

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. **Christ fills us with righteousness**
Introduction - Jesus gives us a picture this morning that we can all relate to. Hunger, thirst. When we moved to Colorado almost a year ago, we got the same advice over and over. Drink lots of water. And you have to. If you don't stop and drink water, you get weak and irritable, and before too long without water, you'll die. We can relate to being hungry and thirsty. I've developed a new hunger since we've lived in Colorado too. Breakfast burritos, green chilies. Mmmmm, nothing fills you up like a breakfast burrito. Well, that's not true at all. Water doesn't quench our spiritual thirst for righteousness, and green chili chorizo breakfast burritos don't satisfy spiritual emptiness. In fact, there are lots of things that we try to use to fill ourselves up, but only Christ can fill us up with his righteousness. And his righteousness both satisfies us and energizes us.

His righteousness satisfies

Jesus says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." We need to be filled, because this life can leave us feeling so empty. Can you imagine the emptiness that Jairus must have been feeling? A rich man who would have given it all away for his sick girl. "Let's go to her," Jesus said. But they got delayed helping someone else along the way. Then the news came that it was too late. "I'm afraid I've wasted your time," the synagogue ruler said. Emptiness. Hopelessness. Have you been there? Has death or suffering left you empty and searching for meaning? We're hungry for righteousness, hungry for things to be right in this world that leaves us so empty.

Things are not right in this world. People don't act righteously. We don't always do the right thing in relation to others. We're hungry for things to be right in the world, but are we hungry and thirsty to be right with God? Do we actively, urgently, crave the opportunity to follow his perfect will? What's the most natural thing for a person to do when they hear a rule or a demand? The most natural thing for us to do when we hear the holy and perfect standards that God uses to measure righteousness is to rebel. We don't get hungry, we get hostile. We don't get thirsty, we feel threatened by God's righteous expectations.

We're not hungry for the righteousness and perfection that God demands. Maybe it's because we're fighting against it, or maybe we're not hungry because we spend so much time filling ourselves up with other things. Instead of filling ourselves up spiritually, we fill up on entertainment or recreation or work. We spend our time and energy on the urgent instead of on the eternal. Think about it for yourself. Are you hungry and thirsty for righteousness? Do you crave God's Word and his forgiveness, or are you here because it's Sunday morning and that's what you do? Do you hunger for the football season while going through the motions at worship? Are you full of information about your favorite hobby, but have no desire to attend Bible Study? Are you feeling smug right now because you can think of others who this applies to, but you haven't applied it to yourself? You might be full... of yourself. When we try to fill ourselves up with anything other than Christ, we will find ourselves empty. If we're not thirsty for God and his word, then we will end up very thirsty eternally. That should terrify us.

But remember what Jesus says to empty, thirsty, terrified people. "Don't be afraid, just believe." Jairus was empty, his hope was gone. He was too late. His daughter was dead. But then he heard Jesus speak words of hope to the hopeless and life to the lifeless - "Talitha kum!" "Little girl get up." And she did.

And Jesus still comes to little girls and grown men. He still comes to dead people and speaks words of life through his word. He still comes to Christians whose appetite has been suppressed and makes them glad to follow him. Jesus still comes to empty people and fills them up with his love and his righteousness. You see, God demands perfection and righteousness from us, but we can't give it to him. So he sent someone to stand righteously in your place. See your Savior hungry and thirsty, not on the semi-arid plains of Colorado, but in the wilderness of Israel. Hear Satan tempting him with refreshment and power, but know that Jesus never sinned. He endured pain, and temptation, and hunger, and thirst, because the thing he thirsted for most was your salvation.

And so Christ carried our emptiness, our hostility, and our unrighteousness to the cross, where he became sin itself, and we became righteous. He was thirsty on the cross, but the only thing he chose to drink was the cup of suffering that should have been ours. And there at Calvary, the one who has power over death chose to die and cover us with his righteousness. His is the righteousness that fills our emptiness. His is the death that gives us life. All of our spiritual thirst is quenched by the living water that Christ freely gives.

His righteousness energizes

Transition - So because of Christ, you are full of righteousness. Everything that God demands of you is completed in Christ. So if we are full of righteousness, how can we be hungry? Well thankfully, God's righteousness is nothing like the hotdogs and hamburgers that you ate on the 4th of July and nothing like the burritos that I will miss so much when we move back to Wisconsin. Getting filled up with too much food leaves us sick or sleepy on the couch, but when we're filled to the brim with Christ's righteousness and his living water, the opposite happens, we are satisfied and energized for living righteously.

When Jesus says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled," remember who he is talking to - his disciples. Believers who are filled with his righteousness. He's talking to us too. We are both filled with righteousness and hungry for righteousness. Now that we are perfect and righteous in God's sight, Jesus makes us hungry for **living righteously** - he gives us a deep, urgent craving for righteousness. We long for the expression of righteousness in our daily lives!

Look back in your worship folder at some of the other beatitudes. In verse 3 Jesus reminded us that we are poor in spirit but we have the kingdom of heaven. We are rich in Christ! But let's not just live the rest of our lives sitting back like content millionaires happily waiting for heaven. Make it the hunger and thirst of your life to live righteously. Hungry people make it a point to eat regularly, multiple times a day. It's important. You meal plan and go grocery shopping. Living righteously is basically showing Christian love to others. Plan out ways that you might do that. The next three beatitudes that we will be studying give some guidance - show mercy to other, be pure in heart, live in peace with others instead of retaliating, show forgiveness and love even if that means persecution.

One of the greatest ways to show righteousness is to share righteousness. You have friends and neighbors who are hungering and thirsting because they have an emptiness that they can't explain. They see death and suffering and a world gone wrong. They look at themselves and see brokenness. Introduce them to the only one who can give fullness to this life. Introduce them to the one who entered our emptiness, who experienced our death. The one who touches our shoulder and says, "Don't be afraid. Only believe." Notice that many of the people you meet are not just hungry and thirsty, but they are spiritually starving. Fill them up with the living water that has saved you.

But don't forget to refuel yourself. Even though Christ has filled us with his perfect life, we still hunger and thirst for his righteousness. We hunger for fellowship with other Christians and daily forgiveness for our daily sins. David said in the Psalms, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." Keep coming to worship. Keep refueling through personal Bible reading at home. Our bodies are healthiest when we eat and drink every day. Can you imagine how they would be if you only ate once a week or a couple times a month? Feed your soul too in regular worship and study. Build up your fellow congregation members and encourage them. If you have been checking out Lord of Life and you're being fed by God's Word, take the next step and join us for our Sunday evening Bible Information Class. See for yourself what the Bible says and what we teach and join us, be one with us.

When sin and life leaves you empty, know that Christ has filled you up with his righteousness. Are you hungry and thirsty for righteousness? Today God gives us righteousness that we can see with our eyes and taste with our mouths in the Lord's Supper. In the body and blood of Jesus you have forgiveness. You have righteousness. His righteousness makes you full and satisfied but it also makes you hungry to live in righteousness. And even when death comes, you won't be left empty but you will join the righteous in heaven. Rev 7:17 - Never again will we hunger, never again will we thirst. There we will have a perfect state of righteousness. And that's the thought that the Bible ends with. God calls to us, "Come" Let the one who is thirsty come and drink freely of the water of life. And he promises, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen