

A close-up photograph of a glass of beer and a plate of food. The glass is filled with a golden beer, and the plate contains several pieces of breaded, fried food. The background is a blurred wooden wall.

# THE BEATITUDES

BEAUTIFUL CHARACTER  
FORMED BY CHRIST

PT. 4:

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER  
AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

## ARE YOU HUNGRY?

A mark of a Christian, is that we have a spiritual hunger. We are to be seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33) - the righteousness given us through the cross that shapes our righteousness by the power of the Holy Spirit - the righteousness that proceeds from the reconciliation we have with God because of Christ Jesus! Hunger and Thirsting are apt words. In fact, they are words that David uses in the Psalms to describe his heart posture before God - a heart posture also shaped by the power of the Holy Spirit! John Stott points out how Mary says, when she is rejoicing and singing about the coming of Jesus birth " He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty." (Luke 1:53) Those who are spiritually poor and hungry will be filled, but those who think in themselves they are sufficient, they will leave empty handed. And it's true. Our works won't save us. Our possessions and achievements won't save us.



**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (5:6)**

All of us are looking to be filled, in one way or another. But Jesus says that it is those who hunger and thirst for righteousness that actually will be filled. But what does that mean? The Pharisees, they thought that they did things right, but their hearts were far from right with God. They need, like we need, the righteousness that comes from Jesus Christ. That righteous reconciles (makes right) us to God the Father, giving us access to Him and a real relationship with Him. It also gives, to those who accept the free gift of Christ's righteousness for them, the Holy Spirit, enabling them to live righteously. And this Holy Spirit works to renew us, making us hunger and thirst, not for fame or approval from others, or riches and comforts, but for God, and to live right before Him and in Him.



# //BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS//

Another aspect to hungering and thirsting for righteousness is what happens when we begin to, by the power of the Holy Spirit, live out the fruit of the Spirit and come face to face with unrighteousness in the world. We are to be committed "to hunger and thirst for righteousness in the whole human community as something pleasing to a righteous God." One of the problems we are faced with is a society that is constantly warring on "what is righteousness." So where do we find righteousness? From God. And God reveals what is right in His Word.

But not all who claim to follow God seem to agree on this. So, what do we do? Well, we don't do what the Pharisees do. They hunger and thirst for the approval of their own "tribe" or group that they want to belong to, not God. Jesus calls us to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and the righteousness of God, that God creates, wants, and loves, is given to us in Jesus Christ and revealed by the holy Spirit in the Bible, God's word. So that is where we look. We look to God and God alone, living out righteousness by the fruit of the Spirit in a world that is fractured and "passing away."

The beatitudes show that we do this ultimately by growing close to God and living out godly character. That's where it starts. What we do will flow from who we are, not the other way around. How we love and fight against unrighteousness in the social sphere must flow from how we fight against our own sin, by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Now, Jesus says that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. How come that doesn't seem to happen yet?

Well, we can't expect to be filled here and now. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness is something that is to characterize Jesus' disciples perpetually, until that day when Jesus kingdom fully reigns, sin is gone, and every tear is wiped from our eyes. Until then we will, and really must hunger and thirst for righteousness, must be poor in spirit, must live out these beatitudes while we await the day when our thirst is fully quenched surrounded by the full presence and glory of God. But we are still called to be "salt and light" and a "city on a hill" today, as we bear witness to the risen Jesus and the real difference He makes in His people. And to have that longing to meet with God that the Psalmist talks about. May we hunger and thirst for God and His righteousness!



## REFLECT. PRAY. ACT

**Reflect:** Why is it futile to try and establish our own righteousness like the Pharisees tried to do? (Read Romans 10:3, Matthew 23:23-28)

John Stott asks: "How are you inclined to respond when you see unrighteousness in society? Explain.

- Close my eyes
- Fell despair
- Get involved in some organized effort
- Get involved person-to-person
- Other"

**Pray:** Pray through **Psalm 63** this week. Pray that your heart would long for God like this Psalm expresses, as you eat, as you lie on your bed in thought, and as you go about your day. You can also check out **Psalm 84** as you pray.

**Act:** Gather some friends at school or some friends from church and challenge them to a week long challenge like: - *Giving to the poor (donating, serving at the Mustard Seed together)* - *Reading 7 chapters of scripture this week and then meeting on zoom or facebook chat to talk about it and how it leads us to God (pick 7 chapters that flow in a row in the gospels)* - *Pray for those who are hurting and suffering because of sin this week, and research a country to pray for and care for.* - *Take extra time this week to pray, sing, and long for Jesus Christ and grow close to Him.*