

Matthew

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[0 : 00] The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5 and verse 6.

The sixth verse, the fifth chapter, the Gospel of Matthew. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

This and the two following chapters are what are commonly called the Sermon on the Mount.

It is the first recorded sermon of the Lord Jesus Christ. And therein he gives us the very simple and yet very needful and important teaching of how those who profess to love him should seek to walk.

And in these early verses, usually termed the Beatitudes, he gives us nine cases, different forms of experience which lead into this state which he calls happy.

[2 : 25] The word blessed really means happy. And those who are in such cases, he says, are really happy.

Blessed or happy are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

But in each case, of course, it means the same. Well then, we must view this not in the natural way, but in harmony with the teaching that the Lord Jesus is setting before us, that which is right in his sight, that alone which will give an entrance, he says, into the kingdom of heaven.

For now, I'm not going to stop to go through each one of these, but I'll keep close to this one we have read to you as a text.

The other things mentioned are all experiences which one who does truly hunger and thirst after righteousness will indeed enter into in some way.

[4 : 08] But we'll keep to this one. It's blessed, he says, are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

And then there is a very sweet and definite promise attached to it.

In fact, that is really the reason I feel why he calls them blessed. For they shall be filled.

It's very definite. It's very positive. And the expression, the language is very simple. Well now, what then does it mean?

Everyone knows what it is to be hungry. Everyone knows what it is to be thirsty.

[5 : 20] Even the children know what that is. And really, to put it in a very simple way, it is to be brought to a particular experience, that you have a need.

That something you want you haven't got. When you're hungry, you say, I want some food.

When you're thirsty, you say, I want some drink. You want something that will suit that appetite, that hunger or that thirst.

Well now, with an animal, they're the same in that sense.

I don't know that they perhaps have the same feelings perhaps as us, but they certainly know when they are hungry and when they're thirsty and they'll see for it.

[6 : 32] But then, you wouldn't feed them, would you? With bread and cheese, if I may put it simply.

You wouldn't feed them with food like a human being has. No, because it wouldn't satisfy them. It wouldn't be suitable to them.

Well now, the Lord says here, Blessed are they that hunger, and first after righteousness.

Well, righteousness won't satisfy your body, will it? You want natural food to satisfy your body?

Well then, surely it must indicate a kind of hunger and thirst that is not natural.

[7 : 34] Because it's looking for something that will suit that hunger and thirst. It doesn't say hunger and thirst after natural bread.

I know the Lord Jesus, in the sixth chapter of John, uses the figure of bread. He says, I am the bread of life. But then he uses it as a figure to illustrate the need of himself to impart that life and to maintain that life, which is not natural.

He is the bread of life. Well now, the word here then used is righteousness. It's hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Well now, what is righteousness? The word of God speaks of righteous men.

It speaks of those who are self-righteous. And the Lord Jesus reprov'd very often those whom he called scribes and Pharisees for their self-righteousness.

[9 : 01] And did you notice in this chapter as we read, that is not the righteousness that the Lord means in this verse. Because he said, except your righteousness exceed.

And that is something more and something better, something beyond the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, he can in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And so that self-righteous spirit is not the one mentioned. Those people who always think they are so good have a good opinion of themselves.

That's not it. No, it's something different to that. Well, what then is it?

Well, in line with the teaching here of the Lord and throughout the scriptures, there is only one righteousness it can mean. And that is the righteousness of God.

[10 : 19] The righteousness of God. God himself is perfectly pure and holy.

He's a God of light. In him is no darkness at all. God himself. That is nothing of a dark or sinful nature.

God is pure. Well, how has he made that known? How has he made it known that he is such a holy God?

Why, because he's given us his law. God is pure and holy. He's God. He's pure. God is pure. And that law reveals what God would have man be.

We've mentioned those ten commandments this afternoon. But it's not only that, but all that he's revealed in his holy word shows us how holy, how just, how pure he is.

[11 : 36] And if you just take the Ten Commandments alone, some things we're told we are to do, and some things we're told we're not to do.

Well now, if we could keep those in every sense, then man could live rightly before God.

That shows man how he ought to live, as God would have him live. But he doesn't, man doesn't. Man has broken that law.

Man has sinned every one. Children, grown-ups, every one has sinned. And therefore they become unrighteous.

Unrighteous before God. Well now, it isn't every one who hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of God.

[12 : 37] Because they do not feel and realize that they have sinned against God. But now again, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I must just put this very simply, first of all, and then I want to come closer to what this hungering and thirsting is. Man has sinned and therefore cannot be just before God.

