

A. Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSV) When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. {2} Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: {3} "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {4} "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. {5} "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. {6} "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. {7} "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. {8} "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. {9} "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. {10} "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {11} "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. {12} Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

II. Confessions of a Compulsive Pastor

A. I have a bit of a compulsive personality. I quite often become consumed by my passions.

B. It started early when I began to play guitar.

1. I loved to hang out in music stores and to be around musicians.
2. I started to run to help stay in shape about 30 years ago, when Sandy I first started to date.
3. For a Christmas present, she gave me a subscription to a runners' magazine.
 - a. That started it.
 - b. I didn't know there could be so much information on a monthly basis about running.
 - c. I didn't know there could be so many gadgets to go with running.
4. The first year we were married, I had a chance to ski with one of my buddies for a whole week at her parents' condo at Beech Mountain in North Carolina.
 - a. At the end of that week, I bought my first pair of skis.
 - b. For my Birthday, she got me a subscription to a ski magazine.
 - c. That is addicting. I started doing something that I do quite frequently. I began to clip articles on instruction, care of skis, exotic places to skis, etc.
 - d. I still have that scrapbook.
 - e. I have one book that a friend suggested that I read, and every once in a while I go to it just to refresh the basics.
5. I am the kind of person who gets into things.
6. If I am going to spend anytime at an activity, I am going to learn about it. I am going to study it.
7. So be careful, if I am ever at your house or office and you have a magazine that pertains to any of my passions, you might find a page or two missing. Usually, I will ask your permission.
8. My friends make fun of me because I read instruction manuals.
9. I am in a support group, but so far nothing has helped and my beautiful wife and her family are enablers.
10. They always give me gifts that support my passions.
11. The Beatitude on which we are focusing this week is one that convicts me.

C. {6} *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

D. Quite often, I question whether any of my passions are helping me pursue the righteousness of God.

E.I know that toys will never satisfy, but the temptation is to quench my hunger and thirst with things that don't last.

III. We are created to Hunger and Thirst

A.Henry Blackaby, *Experiencing God Day by Day*: Hunger and thirst are the body's way of telling us that we are "empty." Our natural response to physical hunger and thirst is to seek food and water to satisfy our need.

B.God understands how we are created and also how our hungers and thirsts are misdirected because of the brokenness of humanity.

C.*Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV) You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

D.*Psalms 42:1-2 (NIV) For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah. As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. {2} My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?*

E.When Mary discovered that she was pregnant with Jesus, she quoted the Old Testament *Luke 1:53 (NIV) He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.*

F.Some of Jesus' greatest observations about the human condition talk about our hunger and thirst.

G.Jesus meets a woman beside a well who has had several failed relationships and asks her to draw water from the well for Him. *John 4:10 (NIV) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." 13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, {14} but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

H.After Jesus performed a miracle by feeding several thousand people with two loaves and a few fish. *John 6:22-35 (NRSV) The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. {23} Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. {24} So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. {25} When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" {26} Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. {27} Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." {28} Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" {29} Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." {30} So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? {31} Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" {32} Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. {33} For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." {34} They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." {35} Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*

I.At the end of one of the big Jewish celebrations with several days of feasting. *John 7:37-38 (NRSV) On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, {38} and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"*

J.Daniel Taylor, *Letters to My Children*. Christian Reader, Vol. 31.

1. When I was a child I was, like most children, afraid of things that go bump in the night. But I told myself (for no good reason) that monsters which lie under beds cannot break through blankets and

sheets! By the time I was a teenager I wasn't afraid of what might live under my bed, but I was afraid of what my friends might have to say about the way I combed my hair.

2. What do I fear now? I am afraid, to put it simply, of living a life that doesn't matter. I am afraid of leaving the world exactly as I found it, no different for my having been here.
3. What are things which last forever? Justice, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and grace are a few. If I want my life to count, to be significant, then I will try to fill it as much as possible with these attitudes and actions.

K. As a part of growth in our faith, we find that our Hungers and Thirsts change.

IV. **Righteousness becomes our food!**

A. I have learned in the last couple of years, that there are truly some foods that are healthier than others. In order to be healthy, I have eliminated some foods from my steady diet and replaced them with foods that I like, but that I know are healthy.

