

***I believe that Jesus is also speaking about having a lifestyle of always seeking to do what is right.*** As Christians who have been clothed with Jesus’ righteousness, we are to present our bodies and minds as instruments of righteousness.

As followers of Jesus, we are to be people that always seek to do the right thing. We are to hunger and thirst to do the right thing. To live to please God in everything we do.

\*(Jesus living this out) Again, Jesus lived out this beatitude perfectly. He always wanted to do what was right. One example of this can be found in Jesus choosing to be baptized by John.

John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. But Jesus had nothing to repent of or sin to turn from.

Yet Jesus chose to be baptized anyway. John knew that Jesus didn’t need to be baptized. That’s why He said, **“I need to be baptized by you, yet you come to me.”**

Jesus responded by saying, **“Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”**

Jesus was always seeking to do the will of God the Father. And in this case the Father’s will was for Jesus to chose to be baptized in order to affirm what John was doing in baptizing people.

Even when on the surface, Jesus coming for baptism made Him look like He was a sinner in need of forgiveness, He still hungered and thirsted to do what was right.

In contrast, the Pharisees as a group were very concerned about their reputation, instead of doing what was right. This was clearly seen in their rejecting of John’s baptism. They didn’t realize their own need for God’s cleansing because they were self-righteous and just wanted to look good in the eyes of people.

Jesus teaches in Matthew 23:5-7 **“Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’”**

*So they were not desperately seeking to live right, but were desperately seeking man’s approval and praise.*

So friends, how do we live this important beatitude out? How do we let hungering and thirsting to do what is right consume us?

It may seem simple, but it comes by staying in love with God and wanting to grow in our walk with the Lord every day.

As a parent, I appreciate obedience from my children. Being obedient comes naturally through love. I could force my children to obey through fear, but that would not stir in them a hungering and thirsting to obey. That flows from love.

I think of Jesus in John chapter 4. Shortly after his powerful encounter with this Samaritan woman at a well, we read this:

**Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”**

**But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”**

**Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”**

**“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”**

Jesus demonstrates that when we hunger and thirst for righteousness, God will satisfy.

Friends, doing the will of God is to be our food and our drink more than bread and water.

The Lord Himself goes before each of us and leads us in paths of righteousness for His Name’s sakes.

As we stay in love with Him, we will follow and He will satisfy and fill us over and over again.

And Sisters and Brothers, we have the Spirit of Jesus Christ living inside of us. He guides us. He leads us in all truth. He seeks to direct us to do what is right. It is not about what is popular or what is convenient. It is about doing what is right.

And it’s not about us or our reputations in the eyes of others, it is about living for an audience of One – Our Triune God.

I am excited to hunger and thirst to do what is right with you for many years to come. I believe that the Lord will not only fill us, but He will use us in profound ways to be a blessing in His name in this region and throughout God’s world. May it be so.