

The Divine Appetite: Seeking Righteousness

Let's pray again. Father, we thank you for your deep love towards us. And we thank you for the love that you've shown towards us in Christ by the fact that you have had Him come and live and die on our stead and then resurrected the third day so that we can truly believe that He is Lord. Father, we thank you for that love. And we also thank you that in your love you've given us your Word, that You haven't left us alone. And You've given us Your Holy Spirit to help us navigate your words and to understand Your Word. So I pray that you use Your Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts through Your Word today. Again, thank you. And I pray that you'd make us more like Christ. We pray this in Jesus name and all God's listening people said Amen. Amen.

If you have a Bible, would you mind opening with me in Matthew chapter five? If not, there's going to be the words of the Bible on the screen here. But we are tackling the fourth Beatitude today. We are in Sermon on the Mount.

And as we were, I'm thinking about this title of Divine Appetite, thinking about the idea of being hungry for righteousness. I was thinking about the fact that probably you've heard the statement, you are what you eat. You probably heard that especially if you've seen a doctor who is big into nutrition. And the thinking is, as someone pointed out, that if you eat too many doughnuts and cream puffs, you'll become a walking pastry, at least that kind of idea.

The argument, though, seems pretty sound in some ways because there are serious problems with obesity and overweight in this country. According to this latest data from CDC, the Center for Disease and Control and Prevention, over 40% of Americans are obese. And yes, there's a small percentage of people that have medical conditions because of or to argue why they're obese. But most of people, majority of us are overweight because we eat junk food and we're not disciplined and we don't really know how to have self-control.

And I find myself pretty convicted at times where I'm at In and Out ordering a double cheeseburger animal style with French fries and then I find that I ask God's blessing, Lord, bless this food to my body. Now that takes quite the miracle right there. Like you believe in miracles like nowhere else. Like what do you expect, Andrei, that all of a sudden you put the cheeseburger down, it's going to become broccoli down this. So as you see, the Lord hasn't answered the prayer yet. I'm still working at it. Probably I need to eat healthier. That's probably the answer. Not to think that miracles happen from the time you put the food in front of you, in your hands, and then in your body.

But going back to the idea of diet and eating, I think that one of the topics that is not as familiar to us is this idea of being hungry or more than that, starving. By God's grace, at least in the last decades in America, you have access to some food, even though you might not be able to buy the best of foods because of the resources you have here. People don't really know what starvation is. No offense. Like, this is reality.

I remember years ago when I just came to America and I was in grad school in Louisville, Kentucky, and I went there to the Louisville Rescue Mission just to help out. And I remember

they gave me a little brochure that this is what they give out to the homeless people in there. It was quite thick. Here's all the places you can have breakfast for free, all the places you can have lunch for free, all the places you can have dinner for free, all the medical stuff that you can get for free. There's a lot of things that I like. I was shocked. So I took that home back to Romania to me, and a lot of people said, hey, can we come to America, just be homeless people? Because it's better than Romania where you have to pay for all this stuff.

So my bottom line is, when we hear about the word hunger and thirst, it's really trivial because you probably not eat for half a day or a day because you were busy, but not because you were actually didn't have what to eat. There were times in our country for sure, the Great Depression, where people did die of hunger and starvation, but not as of late.

So for us to be hungry and thirsty for righteousness, what we're going to talk about today, it takes a little bit of work to kind of imagine what that looks like. So I'm going to try to help on that. But the physical hunger, physical thirst, it's meant to be a metaphor for spiritual hunger, for our soul's hunger. And each one of us, by the way, regardless of the culture you grew up in or you're part of, each one of us has. There is a longing in our hearts for something greater than the things of this world, or even in these things of this world. We want to feel like we have something deeper or more meaningful. And we're still longing for that.

Actually, Augustine, a very known theologian in the early church, spoke of this hunger when he wrote, "God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." So it's a prayer, he says, God, you made us for yourself. In other words, there is something that you build us with. We have this hunger in us, and our hearts are restless. Continue to be hungry until they find their rest, or there's satisfaction in You alone. That's Augustine. This is 1500 years ago, and I think he's right on this.