But God has made a way where he has revealed his holiness, his justice in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I did just refer to this a little this afternoon, so I will not enlarge upon it. But we do read that the Lord Jesus Christ is righteousness.

righteousness. And he has fulfilled all that holy law that we read here. Jesus says, I haven't come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.

[13 : 57] And you know, when a thing is fulfilled, then it's perfectly complete. It's complete. It's complete in every sense when it's fulfilled.

And that is righteous in the sight of God. That law which man broke, Jesus has fulfilled. And so it is alone through him now that righteousness is to be obtained.

Well, no, let us come to the hungering and thirsting. And what is this hungering and thirsting after righteousness?

How does and why does one really hunger and thirst after righteousness? Well, first of all, let us look at it like this.

You know, in many ways, very often in a natural way, as well as a spiritual, people will be after that which their mind is bent upon.

[15 : 24] there's a remarkable word in the 11th of Hebrews in reference to Abraham and some of the old patriarchs who had been called of God and were seeking that better land.

It says this, and truly, and truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

it's a remarkable word, really. But see, if they had been mindful, they're mindful of that from which they came out.

The old things of time, their old pathway, they might have had opportunity to go back. Why, they'd be anchoring after it, you see. They'd be longing, thirsting, hungering for it.

They'd want to go back if their mind was full of it. But it wasn't. You see, it wasn't. But it says this, but now they seek a better country.

[16 : 40] You see, their heart and their mind was on the better things. Well now, how is it then with us? And you dear children, what do you think about these things?

Have you got a hunger and thirst? Not a natural one. You can be satisfied every day. Your parents are good to you. They find the food for you.

Your bodies are satisfied. But is there anything else within that is not satisfied with that natural food? Well now, what really brings this is not just the fact of being hungry.

We must notice something further. And there's a passage in Isaiah which reads like this. when the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue faileth for thirst.

I, the Lord, will help them. I, the Lord, will help them. I make rivers in high places and streams in the valleys.

[17 : 56] I, the Lord, will help them to be satisfied. Now, look, that's a condition of the soul. It's a condition that cannot be satisfied only as God supplies the need.

It's a deep need. It's not just simply being hungry, but it's a deep sense of hunger and thirst that if it isn't satisfied then it'll be death.

And there's none. And there's none. Well, now, what is this really further in a spiritual way that makes a soul hunger and thirst after righteousness and yet as far as he can see there's nothing to satisfy it?

Well, it is that which God himself works in the soul and makes one know and feel their sin.

It's not just simply reading the scriptures and therein to say that it tells us we're sinners, but it's being made to feel it and to realize that as before God he sees us just as we are.

[19 : 33] It's expressed like this by Moses in the 90th Psalm. Thou hast our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

the dear children, I suppose all of us have known this. Something we've done wrong, yes, but it's always been hidden up.

Father and mother haven't known it. Yes, and you can very soon perhaps stifle your conscience and try to forget all about it.

but you can't do that with God. You can't do that with God. Now, see what Moses says, thou hast our iniquities before thee, our secret sins.

not only those things you do outwardly that no one else knows anything about, but those inward things.

[20 : 55] And you know, as we read just now, it's not only the actions, but God says they are a force. Even to think of doing the thing wrong is a sin in his sight.

Now, he has all that in the light of his countenance. Now, has he made us realize this? Do you sometimes tremble before God?

Realizing that he sees and knows what a sinner you are. Well, if he does, I'll tell you what it'll do.

It'll make your hunger and thirst for righteousness. You say, I know I'm a sinner, but I do want to be right.

I want to know my sins forgiven. I want to know the Lord Jesus, who alone can pardon. God's sake. I want to know that he is.

[22 : 00] I want to know that he is. I want to know that he is. Well, there's much sweet encouragement in the word of God for such cases.

And what a sweet word that is of God's by the prophet Isaiah again in the 55th chapter. He says, O everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.

And he that hath no money, no money, come by wine and milk without money and without price. why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which satisfies heart?

Hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness. And then he goes on to say, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord who will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon. Now look, there's a sweet invitation, God's own invitation to those who do really first, to that which he alone can give to satisfy that thirst.

[23 : 52] And it's absolutely free just a word on this freeness, the freeness of the gospel.

You know, some preach the freeness of the gospel or talk about it in this way and say, well, there it is, you've only got to come it's your own doing, your own fault if you don't come and take it or something like that because it's free.

But that's not the freeness of the gospel. That is not what's meant by the freeness of the gospel. The freeness lies simply in this fact that it's free because God himself gives it without money and without price.

