**Lesson 5—True Satisfaction**

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

***Lesson Notes:***

Welcome back. I pray this study is greatly encouraging you. Let’s consider where we are in Jesus' teaching progression before we jump into verse 6.

Please have someone read Matthew 5:3-5.

Jesus began the Sermon by elevating the poor, specifically the poor in spirit - the spiritual beggars. He promised that they were perfect candidates for life in God’s kingdom.

He said that those mourn openly and honestly over their spiritual plight will indeed be comforted by God’s own Spirit. As a result of their being comforted by the Father, they will become meek, humble, and gentle - very much like Jesus.

Meekness, taught Jesus, comes with its own great promise. Those marked by the gentleness and humility of Jesus don’t have to fight to get ahead or grasp and grab for things of this world. Rather, Jesus promised that they would inherit the earth. Remember Psalm 37?

And now we come to verse 6. Have someone read it again.

Now, just for fun, try to say it in your own words. Don’t use *hunger*, *thirst*, *righteousness* or *satisfied* in your version.

***Questions:***

1. What do you think this verse is saying? And how does it connect to verse 5—to the promise of inheriting the earth?

It’s as if Jesus is saying that once we know that “the earth” is ours, it changes our desires. Those who have been promised everything they need now have the freedom to pursue better - higher and more noble - things.

Specifically, they have the freedom to pursue God’s righteousness.
2. The word *righteousness* comes from a common Greek word that speaks of being examined and found to be approved. It speaks of a good standing, not just before men but also before God. It’s the word Pilate’s wife used to describe Jesus to her husband after having a dream about him. (See Matthew 27:19).

The first and more common meaning of *righteousness* as “one approved by men” may be relatively easy to achieve, depending on who’s doing the examining. The latter meaning, “being found righteous and approved by God,” is impossible for men. There’s nothing we can *DO* to gain God’s approval. That’s what makes this promise so stunning.

List some people living or who have lived in the past that are typically considered “righteous” people. What about them gave them that reputation?

Now read Psalm 14:1-3. Paul actually quoted these verses in Romans 3. Why does the Bible teach that no one is righteous before God? Is there any way that we, on our own, can change that?

1. Jesus’ Bible, the Old Testament, described a treasure that was beyond man’s ability to purchase. It was priceless. And yet, it was freely offered to all who wanted it.

Read Isaiah 55:1-2. That satisfying and delightful food the prophet describes is the rich fulness of God’s Spirit that he promised to all who would seek him. Jesus spoke frequently in his ministry about eating and drinking from him and never being hungry or thirsty again.

A little later in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said it this way: *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.* (Matthew 6:33).

Notice how Jesus cleverly connected pursuing righteousness, something we cannot attain on our own, and being satisfied. Everybody say *Hmmmmmmm . . . .*

The word *satisfied* is a ranching term that means *to graze and become full*. It speaks of animals or people who have eaten to the point of satisfaction. The root word comes from the word *fodder*.

Now remember, in the previous verse Jesus promised “the earth” to the meek and humble. Here, he goes one step beyond that. He promises true satisfaction - the deep fulfillment of a contented soul and spirit - to those who seek God’s righteousness. Remember, God’s righteousness is the one thing a person can never achieve on their own. It has to be given.

Ok, try it again. State verse 6 in your own words. Don’t use the words *hunger*, *thirst*, *righteousness* or *satisfied* in your statement.

1. Now, it’s time to talk about the very significant implications of this great verse. It really is like Jesus is telling us to dream the impossible dream.

Because we will be given everything we need, we have the freedom to stop striving and grasping and grabbing for earthly things and to pursue much higher and more noble things. And the degree to which we pursue the things that are not of this earth - specifically, God’s righteousness - is the degree to which we will be satisfied.

Please catch the irony of what Jesus is saying: When we pursue earthly things - riches, security, wealth, power, platform etc., not only do they not satisfy but they actually increase our desire for more. It’s a trap. It’s a vicious treadmill of pursuit. However, we never get off the treadmill. We never arrive.

But when we pursue that which is beyond our earthly reach, when we chase after the impossible dream of God’s righteousness, not only do we actually receive it, but we are forever satisfied.

No wonder the Kingdom is so counter-cultural. Chase after what’s within your reach and you’ll never be content, but chase after the things of God, which are by definition beyond your reach, and you’ll know the fulness of soul and spirit that only the riches of God can give.

Uh, wow.

So, what does this mean for us today? What does the paradoxical truth of this verse say about how we live and spend our lives on earth? What are the implications of this verse for how we spend our money, our time and our talents?

What does it mean for our work and our careers?

What does it mean for how we parent and what we teach and model for our kids about priorities?

Think of other areas of your daily life that the truth of this verse impacts.

And finally, talk about what it would take to put Matthew 5:6, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied*, into action every day in your life. List some practical ways that hungering and thirsting for righteousness might show up in your daily life.

Have fun with this one. You may need another session just to process it. ☺

See you next week.