In this fourth Beatitude that we're going to tackle today, Jesus shows us, how can this hunger be satisfied. It's God's answer to men's spiritual longing.

So with that in mind, I want us to read Matthew 5. We're going to read verses 1 to 6 just for context, but we're going to just spend some time on verse six, "Seeing the crowds, He" meaning Jesus, "went up on the mountain, and when He had sat down, His disciples came to Him and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

Now, I want to put some context here, because it's very, very important. Jesus starts the Sermon on the Mount with these words of happy is or blessed is the one who does this thing. Now I want to make sure that you understand that this actually all talking about the same person. It's more of a chronological order of things or more the things that person experiences in a chronology, chronological order in their lives and not so much about different groups. Oh, blessed are the ones who are mourning. Blessed are the ones who are poor in spirit. Blessed are the ones who are humble. It's not like that. This is all in one and it's actually progressive.

So we are talking about how Jesus says, blessed are the poor in spirit. He starts with saying, it's an intellectual assessment of realizing that you don't have anything to bring to the table. When you see God for who He is. If you look in the Bible and you see that He is holy, that He is perfect, that He is righteous, that He is just, you recognize there's nothing you can do to make yourself right with Him. So there is this realization of your spiritual bankruptcy. That's what poor in spirit means. We're spiritually bankrupt.

Then there is the emotional side to it, where you're mourning over your sin. Blessed are the ones who are mourning because they can be comforted. Mourning for what? For their sin. They're realizing that God is holy and they're not. There's this mourning.

And then that leads us to humility, meekness. I recognize that I don't actually have anything to bring to the table. It's God's mercy. So as a posture, I'm humble, meek.

And then you get to this place of thirst and hunger for righteousness. You are recognizing that you want something that you don't have. You realize how empty you are, and you want something you don't have. And that is God's freedom, God's grace, God's mercy, God's righteousness. You want to do the things of God. You don't have that. This is kind of the context, and this is how they all fit together.

A known British preacher and theologian, Martyn Lloyd Jones, also made this connection between the first three Beatitudes and this one. And he says this "This Beatitude again follows logically from the previous ones. It is the statement to which all the others lead. It is the logical conclusion to which they come. And it is something for which we should all be profoundly thankful and grateful to God. 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." Now listen to this last sentence. "If this verse is to you one of the most blessed statements of the whole of Scripture, you can be quite certain you are a Christian. If it is not, then you had better examine the foundations."

Again, he says, if this is not something that you are eager for, then probably you have to go back to number one, to the first Beatitude. Maybe you haven't really understood. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? What does it mean to not have anything to bring to the table? You probably don't understand the difference between God and you and how huge of a gap there is between God and you. All of us, by the way.

But as I'm looking at this text, I want to first address this idea that people do try to find their satisfaction in something other than righteousness. We all are hungry and thirsty for something better, something greater. This is in us. But unfortunately we tried to find satisfaction for our hunger and thirst is something different.

Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3 says, "God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity into men's mind." He made all of us with this yearning for something deeper, greater, more meaningful.

Unfortunately, because of the Fall, we don't realize that true satisfaction and fulfillment can be found only in God. We don't realize that hole in our hearts can only be filled with God. So we try to find satisfaction somewhere else with all kinds of things.

In the book of Jeremiah, God actually rebukes his people for trying to find satisfaction somewhere else but in Him. Listen to Jeremiah 2:12-13. "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."

So you have these two sources of water. You have the living water, the spring of life. God says, hi, I want to give this freely to you. And then you have the broken cisterns. In those times they didn't have like we have. You just turn on the faucet. They would keep little or big cisterns or other devices where they can collect the water from the rain. Okay, you probably don't like the living water. You don't like spring water. You don't like to go from the rock where it's pure and clean. You want the rainwater, which is not very good, by the way. But this one has also another problem. It has holes in it. It doesn't actually hold water. So you keep staying there with your cup in there and you're just getting enough just for the day. But you always wait for the next rain to come instead of going to the living water.

