**The Inside Out**, **Kingdom of God: The Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5-7**

***Upside Down***

**Matthew 5:6**

**Previous Beatitudes:**

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall or will be comforted
3. “Blessed are the (meek) surrendered, for they shall inherit the earth.”

**This Week’s Beatitude:**

1. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

**Quote from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:**

* “It is one of those texts that divides itself for us, and all we have to do is to look at the meaning of the various terms which are used. Obviously therefore the one to start with is the term ‘righteousness’. ‘Blessed – or happy -- are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness’. They are the only truly happy people. Now the whole world is seeking for happiness; there is no question about that. Everybody wants to be happy. That is the great motive behind every act and ambition, behind all work and all striving and effort. Everything is designed for happiness. But the great tragedy of the world is that, though it gives itself to seek for happiness, it never seems to be able to find it. The present state of the world reminds us that very forcibly. What is the matter? I think the answer is that we have never understood this text as we should have done. ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.’ What does it mean? Let me put it negatively like this. We are not to hunger and thirst after blessedness; we are not to hunger and thirst after happiness. But that is what most people are doing. We put happiness and blessedness as the one thing that we desire, and thus we always miss it; it always eludes us. **According to the Scriptures happiness is never something that should be sought directly; it is always something that results from seeking something else**.”

**Important:** This reality, Jones describes in this quote, is the reality for those outside the church and many inside the church.

* People seek after pleasure.
* People seek after fame or notability.
* People seek after treasure.
* People seek after comfort.
* People seek after what they perceive to be love (in a relationship, creating a family …).

**Isiah 55:2-3:**

2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.3Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

**Jeremiah 2:12-13:**

12 Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord,13for 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.

**Big Question: What are you seeking?**

* Many of you here this morning are like this. Your soul is hungry and your heart is thirsty. **You feel an insatiable longing for something**. You are restless. Almost everywhere you turn, the grass is greener than where you stand.
* We humans, even Christians, tend to drink at broken cisterns. We choose to eat and pursue bread that doesn’t satisfy.

**Famous C.S. Lewis Quote: Mere Christianity**

* “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”

**Truth to Believe:**

* Jesus has something to say to us about this universal experience of an inconsolable longing. He has something to say about the insatiable hunger of the human heart, and about the relentless thirst of our soul.
* **This beatitude tells us that satisfaction and happiness comes for those who have a hunger and thirst for righteousness**.

**What is the Righteousness Jesus is talking about?**

* “Righteousness” – Meaning “deliverance” “salvation” or sometimes even “victory” – when putting right what is wrong. Is Jesus talking more about the behavior of the disciples, or rather is this about the action of God, understood either as his exercise of “justice” in the world, especially as his intervention on their behalf, or as his saving gift of “justification” in the Pauline sense.

Righteousness – Having to do with morality and right living.

Righteousness – Having to do with justice in this world.

Righteousness – Having to do with “justification” (being made right with God by Jesus’ righteousness).

* **Big Point:** The person who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, is the person whose supreme desire is to be like Christ.

**Both were concerns of Christ, and Christ did both:**

* **Right Living** – Being eager to live as God requires.
* **Doing Justice** – Wishing to see God’s will prevail with justice.

**Right Living** – Being eager to live as God requires.

* Let us look forward and read in Matt. 5:20.

**Matthew 5:20:** 20For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

* Coming up in the rest of Chapter 5 are six illustration of how our righteousness must surpass the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees:
* In **verses 21–26** we must not only not kill, but more, we must not sustain *anger* against a brother but seek peace.
* In **verses 27–30** we must not only not commit adultery, but more, we must not *look upon a person lustfully.*
* In **verses 31–32** we should not condone divorce just because there is a legal provision for it in the Old Testament. We should surpass the righteousness that makes peace with hardness of heart, and *keep our covenant commitments*.
* In **verses 33–37** we should not only keep our oaths, but more, we should be the kind of people who *do not need to take oaths* in order to be believed.
* In **verse 38–42** we should not only not poke out an eye because one of ours was poked out, but more, we should *turn the other cheek* and return good for evil.
* And in **verses 43–48** we should not only love our neighbor, but more, we *should love our enemy* and pray for those who persecute us.

**Doing Justice** – Wishing to see God’s will prevail with justice.

* Let us back up and read in Matt. 4:23-25

**Matthew 4:23-25**: 23And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and **healing every disease** and **every affliction** among the people. 24So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and **they brought him all the sick**, **those afflicted with various diseases and pains**, **those oppressed by demons**, **epileptics**, and **paralytics**, and he healed them. 25And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

* Clearly Jesus, during his ministry, ministered to the least of those in his time. Social justice was a huge part of Jesus’ ministry, just as was the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom.
* It is not accident that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus emphasized giving to the borrower and the beggar; giving alms as service to God rather than for show; and not hoarding money for ourselves but giving it to God’s kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 5:42; 6:2-4, 19-34).
* Also, remember the beatitudes are a reminder that those who are “poor in spirit”, “mourning”, and even persecuted are going to be rewarded in Heaven and will be comforted by God now (even if in more of a presence of God type of way).

**What about “Hungering and Thirsting” for righteousness**?

* This word usage described a deep longing for something, which in this case is for “righteousness.”
* **Happy are those who are conscious/aware of our need for righteousness**. Hunger and thirst pains make us aware of our need for food and drink.
* **Happy are those who long/agonize for righteousness**. I feel I can say this because of our lesson on mourning, but beyond that everyone can remember a time when they were thirsty or hungry and the remembrance of that sensation is certainly one of wanting something badly needed.
* **Happy are those who sense the Holy Spirit’s work in their lives**. The only way one could long for righteousness is if God’s Spirit were truly in them giving them unnatural (spiritual longings) longings for supernatural things (like the pursuit of righteousness rather than fleshly desires).