

Righteousness

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[0 : 0 0] will you turn with me now to the gospel of matthew chapter 5 and we'll read again the verses that are known as the beatitudes matthew chapter 5 and seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain and when he was set his disciples came unto him and he opened his mouth and taught them saying blessed are the poor in spirit for there is the kingdom of heaven blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth blessed are they which do hunger and thirst of the righteousness for they shall be filled blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see god blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of god blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake and so on tonight in our study we look at verse number six blessed are they which do hunger and thirst of the righteousness for they shall be filled now matthew who wrote this gospel we heard before that his overall theme for this gospel of matthew was christ as king and in chapters 5 6 and 7 he records for us how the lord jesus christ himself describes his kingdom and we read that the way that jesus describes his kingdom and the description that he gives amazes his listeners matthew chapter 7 we read when jesus had ended these sayings the people were astonished at his doctrine for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes you see when the scribes and the pharisees and the rabbis and the other teachers taught they quoted other people they quoted famous sayings and famous people but jesus simply said it he had the authority of a king he told what was expected of people who would enter into the kingdom and he also taught how the kingdom was here and now and he taught how the people once they entered into his kingdom would live immediately you become a believer in the lord jesus christ you enter christ's kingdom although you won't know it in all his perfection until you are in heaven and we find that the rules for entry into this kingdom are ongoing ones governing your behavior in the kingdom itself that is that we are humble and acutely aware of her needless a savior first of all that is to enter the kingdom we must be poor in spirit and as we go on in the kingdom we become more humble and more dependent on our savior to enter the kingdom we must mourn over our spiritual condition our unworthiness our sin and as we continue in the kingdom we will still mourn over the sin that is still part of our lives the sin that we can't be rid of and that holds us back to enter the kingdom we must come in meekness with gentleness and sweet temper and forgiveness replacing the proud aggressiveness of former years but still we have a holy indignation against what is bad and that attitude continues in his kingdom to enter his kingdom you must hunger and thirst after righteousness and once you enter his kingdom you will continue to hunger and thirst there will be times in our lives when we will be less faithful times when we will be downright disobedient to those laws to those elements of the kingdom life but they are still part of our lives the entry into the kingdom the rules for entry and the behavior in the kingdom are the same first of all then we see the position of this beatitude the position of this beatitude blessed

are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled our lord here is outlining for us successive stages in the growth of a christian life the hungering and thirsting after righteousness that is the yearning to be good the yearning to have a closer walk with the lord comes after and is the result of the previous characteristics is a definite step onwards we are poor in spirit that is we see our own sinful state we see our own moral bankruptcy we see our own hopelessness we see our own helplessness and because of that we mourn that is the next step because we see ourselves as we really are then because of that we mourn the response to seeing ourselves as we really are is mourning which makes us capable of receiving forgiveness because once we start mourning about our sinful state then we're in a condition that god is able to reach out his hand of forgiveness to us and as the lord gives us a knowledge as it were of the pardon makes us aware of his pardon given then we are comforted which is the next step and because we are pardoned and comforted by a merciful god then we become meek because we see how much has been forgiven to us and we cannot be harsh or hard against other people because we have seen how much has been forgiven us and we become absolutely subservient to the will of god and we will be able to say with true sincerity not what i will but what thou will but having reached that stage a stage that we admit is marvelous a stage where we might think that we had come far enough and that we could have a breather that we could rest on our laurels we find that that's not the case but there is a step further still we find that there springs up on us a deep and earnest longing to be better to be much much better than that to have a closer walk with god we've come a certain distance but the further we go the more we desire to go further into god's own presence and to become more christ-like and then secondly we note that the result of each state that is poor in spirit mourning meekness hungering and thirsting after righteousness that they fit together you see theirs is the kingdom of heaven they shall be comforted they shall inherit the earth they shall be filled is there anything else that a believer would want for himself you see how it is that the believer is being given all things the world is going mad chasing after things and here christ is telling us do things my way and you'll get everything james says in chapter 4 from whence come wars and fighting is among you come they're not hence even of your lusts that war in your members ye lust and have not ye kill and desire to have and cannot obtain ye fight and war yet ye have not the world breaking its neck trying to get this stuff and the next thing and here christ is promising that his people will inherit everything in the end the world has only a very very temporary hold on the things of this world no matter how rich you are no matter how famous you are no matter how much you own you've only a temporary a very temporary hold on those things the christian can sit back as it were the christian can afford to wait because in the long run christ is going to come and he's going to clear all the wicked people off the face of the earth and he's going to give his own people everything that they need everything that he has becomes the believer the believer will inherit all things and then we notice well how what is pronounced here is pronounced as blessed is not the actual condition of the believer but that which the believer desires it's what he or she wants it's what you want that christ here