B. *Matthew 6:33 (NASB) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."*

C. Latin Proverb: God takes notice of clean hands, not full hands.

1. We are more interested in full hands, God is interested in what is in our hands.
2. That represents our Hungers and Thirsts.

D. *John 4:34 (NIV) "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."*

E. Blackaby states: Each Christian has an inner longing that only Christ's righteousness can satisfy. But we cannot be filled with righteousness if we are filled with self.

F. Righteousness is not to be taken lightly, nor is it easily attained. Holy God does not give His righteousness to people indiscriminately. He gives it to those who know they cannot live without it. Our desire for personal righteousness may be powerful, all consuming, dominating everything we do. Pursuing righteousness means that we value the opinion of God far more than we treasure the opinions of people.

G. Our hunger and thirst for God, gives us a hunger and thirst for Righteousness.

H. John Wesley, in *The Almost Christian*. Good men avoid sin from the love of virtue; wicked men avoid sin from a fear of punishment.

I. Righteousness becomes our favorite meal.

V. Satisfied

A.6 *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."*

B. As I changed the way I ate, I also learned that some foods were not only healthier to eat, but they also satisfied my hunger quicker and longer, better.

C. Oswald Chambers, *Christianity Today*, Vol. 37, no. 11. The man or woman who does not know God demands an infinite satisfaction from other human beings which they cannot give, and in the case of the man, he becomes tyrannical and cruel. It springs from this one thing, the human heart must have satisfaction, but there is only one Being Who can satisfy the last abyss of the human heart, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. Blackaby Righteousness is not merely an absence of sin. It is allowing God to fill us with His holiness. It is being like Christ. Jesus is our model of One who sought God's righteousness first, and then the Father glorified Him. We are not only to see the kingdom of God, but we are to pursue His righteousness (Matt 6:33) If we will hunger and thirst for righteousness, we will be satisfied.

E. *Andrew Murray*, the great devotional writer of the the late 1800s and Early 1900s, stated in his classic book *Abide in Christ: The secret to never thirsting is ever thirsting.*

F. When a person becomes content in their relationship with God, that is probably the worse place you could be.

G. God wants us always hungering and thirsting for Him and Him alone, we find that it is only in Him that we are satisfied.

VI. **Quenching our Hunger and Thirst!**

A. In my mid thirties, I began to make some adjustments in my passions. I really knew that I had to be careful not to let my compulsive personality let them consume me.

B. I mentioned to Sandy that I might like to buy a bicycle and to cut down on some of my running and protect my knees, but I wasn't going to get into biking. I didn't want any magazines or books, I was just going to ride for the fun of it.

1. As always she encouraged me, and I bought a bike.
2. The very first time I mounted that bike in my driveway for its maiden voyage, my neighbor was sweeping his driveway and hollered, "Hey Gee, I didn't know you were into biking...."
3. I just waved and smiled as I rolled down the road.

C. As living beings we will always have hunger and thirst, making sure we eat and drink the things that satisfy is what Jesus is calling us to do.

D. A right relationship with God is the only thing that can ever really satisfy.

E. Some of our tastes must change. Some of our appetites must die.

F. One of the final times that the Word talks about our hunger and thirst is in the last book of the Bible.

G. *Revelation 7:11-17 (NRSV) And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, {12} singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." {13} Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" {14} I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. {15} For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. {16} They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; {17} for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

H. Until then, we can only hope for that day.

I. Jesus, however, has given us a celebration to give us a foretaste of that day.

J. *Matthew 26:26-29 (NRSV) While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." {27} Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; {28} for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. {29} I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

K. This Celebration reminds us that we put on the righteousness of God.

L. Today, as we eat and drink, it is a step of faith that says my deepest desires, my hungers, my thirst can only be met by Jesus.

M. Also, we look forward to that day, when all of our hungers and thirsts, all of our needs, are met when we meet Jesus face to face. On that day, we will hunger and thirst no more!

VII. The Lord's Supper