

**“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR  
RIGHTEOUSNESS”**

**GRACE AND POWER : LIVING THE BEATITUDES SERIES**

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

INTRO: Before I talk about the Sermon on the Mount and specifically our text for today, I think it is important to look at the big picture of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus begins His ministry by preaching the Good news of the Kingdom of heaven in Matthew 4:17. **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**

Matthew, being Jewish and writing to Jewish readers, uses the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven,” whereas the other Gospel writers uses the phrase “Kingdom of God.” The orthodox Jews so revered God that they would not say the word *Yahweh*, or God because He was so holy. They would call Him *Adonai* or Lord. So Matthew out of reverence uses the phrase “The Kingdom of Heaven” but it means the same as The Kingdom of God.

So The Kingdom of Heaven means that God to earth through Jesus the Messiah has come as King and He is establishing His Kingdom. He is King over all the earth and not just Israel. This is good news.

Before we can receive His Kingdom, we have to first repent. The word repent does not mean to be sorry for your sins and then turn from your sins, although this will happen in His Kingdom. It means to change the way you think in a way that will help you to turn from the wrong direction that you have been going in and start moving in the right direction.

The Sermon on the Mount is not just a new ethical teaching just to make the world and society better. It is the inauguration of a new covenant. It is the beginning of a radical new world.

Jesus is the New Moses: who came out of Egypt, went through the waters of baptism (like Moses and the Jews did as they went through the Red Sea), and went through the wilderness as Jesus did for forty days and nights and finally go up to the mountain and give the New Covenant. Moses went up to Mount Sinai and brought down the Old Covenant to teach the Jewish people and Jesus is now teaching the New Covenant.



The Bible prophesies and teaches that God is going to establish his new covenant.

**Jeremiah 31:33-34** “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

The Sermon on the Mount prophetically presupposes that the Kingdom age has come, where God is King and that He has written His law upon our heart and poured out His Spirit upon us to live out His New Covenant.

It is impossible to walk out the Sermon on the Mount in our own strength or abilities. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Finally a word on “Blessed” (*makarios*). Blessed means extremely happy. “Highly favored, fortunate, well off.” Those who are poor in spirit, repentant and meek are highly blessed and favored. Today we come to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, they too will be blessed.

## **I. HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS--TWO WAYS TO UNDERSTAND THE WORD “RIGHTEOUSNESS” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **A. STANDING JUSTIFIED BEFORE GOD--POSITIONAL AND PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS**

1. The Bible teaches that if we're "in Christ," we are justified before God. Justified means “just as if I had never sinned.”
2. The apostle Paul says, “**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Romans 5:1).
3. **2 Corinthians 5:21, God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**



4. If you know Jesus, God declares you righteous or right before Him. Do you have a hunger to be right before God?

5. **Billy Graham says, "This righteousness is not something that comes from within us, and it is a gift from God. By grace we have become partakers of divine life."**

6. It doesn't matter what you've done in the past. When you come to Christ, His blood covers all of it, His righteousness is imputed to us and we stand legally justified before Him.

7. If you are not a follower of Jesus, you don't have this position before God, but you can. Later, I will extend an invitation for you to give your heart to Jesus and He will declare you righteous before Him.

## **B. PRACTICING OR DOING JUSTICE**

1. Dr. Hagner, who was my professor of NT and wrote the landmark *Word Commentary* on Matthew, believes that Jesus is teaching about justice and not personal righteousness. I agree. Jesus maybe have been quoting from Psalm 106:3

2. **Psalm 106:3 How blessed are those who keep justice. Who practice righteousness at all times!** Or Isaiah 30:18

3. **Isaiah 30:18 For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him.**

4. **Psalm 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.**

5. **Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?**

6. **1Kings 3:11 God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice..."**

7. **Luke 11:42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every *kind of* garden herb, and *yet* disregard *justice* and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.**



8. **Justice is to make right everything wrong in your world.**

9. **Practicing righteousness--doing what is right**

## II. HOW TO LIVE OUT MATTHEW 5:6

### A. RECEIVE A FRESH INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

2. You notice that those who hunger to do right will be filled. Filled with what? The Holy Spirit. You cannot live this out without His grace and without the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. Let's look at our text again: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for "justice", for they will be *filled*."

4. Filled with what? The Holy Spirit.

5. **Romans 14:17, The Kingdom of God is *righteousness (justice), peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.***

6. Moses had an intense hunger and thirst for more of God. In Exodus 33 he said, "Unless your presence goes with us, we cannot go further." God said, "My presence will go with you." And yet Moses cried out, "Lord, please show me your glory." And God did.

7. I believe God wants to fill us not just individually, but corporately. This is revival.

8. I wrote on how to have revival in *Hosting the Holy Spirit*. One of the keys to revival is to hunger and thirst for His Spirit.

9. Other nations are experiencing revival because they have more desperation for God. They must either trust God or die.

10. Evan Roberts would go to Mariah Chapel every day after work, hungry for revival.

11. Perhaps I'm talking to someone here this morning that feels spiritually empty. You're discontent and frustrated with life. The smallest things make you irritable these days. The funny thing is, you have so much around you; but you're unhappy and you wonder why. Your spirit is dry and you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

### B. WE NEED TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT

1. Obey what God is telling you to do. Be faithful in little.

2. E.g. Picking up trash Coke bottle, wiping down the bathroom



**C. BE INVOLVED IN A JUSTICE MINISTRY**

1. First of all, I want to thank God for all the HIM leaders who are involved in a Justice Ministry. Jonathan and Sharon Ngai, *Justice Speaks* rescuing women and children in the sex and human trafficking. Patricia King, Leanna Cinquanta, Marcus Young, and many more.
2. Working with orphans and widows and the illegal immigrants. **Deuteronomy 10:18 “He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.**
3. Helping the poor, the poor and the incarcerated. **Psalm 146:7 Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free.**
4. **Be involved with the Pro-life movement. Proverbs 31:9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.**