blesses it's not what you are it's not what you've attained to but what you are wanting sincerely in your own heart although you haven't got it yet that christ blesses because what a person earnestly desires tells a lot about that passion what is going on inside your heart and often it's a prophecy as to what you will become and christ here puts the hungering and thirsting after writers in line with the actual possession of the other characteristics of a christian alongside being poor in spirit alongside being mournful and being meek he puts the fact that you desire it may be a faint desire but it is a desire to have a closer walk with god to be better than you are and this assures us that satisfaction for hungering and thirsting that is being filled is a gift from god in answer to our longing we want something god records that longing and he gives us what we need so that the condition of receiving the gift is to wish for it honestly earnestly deeply and continually and if we want something that is in line with god's will as this is a closer walk with him a closer walk in the path of obedience to get more christ-like every day a hungering and thirsting after righteousness then god records that desire and he fills us he reaches out and he gives us the satisfaction we require he shall receive the blessing from the lord and righteousness from the god of his salvation sound 24 but what then does it mean to hunger and to thirst well i'm sure that most of us don't really know what hunger and thirst really is most of us think of hunger as dinner being half an hour late and thirst as i could really do with a cup of but the force of christ's words here would not be lost on the people of palestine to whom he first spoke we've had a few hot days lately but imagine that going on for months and months and months and no water no no nothing growing everything parts and the people in palestine understood exactly when he spoke about hungering and thirsting they understood what he was talking about and the greek verbs that are used here are very very powerful they mean to suffer a deep hunger and to suffer a genuine thirst and we see it's a continuous action and what christ is saying blessed are the ones who are hungering blessed are the ones who are thirsty blessed are the ones who are longing more than for anything else to be good to have a closer walk with god to be righteous and here we have not just the requirement of the one who is coming into the kingdom but the pattern of the one who is already in for the more we know the lord the more we want to know moises lived very close to the lord god was constantly speaking to moises moises saw him in the burning bush moises saw him in the plagues in the miracles he saw him when the red sea was divided he saw him when the red sea closed in over the egyptians he saw him in the pillar of cloud he saw him in the light of the pillar of fire he saw him in the water from the rocks he saw him from the manna that came from heaven he saw him in the quails that were driven to feed them but moises wasn't satisfied and yet you almost say that moises was greedy because god was constantly dealing with him but moises wasn't satisfied with that his cry was god i want to see your glory i want to see more of you i want to see your glory and even after he saw god's finger of flame etching the commandments on the tablets of stone his cry still was i pray thee show me thy glory and david he was a man after god's own heart he had a close relationship with god he was a friend of god he wrote psalm 23 and only somebody who was walking close to god could write that psalm he knew god

yet his cry coming through in the sounds is a constant cry for a closer knowledge like as a heart for water brooks in thirst of pant and pray so pants my longing soul o lord that come to thee i may and again in psalm 63 lord thee my god i'll early seek my soul doth thirst for thee my flesh longs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be and then paul paul who had three personal visions of christ he had the damascus road experience when he heard jesus speaking directly to him and calling him by his first name from heaven and then he was caught up into the third heaven when there were things that he saw and heard that were as it were unrepeatable and then at corinth acts 18 when god spoke directly to him christ spoke to him and said don't worry i have got you to preach in this place for there are many of my people in this place three times god spoke to him christ spoke personally to him yet his cry was that i may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering you see he was longing he was crying out he was he was really hungering and thirsting as the psalmist says to have a closer knowledge a closer walk a closer communion with the lord jesus christ oh yes the sons and daughters of the kingdom they never stop hungering they never stop thirsting to get a closer walk with god on this earth the christian is never really satisfied with his own standard of christianity there's a divine discontent about the christian because he sees himself not as good as he ought to be paul says to the philippian church which was a very loving church it was probably an example of the most loving church that was and his prayer for them was this i pray that your love may abound still more and more what he's saying to them is no matter how much you love and is a very commendable thing the amount that you do love still love more and what he's saying to us today is no matter how much you pray you've got to pray more no matter how much you obey the word of god you've got to obey more no matter how much you are like christ you've got to be more like him still the hungering and the thirsting go on and we like david cry out i shall be satisfied when i awake with thy likeness that is when we meet him face to face and when we will be with him and like him but the result of this ongoing thirsting and hungering after righteousness is an ongoing filling and it's very very difficult to understand this because it's it appears to be contradictory because if you're hungering and thirsting and there's an ongoing filling how can you be hungering and thirsting well it's a spiritual thing they shall be filled that's what christ says and when we seek righteousness god grants it and the word filled here the greek word used means absolutely satisfied it's used often when feeding cattle when you have given them so much fodder that they've stopped eating that you are absolutely full absolutely satisfied and god promises this filling for our hungering and our thirsting when we seek righteousness god grants it for he the soul that longing is doth fully satisfy with goodness he the hungry soul doth fill abundantly they that truly seek the lord shall not lack any good and david in psalm 23 i shall not want in other words there's nothing i need my cup overflows and in john 4 14 jesus told the woman at the well whosoever drinketh of the water that i shall give him shall never thirst