There's nothing to pay. Nothing to pay. But you see, it's addressed as such characters who have this deep thirst.

A thirst which they realize that if it's not satisfied, if they do not get something to quench it, and something to satisfy that hunger, then they must die.

[25 : 21] all that it's free and it's full. And see as we just quoted how the Lord thereby, the prophet goes on to say what it means.

It's to do with sin. He'll abundantly pardon those who truly seek after it. God. And then again, further that point, in the sixth chapter of John, the Lord says this, and I refer to the chapter just now when the Lord said, I am the bread of life.

life. That is, he is the only food that will satisfy that spiritual life. He's not the natural bread, that he makes plain.

Because what led him, humanly speaking, to that beautiful discourse was this. In the first part of the chapter, he fed the five thousand with the loaves and fishes.

And then he went across the sea and then the multitude sought after him. And he said to them, you seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but just because you ate of the food and were satisfied, were filled.

[26 : 56] You just ate of the natural food, that's all you thought about. But then he goes on to say, labor not for that bread which perishes, but for that bread which endureth, unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed.

But then a little lower down in that chapter, he says this, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Now what does that mean? And I suppose there's many a dear child of God here, you say, well I do want some more.

Well of course you do. But look, the meaning is this, and it's in line with that what I mentioned at the first. Those are seeking water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst.

Well now he says, if you come to me, those that come in that way, they'll never hunger to that degree.

[28 : 31] They'll never hunger and thirst in such a way that they'll go unsatisfied. It won't be a hunger and thirst that'll leave them in death.

There'll be that supply and the constant supply of that living bread which will uphold sustain them.

I know of course, speaking to you older ones here for a moment, I know of course we do get faint and weary at times, but you can't say you're without the food, can you?

Once you have been led to the Lord in this way, you've never been in that state of hunger and thirst that you would die under it. You certainly haven't.

You want some more, yes, you feed daily like Israel had to from the manna, but you have a constant supply of that bread of life, of feeding upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

[29 : 44] but now look, he that cometh to me, oh, everyone that thirst is come, he says, come, and he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

You see, it's a source of supply and satisfaction that you'll never fail. Never fail. Now, what a blessed thing then that is.

Well, let's put it another way. In the seventh of John, we read in that last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, if any man first, let him come unto me.

I that fountain of living water, that fountain of living water, that will be inside, constantly springing up into everlasting life.

You see, it's something that will never fail, but it says, this is spirit of the Holy Spirit that should be given to them that believe on him.

[31 : 08] You see, it's a constant inward source of supply from God himself. And so we could continue in varied passages of Scripture in that way, but you see, there is the simple explanation of it.

blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled, and the mercy of it is that this will go on to the end of time.

There be no poor hungering and thirsting sinner that will be empty sent back. Right, in the last chapter of the Revelation, you have it.

When you have that echo of the Lord's coming, it is, behold, I come quickly, but even there, let him that is a thirst come and let him drink of the water of life freely.

You see, it will never fail. At the end of time, right to the end, there will still be those who will come and receive of that water of life.

[32 : 45] But now, further, what is it to be filled? what is it to be happy in such a condition?

Blessed are happy for they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

And that is, of course, as I tried to point out, that is after the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. they want to be right with him, want to know our sins forgiven, we want to know that we are part of, justified, and you know, to such.

We read such remarkable passages of scripture. Christ Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself.

A pure church, a holy church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. You see, they'll be forgiven, they're made pure, they're in the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.

[34 : 18] but now, blessed, happy, are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Well, now, again, many a dear child of God gets very tried about this. And they say, well, I do want more, I can't get what I want, I can't enter into the fullness and the enjoyment of it, as I would like to.

No, that may be, at least as far as you judge it. But now, if God has thus begun this work of grace, are you not a partaker of that fullness that is in Jesus Christ, doesn't he fill you as time goes on with that which satisfies you for the time being?

And haven't there been times when you've really felt it so? You might say, well, it's just a crumb of mercy here and there, but as you've realized the fullness of that is from the Lord, you've had a sense of joy, of happiness.

It's a spiritual happiness. I'm not suggesting that is the full meaning, it isn't, but I think there is a sense of it like that.

[36 : 09] but then that may go on in varied ways, varied phases of experience, but of course, this is where the fullness really is.

When we enter into that eternal bliss, they shall be filled. I know sometimes there is a wonderful sense of it here below, and perhaps I think we can put it like this.

While you may not always be, perhaps in a very comfortable place naturally, and perhaps you find many things to try, but at the same time, to have a very sweet and comfortable persuasion in your own soul, of the certainty of the fulfillment of God's promises.

