

# Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst For Righteousness (Matthew 5:6)

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matthew 5:6, ESV)*

What do you hunger and thirst for? What do you desire? These questions come to mind as we consider the verse before us. There may be a multitude of responses to the questions that have just been brought forward. Perhaps you're really looking forward to dinner this evening or it could be that there is a customary morning cup of coffee that is being anticipated. I'm currently enjoying mine. It could have nothing to do with food, but instead it could be a gift that you're excited to receive come Christmas. Maybe it's acceptance into a post-secondary program or getting the call that you got that job you were applying for. For some it could be a far deeper thirst like wanting to know why you're here and what life truly means. It's safe to say that we all hunger and thirst for something. Thankfully we can find that full and final satisfaction in Christ.

It's a good reminder around this time of the year to consider satisfaction. What is it to be truly satisfied? The King James Version uses the word "filled." What fills you up? Not temporarily but fully and truly. The Lord Jesus Christ here is conferring favour upon those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness." Satisfaction is promised, but not all would swallow their pride and consider the eternal ramifications of what Christ was saying. We can read that "*being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness*" (Romans 10:3, ESV). It's unfortunate to consider the self-righteousness that the Pharisees sought to establish. In their minds they had it all but truly they were parched most of all. It's wonderful to read the words of Christ when he says "*whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life*"

(John 4:14, ESV). What a joy it is to read the response of the woman at the well when she says in the very next verse *“Sir, give me this water”* (John 4:15, ESV). David uses this kind of language in a lament when he says *“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?”* (Psalm 42:1-2, ESV). We’re reminded later on in The Sermon on the Mount to *“seek (thirst, hunger for) first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”* (Matthew 6:33, ESV). Time and time again we’re reminded that eternal satisfaction is exclusively found in Christ.

In Jeremiah we are reminded that the pursuit of satisfaction outside of God will always leave us thirsty when we read *“But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water”* (Jeremiah 2:11b-13, ESV). Have we “hewed out cisterns” for ourselves? Are we seeking to quench that thirst outside of Christ? It will never satisfy. Saint Augustine of Hippo perfectly captures the thought when he says

*“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.”* [1]

We may think that we are satisfied but it is nothing but a shadow glory. A cheap version of what God truly has for us. A knockoff of the real thing. Real joy and satisfaction is found in the one of whom it can be said *“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore”* (Psalm 16:11, ESV). Satan doesn’t want any of us to realize this. He has so many deceived into thinking that words like “life” and “pleasure” could never be found in Christ. The truth is that going in for what Satan offers is the most binding and burdensome thing there is. There is no life and pleasure there. Just death and deception. A broken cistern “that can hold no water.”

Come today to “the fountain of living waters.” Perhaps you are “restless” like Augustine states above. You don’t know Christ and are trying cistern after

cistern in an attempt to find purpose and peace. None but Christ can satisfy. Maybe you're a Christian and you'll be the first to admit that you've been frequenting some "broken cisterns" for the past while. It's left you empty and dry at the end of the day. Come to the cistern. Come to Christ. Confess and enjoy "fullness of joy" once again. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, ESV)*. The Lord will satisfy. *"All my springs are in thee" (Psalm 87:7, DBY)*.

[1] *Confessions* by Saint Augustine of Hippo, translated by F. J. Sheed (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2006), p.3.