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## Upside Down Kingdom: Blessed are the Hungry and Thirsty Matthew 5:6<sup>i</sup>

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you this morning. For those of you that are guests, my name is Chris Wigley, and I serve as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. Whether you are in the room or you are joining us online, we are certainly glad you are with us today. And on behalf of our church family, we welcome you.

We would love the opportunity to get to connect with you. If you would, simply text the keyword, "TBCMP," that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to 94-000. You will then be prompted to click on a link that will provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you. And here's our promise to you... we promise not to bombard your inbox. Again, we would love the opportunity to connect with you and to pray for you.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in a series that we have entitled, "The Upside Down Kingdom." We are looking at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5. And in particular, we are looking at the beginning of His sermon known as the Beatitudes. So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn there with me this morning as we examine verse 6.

### OPENING ILLUSTRATION: CRUISES

Years ago, Cathy and I celebrated our 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by going on a cruise. How many of you have been on a cruise before? Man, I love cruising. If you have never been on a cruise, you need to go, at least once. I know COVID has us all like, "The last place on earth I want to be in confined to a ship with a bunch of people." But I'm like, now's the time to go because 1) you can get a really good deal, and 2) If everyone has that mentality then you will have the ship to yourself!

But here's why I like cruising. You are going to eat like you've never eaten before. I'm a foodie. I love good food. On a cruise, you have 24/7 access to all you can eat buffets. When we went on our cruise, we joked about having first dinner and then second dinner each night. Listen, if you don't gain 10 pounds on a cruise then you didn't cruise right. Know what I mean? Can I get a witness?!

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In addition to eating, someone is always there to put a drink in your hand. Everything to completely satisfy you is at your disposal!

But here's what's crazy. After a day of stuffing your face with all the good food you can imagine, the next morning, YOU'RE HUNGRY AGAIN! I mean, what is up with that. I'm like, I just fed you yesterday an ungodly amount of food and my stomach is already growling for more food.

Can anyone else relate to that? Maybe you go out to eat and just leave the restaurant completely stuffed and then the next morning your stomach starts to growl. You can eat yourself into a food coma and wake up hungry the very next day.

According to a study done in 2018<sup>ii</sup>, after overeating on what most of us consume is non healthy junk food, our pancreas over produces insulin, due to the amount of sugars consumed, that then results in a dramatic reduction in blood sugar levels which results in the need to eat more. In other words, our bodies are never satisfied. And that is especially the case when we consume unhealthy food filled with sugar.

I have found that one thing all people share in common is the desire to be satisfied. We seek satisfaction in our jobs, our marriages, in our kids, financial independence and wealth, and also in finding meaning and purpose in life. We are wired to be satisfied.

And what I have found, at least in my life, that just like in eating food, our tendency is to seek satisfaction in what only satisfies temporarily. In other words, we have a tendency to overindulge in the sweet stuff that worldly desires only attempt to satisfy yet never truly satisfy.

### MESSAGE:

This is where our Beatitude of study comes to play. Let's look at it together. Let's read, and you follow along in your copy of God's Word, Matthew 5:3-6.

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. <sup>5</sup> "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

This morning, I want to work the 4<sup>th</sup> Beatitude backward. I want to start at the promise from God and then work our way through what precedes the promise. Jesus says that satisfaction is possible.

Everyone is looking for happiness. And Jesus says that you can have lasting happiness.

The word that Jesus uses in this Beatitude for satisfied can also be translated as fill. It is a permanent fulfillment that is rooted in what lasts forever, the spiritual. God is the self-sustaining one and in Him and in Him only can there be absolute sustained satisfaction. That is true both in this life and eternity.

Jesus makes this point when He visits with the woman at the well. You'll remember that Jesus meets a woman in the middle of the day at Jacob's Well. And this woman had sought fulfillment in all the ways the world offers. She had many different relationships that were all broken and left her unsatisfied. So much so that she was steeped in shame, which is why she came to the well when no one else did. And that's where Jesus met her and offered true satisfaction.

