

Sermon on the Mount #6
Hungering and Thirsting for Righteousness!
Matthew 5:3-12

I. Sermon on the Mount: Brief Refresher (Mt.5:48)

A. Jesus' called us to pursue a lifestyle of obedience that seeks to be perfected (mature in obedience). Walking mature in our obedience is relative in this age and absolute in the age-to-come. In this age, we never attain to perfection in the absolute sense. We are to walk in the fullness of the light that we receive from the Spirit. This includes declaring war on all our lust that the Spirit reveals.

Mt. 5:48 You shall be perfect (walk in all the light you receive) as your Father...is perfect.

B. The pursuit of 100-fold obedience includes making a covenant with our eyes (Ps. 101:3; Job 31:1), bridling our speech (Jas 3:2; Eph. 4:29-5:4), managing our time (for service and prayer with the Word, (Eph. 5:15-16) and money to increase the Kingdom beyond our personal comfort and honor (Mt. 6:19-21) as we engage in communing prayer with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).

C. In the sermon on the mount Jesus gave six practical areas in which we must wage war against lust (1 Pet. 2:11): anger (spirit of murder, Mt. 5:21-26), adultery (spirit of immorality, Mt. 5:27-30), disregarding the sanctity of marriage (spirit of treachery, Mal. 2:13-17 or disloyalty that disregards the sanctity of marriage, Mt. 5:31-32), false commitments (spirit of manipulation that seeks to promote ourselves, Mt. 5:33-37). To use "spin" to present ourselves in a false way about our commitments in the past and the present (by lack of follow through), demanding personal justice (spirit of pride or bitterness that insists on our personal rights, Mt. 5:38-41) and refusing to retaliate (spirit of revenge or animosity in relationships, Mt. 5:42-47).

D. Jesus also describes five "grace-releasing activities" in our secret life that position our heart to receive more strength in the grace of God. Our heart receives more grace as we consistently and secretly serve and give (charitable deeds: giving service and/or money (6:1-4, 19-21), pray (6:5-13), bless adversaries (forgiving, 6:14-15; 5:44) and fast (6:16-18). The progressive working out of this lifestyle within the context of our devotional life as the Holy Spirit disciplines us into someone that resembles Jesus and brings glory to God is what happens when these methods are embraced and pursued.

II. The Eight Beatitudes: Brief Definitions (Mt. 5:3-12)

Introduction: True spiritual reality is defined by the 8 beatitudes. This is the character of Jesus, true christlikeness! These describe what pleases God and what Jesus has in mind for creation and will duplicate in the nations through His ministry as King. Implied in all of God's commands is the promise of the enabling grace to walk out the command. Thus, all eight beatitudes are a part of our inheritance and are doable by the grace of God active in us. God will bless the pursuit and progressive attainment of these 8 expressions of grace in the heart.

A. Being poor in spirit (theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Mt. 5:3) – to acknowledge that we are in great need of help to sustain wholeheartedness. This is to understand, that we are in a serious dilemma in needing a breakthrough (insight/power) in our heart for godliness.

B. Mourning for breakthrough (for they shall be comforted, Mt. 5:4) – to be convinced (grieved) at the human condition and our personal inability to live the Christ life, and to be desperate enough to be "extreme" in our pursuit of a progressive breakthrough of insight (revelation) and power (divine enablement) in our heart and ministry.

C. Walking in meekness (shall inherit the earth, Mt. 5:5) – to walk in the fasted lifestyle (voluntary weakness) or to have a servant spirit in the use of our natural strengths (time, money, energy, reputation, authority, etc.). Humility or meekness speaks of using our resources with a servant spirit, as we lay down personal rights in serving without regard for receiving the reward (honor, money) from people.

D. Hungering for righteousness (for they shall be filled, Mt. 5:6) – sustained faithfulness in seeking God with wholeheartedness through changing circumstances and seasons of our life.

E. Relating to others with mercy (for they shall obtain mercy, Mt. 5:7) – having a tender spirit in how we treat others in light of receiving God's mercy in our many failures (Ps. 18:35; 130:3-4).

F. Being pure in heart (they shall see God, Mt. 5:8) – breakthrough of purity in our thoughts (bitterness, immorality) and motives (helping people for their benefit without any personal gain).

G. Becoming an anointed peacemaker (called sons of God, Mt. 5:9) – anointing to bring peace (reconciliation) to that which is out of God's will (restoring relationships, bodies, legislation).

H. Enduring persecution (theirs is the kingdom, Mt. 5:10-12) – bearing the counterattack for plundering Satan's Kingdom because we operate in the power of grace and stand for righteousness.

III. Blessed are those that Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness! (they shall be filled)

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

A. Jesus is here saying that fullness (to be foddered, fattened or stuffed) is for those with an appetite or hunger for the reality of His righteousness. Hunger is the prerequisite to fullness, just as seeking is to finding or searching is to discovery.

B. Later in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes it clear that He is the source and expression of the righteousness of God, which is to be the priority of pursuit in the human heart!

Mt 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

C. Jesus, above all other systems and claims, is the perfect and complete definition of righteousness. Righteousness is righteousness because it is the character and activity of very God. Jesus is the personification of the righteousness of God and is truly the "Lord our Righteousness!"

1 Corinthians 1:30 *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*

D. Jesus knows of no other or higher source of meaning than to invite people to Himself for fulfillment and satisfaction. Obviously, finding this fulfillment presupposes an appetite (if anyone thirsts?), an approach (let him come to Me), and an appropriation (and drink).

John 7:37-38 *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

E. This matter of hungering and thirsting as a prerequisite to the revelation of fullness or satisfaction is carried throughout the scriptures and is an expression of the humility that draws in the presence of God to bring true fullness, to the true seeker, which fulfillment is the knowledge of Himself!

1. Jeremiah 29:11-13 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

2. Isaiah 55:1-3 *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you — The sure mercies of David.*

3. Psalms 42:1-3 *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, "Where is your God?"*

4. Revelation 22:17 *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

F. The human heart has been made by God with legitimate needs for attention, affection, approval, acceptance, accomplishment, and significance. Everything the world offers to meet these needs is temporal at best and ultimately an unsatisfying deception for we have been made by God and for God. Some common earthly pursuits (seeking to fulfill legitimate needs by illegitimate means) are:

- the approval of man, drawing attention to yourself and then deflecting it with false humility
- the amassing of wealth, things and possessions for a feeling of security
- the accomplishment of worldly fame, honor and recognition; desire to become a somebody
- the pursuit of affection by trading off your old unfulfilling covenant partner for a new and exciting someone else

G. Only weak people pray, only weak people fast in pursuit of God. Only those that are convinced of their own bankruptcy will become meek and apply the methods of Jesus prescribed in the sermon on the mount for answers and meaning. They are rewarded with grace for a hunger for God that when focused on a sustained basis progressively works toward transformation into christlikeness as well as eternal reward.