and then again in john 6 i am the bread of life he that cometh to me shall never hunger you see jesus satisfies and yet there is a blessed dissatisfaction that wants even more and will be satisfied only when we meet him face to face and we are like him there's this hunger and thirsting going on all the time but that there is constant filling all the time but your appetite for christ is so great that no matter how much you get you long to get more of him and his oh lord show me thy glory day by day and as you go on and on that's how it is well what is your own condition this evening are you hungering and thirsting after righteousness are you continually saying to yourself oh right person that i am who shall deliver me from the body of this death or are you quite happy are you so self-righteous that you think everyone else is wrong and that you're right there's no need to be have a fuss about everything that everything is all right and that everybody else who is wanting a closer walk with god is a wee bitty around around the bend probably or something or sort of fanatical or something like that well my friends if there is any sense of any self-satisfaction in you i just wonder whether you know what it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness i'm speaking to the christians now if you don't hunger and thirst after your righteousness and if you don't know what i'm talking about you've got to ask yourself what on earth am i doing as a christian have i been sort of apathetic have i have i not moved in the right direction at all because christ here is speaking to us do you always feel the constant pain that you're falling short and that you're not the christian that you ought to be well if you do feel that pain that's a symptom of one who seeks god's way do you have a great appetite for god's word a great appetite for god's word jeremiah said thy words were found and i did eat them if you are hungering and thirsting after righteousness you will have such an appetite for the word that you will devour it and if you don't have this hunger and thirst for god's word if you don't love god's word if you're not examining it and looking at it from all angles and reading about christ and doing everything of god's word maybe you're not a child of the kingdom at all or maybe you're a child of the kingdom that's living in sin and that you've lost the hunger and the thirst of the righteousness and is your hunger and thirst unconditional we read there about the rich young ruler who came and he sincerely wanted to be good he looked at the commandments and he kept them all this man had done a lot we mustn't disguise his efforts at all he had done a lot he was able to say to christ i have kept all these commandments from my youth and christ god told him go and sell all that you have and give to the poor and he went away sorrowful for he was a man who had great possessions you see his heart was in his possessions his hunger was conditional and he was never filled what about you what is your condition are you hungry and thirsting for christ or is your cry tonight i want christ and my sin i want christ and my pride i want christ and my sinful relationship i want christ and my cheating i want christ and my life i want christ and my covetousness i want christ and my materialism christ and christ and a hungry man doesn't ask for food and a suit a such man doesn't ask for water and a new pair of shoes they want food and they want water and they

[20 : 21] just want that and then a word to the unsaved i know that you do want happiness i know that you do hunger and thirst for something but you probably don't know what for for the heart of every person in the world believer or unbeliever was created with a hunger for god there's a god space in everybody's heart and nothing will satisfy that except god himself oh but man in his own ignorant wisdom will go and try to find satisfaction in all the wrong places and with all the wrong things love not the world neither the things that are in the world for all that is in the world the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the father but is of the world john says jesus knew people were hungry and he offered himself as the bread of life he knew they were thirsty and he offered himself as water but what was the reaction of people the reaction of people was they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters to hew for themselves cisterns broken cisterns that can hold no water well may i ask you my unbelieving friend what do you hunger for what do you thirst for the believer thirsts for righteousness and i can tell you that there are some people who are going to thirst too late they're going to be like deves the rich man in luke chapter 16 they will die they will be buried they will lift up their eyes in hell they will be heard to scream oh send someone who can dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue for i am tormented in this flame thirst now my friend hunger now my friend for now is the time for the filling blessed are those who hunger and thirst of the righteousness for they shall be filled don't leave it too late amen let us pray oh lord we praise thee for the way that thou didst teach us from thine own word and we ask that thine own holy spirit would open our hearts to receive it and that we would be submissive to thy word bless each one of us here and bless the listeners we pray and reach out especially to those who do not yet know thee oh lord let them see let them know let them understand the dangerous position in which they are rejecting the lord jesus christ the master sin that condemns the world and packs the gates of hell refusing to accept the son of god who died for sinners reach out oh lord god convert the unconverted here reach out to them this very moment we pray let them hear something that will be to their own everlasting good and to thine own glory we ask in jesus name amen