Having asked her for a drink, Jesus shocked the woman. She was blown away that a Jewish man would ask her, a Samaritan woman, for anything. We see the exchange that followed. John 4:10, *"Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."* <sup>11</sup> *The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? [In other words, there is nothing on this earth that offers that. Trust me, I've looked.]* <sup>12</sup> *Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."* <sup>13</sup> *Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,* <sup>14</sup> *but 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."* Jesus was telling her that in Him does someone find true satisfaction.

Just like the woman at the well, we can pursue and seek and long for satisfaction in the things of this world, but it will only end in disappointment. It is when we change our focus that we begin to pursue the things that Jesus says will truly satisfy.

### ILLUSTRATION: TASTE CHANGED

Several years ago, Cathy and I went on an intense diet. We both lost a bunch of weight and felt the best we ever had. But I noticed something on that diet. I noticed that my craving for sweet things changed. When we cut out all sugars and detoxed, we noticed that fruit was very sweet, almost too sweet. I started calling apples and berries "God's candy." When you have detoxed from all the junk food, fruit becomes very sweet and satisfying.

The same is true for us spiritually speaking. When we change the source of what we are seeking to find satisfaction in, we will delight in the things that God has for us. The things of this world, once we stop pursuing those things, will grow strangely dim in comparison to what we find in Christ.

But the question becomes how do we do that? Jesus gives us the key by telling us what the truly satisfied seek. Let's look at it. 3 characteristics of those that are truly satisfied.

#### 1) The Satisfied... Stay Hungry<sup>iii</sup>

Jesus begins this Beatitude with the statement, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness."* It is important for us to understand the meaning behind the words Jesus uses here, hunger and thirst.

We know what it is like to feel hunger and to experience thirst. However, in our culture, in a country that is blessed with abundance, we don't understand the kind of hunger and thirst that Jesus is talking about here.

The words that Jesus uses here describe a condition much more desperate than we can relate to. The word translated as hunger in our text this morning can best be understood by looking at another time in Scripture this same word was used. Flip back one chapter to Matthew 4 and look at verse 2. *"And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."* Now, not eating for 40 days and forty nights, that's hungry.

### ILLUSTRATION: Fasting Article<sup>iv</sup>

I read an article this week published by Global Healing that outlined 5 stages of long-term fasting. In stage 1, the first 2 days, you feel very hungry, and your body goes into "battery save mode." Stage 2, days 3-7, you feel less hungry, and your body starts to burn fat. Stage 3, days 8-15, is when you begin to feel really good. Stage 4, beyond 15 days, the body begins to hibernate. By the

time you get to day 40, the hunger that is felt is often called, “death hunger.” This is when the body starts to eat itself. And Stage 5, the fast is broken.

So, day 40, Jesus was experiencing the death hunger. You know, many have died trying to fast 40 days. And the same word describing “death hunger,” is what Jesus uses in the 4<sup>th</sup> Beatitude. When you are experiencing “death hunger,” nothing else matters. Right? The only thing on your mind is consuming food. Now, that’s hungry.

But Jesus also says blessed are those that thirst. Just like the word for hunger, the word translated as “thirst” is equally intense. Jesus experienced this level of thirst as well. John 19:28. *“**After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”**”*

“After this,” is in reference to the events Jesus endured leading up to the cross. Think about that. He was arrested, endured a few fake trials, stood before Pilate, had the crowd turn on Him, and then was beaten and whipped. His flesh was ripped open. Many scholars believe that this kind of lashing would result in blood loss and the exposing of internal organs. He had a crown of thorns placed in him causing more blood to flow. Then he carried the cross beam to the point of extreme exhaustion. Was nailed to the cross and lifted up before the people. After this... Jesus said, “I’m thirsty.”

Beloved, the term used to describe thirst is a thirst unlike anything you and I have ever experienced. It is an extreme thirst that is the result of extreme dehydration.

There is something else about these two words that is important to grasp. They are present participles. This means that what Jesus is describing is an intense and continuous longing. The use of hunger and thirst together describe an experience that is all encompassing. In other words, there is but one focus, the only thing someone can think about, is satisfying the hunger and thirst they are experiencing.

Blessed are those that have this level of hunger and thirst. They are the ones that will be satisfied, filled. The satisfied stay hungry. But what is it that we are supposed to stay hungry, and thirsty, for? That brings me to our second characteristic of those that find true satisfaction.

