



KICK OFF

For what does the world hunger?



KEY VERSE

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



BIG IDEA

That only Christ and His gospel can truly satisfy our spiritual hunger across all the areas of our life as a Christian.



INVESTIGATE

WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Read Matthew 5:6

1. If you look up the word that is used here for 'righteousness' very often it stands for 'justification.' Paul uses it this way in Romans 1:17. However, in this context it means this and much more. How is Jesus using the word 'righteousness' here? John Stott says that in the Bible, righteousness has at least three aspects: legal, moral and social. (See quote from Carson in sidebar). What are the positive and negative aspects of righteousness in the following passages?

A. A desire to be free from:

Romans 1: 16—17, 9:30—10:4,

Galatians 5: 19-21

B. A desire for: Galatians 5: 22—24,

2. In Philippians 3: 1—11 what is Paul not hungry for?

what is he hungry for?
3. How is the Christian's hunger for righteousness satisfied?
2 Peter 3: 10—13.

THE HUNGER OF THE CHRISTIAN

4. Describe this spiritual hunger of the Christian?
5. Describe the Psalmist's hunger in Psalm 42?



DIG DEEPER

"What is this righteousness which we must pursue? In Paul's epistles 'righteousness' can refer to the righteousness of Christ which God reckons to the believer's account, even as God reckons the believer's sin to Jesus Christ. If that were the righteousness here in view, Jesus would be inviting unbelievers to pursue the righteousness God bestows by virtue of Christ's substitutionary death. Some have thought that 'righteousness' in Matthew's gospel refers to the vindication of the downtrodden and the afflicted. Now, however, those who have studied Matthew's use of the terms increasingly recognize that 'righteousness' here (and also in verses 10 and 20) means: a pattern of life in conformity to God's will. Righteousness thus includes within its semantic range all the derivative or specialized meanings, but cannot be reduced to any one of them. (Carson p25)

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says " I do not know of a better test that anyone can apply to himself or herself in this whole matter of the Christian profession than a verse like this. If this verse is to you one of the most blessed statements in the whole of Scripture, you can be quite certain you are a Christian, if it is not, then examine your life's spiritual foundations again." p78
Lloyd-Jones again p 85 "When the prodigal son was hungry he went to feed upon husks, but when he was starving, he turned to his father. Now that is the whole position. To hunger and thirst really means to be desperate, to be starving, to feel life is ebbing out, to realize my urgent need of help. 'Hungering and thirsting after righteousness' - cont'd next page

WHAT IS PROMISED?

6. What is promised to the Christian in this beatitude?
7. How does God enable this to happen?
Romans 5: 1—5, 1 Corinthians 1: 30—31
Galatians 5: 22—24, Ephesians 6: 10—13
Philippians 3: 20—4:1



THINK AND APPLY

8. Have we got this satisfaction, across each of the aspects of righteousness mentioned earlier?
Are we aware of God dealing with us?
Is the fruit of the Spirit being manifested in our lives?
Are we experiencing love for God and other people?
9. Do we see through our own false righteousness? Have we a deep awareness of our need of a saviour? Do we avoid things we know to be bad and harmful spiritually, or that take the edge off our spiritual appetites? Do you put yourself in places—church, fellowship, reading the Bible, prayer, reading Christian biographies where your hunger can be satisfied?



Praise God for the challenges raised by God's Word through this study.

Praying for others in your group:



How does this passage apply to our daily life?



'As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.'

Lloyd-Jones 'p87 "You see the Christian is one who at one and the same time is hungering and thirsting and yet he is filled. And the more he is filled the more he hungers and thirsts. That the blessedness of the Christian life. You go on changing from glory into glory 'till in heaven we take our place.' It goes on, perfect, yet not perfect, hungering, yet filled and satisfied, but longing for more, never having enough because it is so glorious and so wondrous, fully satisfied by Him and a desire for Phil 3:10-11.

PRAISE GOD that the gospel of Jesus Christ satisfies our deepest longings for righteousness across all the aspects of our lives: spiritually, character, socially, and eternally.

CONFESS that all too often our spiritual appetite is not satisfied by looking to Jesus. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31

ASK GOD that we may seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. Matt 6:33

PRAY ALSO For a real spiritual hunger amongst ourselves, families, churches, colleagues at work, community, community leaders and nation.



For next week's study read Matthew 5:7