It's very sweet to feel that. Oh, it is. And they most certainly will be fulfilled.

And look at it this way. in the first chapter, the second of Corinthians, the apostle speaking of those promises of God, he says, for all the promises of God are yea and amen.

[37 : 49] Yea and amen. They're not yes and no. Like men's promises, they'll fulfill it today and tomorrow they'll break it.

No, it isn't that. It's most positive and certain. Yea and amen. In Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us.

Those promises are made through Christ to his church. This one's made to all who hunger and thirst after him. Will he fail?

Can it fail? No. No, it's most certain to be fulfilled. Now, isn't there a sense of happiness in that?

When one can by faith lay hold of the faithfulness of God in his promises and know and believe it will be fulfilled.

[38 : 48] fulfilled. But then, of course, fine, as I said, I feel it refers to glory and the fullness of it.

And it's most certain that everyone who does truly hunger and thirst after righteousness they shall be filled.

and this should be an encouragement to everyone who has what is sometimes termed that aching void the world cannot fill.

And this is by no means confined to old people or middle age. It isn't. Young ones have known it.

Young ones have experienced it. Young ones have gone to glory with it. What a mercy it is. There's no age limit in the gospel.

[39 : 51] No age limit in the gospel. And how good it is when you see these things in the young. They may be sometimes hardly discernible and we need very much grace and tenderness how we deal with them.

It may be mistaken but it may be there if God has put it there. And what a mercy he does and sometimes takes the young.

But they shall be filled. There's no question about it. And because of that reason they're in a happy state.

And may you not view the happiness in this way. Not so much in the comfort of it in your soul but in the state that God has put you in.

Isn't it a happy state to be in if God himself has put you there? As one who really hungers and thirsts after this righteousness and you have his own faithful promise that you shall be filled?

[41 : 15] Can you find a better state to be in? Can you find a safer state? Can you find a more happy condition to be in? Than in the hands of a covenant keeping God?

blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

Well time is almost gone but I wanted to look a little farther down the chapter. But you will notice and I must leave you to ponder it over more.

But the Lord goes on to show how this should affect in a practical way. What should be our life and walk and conduct as those who do really hunger and thirst after righteousness.

things speaks of his people being the salt of the earth the light of the world that does our light shine.

[42 : 36] He also says this you may be persecuted for it. Do some of the young ones find it so?

Because you have a desire for a chapel maybe and for better things. Some of us ridicule you for it. Well if there is that right desire toward the Lord the Lord says you are blessed.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And surely these things he does express as the salt of the earth and the light that in your light so shine before men as we seek for grace to do this.

But then surely that will be one way experimentally where we shall enter more into the sweetness and the comfort of the happiness of that state.

For anything that's contrary to him and his word cannot bring happiness to our souls. And then just one more point I'll mention.

[44 : 01] There are many others there could be mentioned. He says swear not at all. You know some men are rather given to oath. They were amongst the Jews very often, the Pharisees and such like.

And they were apt to use it as he says by the temple and such like. Well he says you're not to be like that. He swear not at all.

But let your conversation be yea and nay for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil.

And throughout he says you've heard that such and such a thing has been said. But I say unto you do this or that. Well the whole point as you follow it out is this.

Those things were said in the Old Testament. Yes but that was the rigidity of the law. tooth for tooth and so on. But no I say unto you walk in love.

[45 : 05] And it regards your walk and conduct. You're not to bring in oath to say well I swear by this to do this or that. What does it mean?

You know very often these people that use oath often they're very untruthful. And they swear by this or that to try and confirm what they say.

But very often it's because they're not always as truthful as they ought to be. But let your conversation be yea yea nay nay definite.

Men are so you're truthful and men know just where you are. There's no need for oaths. In a spirit of love toward all. Let it be definite.

Let it show you are one who seeks to walk rightly before the Lord. I say unto you this. What the old law says, well that's alright so far.

[46 : 05] But now you're in the gospel day. It's through my love you're where you are. Then walk in love towards others. Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

If one smites you on the cheek, turn in the other. Oh, you say, well I've got a perfect right to do this or that. Yes, the law has the right to do it, but you're to walk in love.

You're to bear the grudge, show that you are one of his. And by walking in that way, you're seeking, hungering, and thirsting after his righteousness.

Well, I must leave it there. But may we, young and old, be brought to this very blessed state, to be amongst those who do really hunger and thirst, after God and the things of God, to be right with him, for they shall, they shall be filled.

Amen.