## 2) The Satisfied... Are Holy

Jesus says, *“**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”*** The deep and intense hunger and thirst is for righteousness, holiness.

Now, there are two aspects to righteousness taught in the Bible that I think sheds light on what Jesus is saying here. There is a positional<sup>v</sup> righteousness and a practical<sup>vi</sup> righteousness. Let’s first examine...

### A) Positional Righteousness.

When I say positional righteousness, I’m referring to our position before God. One of God’s greatest attributes is that He is perfectly righteous. He is perfectly just. And in Him, there is no sin or error. In other words, He is Holy.

When we measure the standard of the righteousness of God up to our lives, we fall woefully short. Romans 3:23 says, *“**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**”* This is something that echoes in all of our hearts so that Scripture is proven true when it says in Romans 3:10, *“**None is righteous, no, not one.**”*

And here in lies our problem. We cannot obtain the standard of perfect holiness to have a right position before God. The sin in our lives places us in the position of unrighteous, being opposed to God. That’s not good news. But we can have a positional righteousness with God through faith in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our lives. This is what makes the gospel oh so good!

2 Corinthians 5:21. *“**For our sake** [For our benefit because of God’s love for us] **he** [God] **made him** [Jesus] **to be sin** [our sin specifically, your sin specifically] **who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**”* There it is; positional righteousness. The righteousness of God.

Upon the cross, Jesus took all our sin, all our unrighteousness, and He imputed, or gave to us, His righteousness. We have positional righteousness before God, not because good in us, you see, but because we have been given Christ’s righteousness by way of the cross at Calvary.

This is why Jesus says in John 14:6, *“**I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*** This is not an unloving and exclusive statement. It is a true statement because apart from the atoning

work of the cross, we stand before God sinful. But because of Jesus, we stand before God sinless. And that comes only by what of grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus.

So, when Jesus says, “Blessed are those that are desperately, intensely, and deathly hungry and thirsty,” He says that in reference to a positional righteousness. *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**.”* The truth is that because of our sinful state, we are all, literally and eternally, dead in our sin, hungering and thirsting for a relationship with God. Thanks be to God for Jesus! He satisfies our positional righteousness by way of the cross.

Do you have a positional righteousness? For some of you, whether you are in the room or you have joined us online, The Holy Spirit of God is speaking to your heart on this matter right now. He is revealing to you that you do not have a position of righteousness before God because you are still dead in your sin, you have never truly trusted in Jesus as Lord. In just a little bit, we will come to a time of response. Today, I urge you, to bow the knee to Jesus as the Lord of your life. You can have and know a positional righteousness before God today.

So, the satisfied are Holy because of a positional righteousness. Now, let's look at...

### **B) Practical Righteousness.**

Positional dealing with our relationship with God and practical dealing with the way in which we live our lives. Those that have been made righteous by Christ in salvation will naturally hunger and thirst to live lives of holiness according to the Word of God.

A couple things here that is important to understand. Good deeds are not the root of salvation, they are the result of salvation. In other words, we are not saved by our good works. We do good works because we are saved and have the indwelling and conviction of the Holy Spirit. No one will be able to stand before God and say, “I have been a good person because of this and that.” Matthew tells us that people will say that, but God will say to them, “Depart from me for I never knew you.” Isaiah 64:6 says, *“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.”* The good deed we live do not earn our salvation, but our lives should reflect holiness because of our salvation.

Another thing that is important to understand to the point of practical righteousness is that this is not a self-righteousness. Jesus reserved the harshest words for the self-righteous. The self-righteous are quick to forget the sinfulness of their own heart and quick to point out the sinfulness of another's heart.

The practical righteousness we live comes as a result of daily crucifying ourselves and yielding our will to the will of The Father. We surrender the sinful desires of the flesh and we live by the Spirit that dwells within. This means we live out Galatians 5:16-24. *“**But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**”*

So, the satisfied stay hungry and are holy. Thirdly, ...

### **3) The Satisfied... Always Hustle**

When we have a deep desire, like Jesus is describing here, for righteousness, it also means that we hunger and thirst for the world to know the love of God. This kind of desire wells up in us to hustle for the Kingdom of Heaven. And when we do this, we will live on mission each and every day of our lives.

