



ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS -
THE SERMON ON THE
MOUNT 4

Blessedness (recap)



The Beatitudes:

A collection of heart postures and attitudes lived in relationship with God rather than emotional responses to events.

What do you think about that?

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



Initial Questions

- What is *righteousness* here?
- What does *hungering and thirsting* look like?
- What does it mean to *be filled*?
- Anything else?

Righteousness – what is it?

- For I tell you that unless your *righteousness* surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Mt 5:20)
- What is Jesus saying here?
- What did Jesus think of the way the Pharisees and teachers of the law went about righteousness?
- What did the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law look like?
- It was an external, performative “righteousness”
- And we have to do better than that! How does that feel?

Righteousness – what it isn't

- ***Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.*** If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. (Mt 6:1-2)
- What’s going wrong here?



Righteousness – what it isn't

To some who were *confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else*, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’” “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’” “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Lk 18:9-14)



Righteousness – What to think about...

- Do not look for a list of “right” and “wrong” actions, but rather a way of life.
- Do think about “attitudes”.
- Seek to understand God’s attitudes.
- Think in terms of *relationships* – relationship with God and relationship with people.
- Being under God’s rule. Conformity to God’s will.
- Is this easy or hard to embrace?



Righteousness - Context

- We are in the Sermon on the Mount.
- Jesus has been already teaching “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near”
- The Sermon on the Mount, then, is to be seen in this context. It describes the repentance (*metanoia*, the complete change of mind) and the righteousness which belong to the kingdom. That is, it describes what human life and human community look like when they come under the gracious rule of God. (Stott, 4)
- Thoughts about that?

Thinking about Righteousness...

- Jesus will define it for us as we go through the SOM.
- Not self-righteousness.
- Not tradition.
- Not “for show” or brownie points.
- Does involve our attitudes.
- Does involve our ambitions.
- Does involve how we relate to other people.
- Jesus has a lot more to say about this in the Sermon on the Mount. Stay tuned!

Hunger and thirst in the Bible

- You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses. In their **hunger** you gave them bread from heaven and in their **thirst** you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them. “But they, our ancestors, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and they did not obey your commands. They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them (Neh. 9:13-17)
- What do we learn from this account? How would the Jews think about “hunger” and “thirst” based on their history?



Hunger and Thirst in the Bible

- In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!' "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up. (Isaiah 49:8-11).
- What is Isaiah saying God He will do in relation to hunger and thirst?
- Have we heard some of these ideas before?



Thirsting for God

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" (Ps 42:1-2)

For they will be filled

- Our barns will be filled with every kind of provision. (Ps 144:13)
- They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isa 11:9)
- For the earth will be *filled* with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:14)
- But..
- You will be filled with shame instead of glory (Hab. 2:16)
- Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. (Prov. 1:30-31)

What Jesus is promising

- *Jesus is promising that for the one who will stop at nothing to align themselves with the great project of bringing God's righteousness into their world and into their relationships, He will back them every step of the way! (Kitchen)*

In your own words

**Blessed are those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness, for they will
be filled.**

How would you say it in your own words?



Reflection

- How do I understand righteousness now?
- What does that look like for me?
- Do I find righteousness desirable?
- What lengths do I go to when I am physically hungry or thirsty?
- What would “being filled” be like?
- How can I cultivate this hunger and thirst for righteousness?