Before sin entered the world, God's peace ruled the world. Adam and Eve, and all of creation, had all that they needed. No one and no thing hungered or thirsted. Peace, harmony and justice was the norm. But, after the Fall, injustice became the norm.

We see injustice all around us, don't we? We feel the effects of sin in our world. We have friends and family and demonstrate a hunger and thirst, yet they don't know where to find satisfaction that lasts.

Beloved, God has uniquely positioned us to be agents of hope and reconciliation. That we can bring the Good News of satisfaction and peace to a hurting world.

2 Corinthians 5:16-20. <sup>16</sup> *From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.* <sup>17</sup> *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* <sup>18</sup> *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**; <sup>19</sup> *that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting to us the message of reconciliation**.* <sup>20</sup> *Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

We must be a church made up of the people of God that hunger and thirst for righteousness in such an intense way that it is all encompassing, the only thing we think about. That's what Jesus is saying life in the Upside Down Kingdom is like.

The satisfied stay hungry, are holy, and always hustle.

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation of this sermon: John MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary*; David Brown, "The Gospel According to Matthew Commentary," Matthew 5:1-16; Grant Ethridge, "What Does It Mean to Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness?" Liberty Church, November 2, 2020, <https://libertylive.church/2020/11/02/what-does-it-mean-to-hunger-and-thirst-for-righteousness-matthew-56/>; Christianity.com, "Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness?," article written September 30, 2021; Bible.org, "Hungering and Thirsting after Righteousness (Matthew 5:6)," article posted at <https://bible.org/seriespage/11-hungering-and-thirsting-after-righteousness-matthew-56>, accessed October 26, 2021; Gregory Brown, "Blessed Are the Hungry (Matthew 5:6)," article published April 4, 2020, Bible.org; Vance Pitman, *Radical Red Letters: "Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness,"* message preached October 11, 2020 at Hope Church Las Vegas; Michael Gossett, *The Upside Down Life: "Satisfying Hunger,"* preached October 10, 2021 at Green Acres Baptist Church; Skip Heitzig, *Expound, "Matthew 5:5-16,"* Calvary Church Albuquerque, October 19, 2011; J.D. Greear, *The Whole Story: "8 Ways to Be Happy, According to Jesus,"* Summit Church, September 25, 2016.

<sup>ii</sup> Nutrients Journal of Molecular Diversity Preservation International (MDPI), "Effects of Meal Timing on Postprandial Glucose Metabolism and Blood Metabolites in Healthy Adults," published November 10, 2018.

<sup>iii</sup> This outline is inspired by a completely unrelated book entitled, "H3 Leadership," by Brad Lomenick. The sections of the book are Be Humble, Stay Hungry, Always Hustle.

## **CONCLUSION:**

As we come to a time of response in our service this morning, I want to ask Micah and the band to come back up and lead us in that time of response. And as they are coming, I want you to consider how The Lord is stirring in your heart.

I mentioned earlier about the positional righteousness we have in Christ. Is Jesus revealing to you your need to trust Him as Lord and Savior? If so, let's do business with God. Our Elders will be here at the front and would love nothing more than to talk to you about what it means to trust Jesus.

Perhaps you are here this morning and you are hungering and thirsting because of something going on in your life. You need to church to pray on your behalf for something. We are here for that as well.

Maybe you're here this morning and you would say that you have not been hungering for righteousness. There's an area of your life that you need to repent and pursue Jesus. An area of holiness that the Holy Spirit is convicting you about.

Whatever The Lord is prompting in your heart, be obedient to that in this time of response. I trust He is stirring, respond to that stirring. Pray stand, respond.

<sup>iv</sup> Dr. Edward Group, "The Stages of Fasting: What Happens To Your Body When You Fast?," Global Health, article published August 24, 2017.

<sup>v</sup> Grant Ethridge, "What Does it Mean to Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness? – Matthew 5:6," article posted by Liberty Church, November 2, 2020.

<sup>vi</sup> Gregory Brown, "Blessed Are the Hungry (Matthew 5:6)," article published on Bible.org, April 4, 2020.