Makes sense what he's saying. He's saying you're trying to be satisfied with something that doesn't even hold much. And it's very temporal, very circumstantial. Instead of going to the spring that gives water all the time and it's fresh.

Probably, you know, people like that that are trying to grasp at things and probably you've done it. Probably you are doing it right now. You're trying to find satisfaction in things of this world. And probably the next promotion will be the one will make you really happy. Or your relationships are not working very well and you're thinking, maybe my next relationship will be really good. Or you may be thinking that maybe if you buy another house or you get more money will really satisfy you, but in the end none of them are working.

And I was thinking about this illustration. I know I shared it with you years ago, but because it's Super Bowl Sunday, I thought it might be appropriate. So years ago I was watching this interview with a very well-known football player who is by far one of the best that ever played the game. His name is Tom Brady, and after winning three Super Bowl rings, he was on the show 60 Minutes. And he said at one point, "Why do I have three super bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people will say, hey, man, this is what it is. I reached my goal, my dream, my life. As for me," he says, "I think it's got to be more than this. I mean, this is it. This cannot be what it's all cracked up to be." And the interviewer asked him, what's the answer? And here's what Brady says. "I wish I knew. I wish I knew." Now, Brady won four more NFL championships since that interview, but I don't think that he found the answer to his question. He's still trying to find satisfaction in the things of this world. Good luck with that. You'll never get there.

I actually remember years ago when I was in Romania, I was in high school, and I love this one show. It's more like conversation that they had like, they would have an MC, a moderator, and invite all these guests that were very successful in their business or in their careers. And I

remember they were interviewing this lawyer. It was a very known lawyer, and I wanted to go into law. So I was, like, very curious about this interview. And they were interviewing this known lawyer who was one of the most known at his time in Romania. He was a professor in Paris at the Sorbonne, and he's done pretty much everything you can achieve in the law degrees and in the world of law. So at one point, the interviewer said, "What would you say to a young lawyer who's just starting in his career, he's just climbing on the ladder, and you who have been there, done that, what would you say to one of those young men or young women?" And he said this. "I would tell them that there's nothing on the top of the ladder. And as they get up there, they look around, there's nothing there." That's a very actually important piece of advice. It's sad that he had to be at 80 and figure that out, but I think a lot of you don't believe him. A lot of you hear these things, and you say, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's just for your Romanians. And for some guys, we have figured out things differently. If you really want to have happiness, I want to be like Elon Musk or this guy and that guy, and I want to be like that. I want to see with my own eyes.

Solomon says in the Bible, I tried it all. I tried to find fulfillment and happiness and true meaning in all kinds of things. And he says, I tried wealth, I tried material stuff. I tried to have a bunch of houses, I tried to have a bunch of singers and entertainment, I tried a bunch of women. I tried all kinds of things. And he says at the end of that, in Ecclesiastes, chapter 2, verse 11, all is vanity or meaningless. And if you don't know what the word vanity is, because sometimes we don't use that, there is a comma in there. It's like chasing after what the wind. And he tells you that, then you say, no, no, no, I don't believe him. I don't believe him. The Bible says you are trying to get water from the wrong, wrong place, be satisfied from the wrong place.

The prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament, Isaiah 55 says, "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Harken diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to me here that your soul may live."

Many of you are here this morning and you're this person that he describes. Your soul is hungry and your heart is thirsty. You feel this deep longing for something you are something greater. You are restless almost everywhere you turn. You feel like the grass is greener somewhere else. And social media doesn't help. You feel like you're not never satisfied.

And then the great tragedy for some of you is that even though God is trying to tell you what is true and where the living water is, you're going to leave this place. And you're going to continue to try to find satisfaction in the short run. Temporary backfire in pleasures. You're going to go back to materialism, success, sexual immorality, drugs or alcohol or fashion or the latest new toy gadget. And everything turns into ashes into your hands. Everything will turn into ashes into your hands as you think you hold on to them. They're going to actually be disappearing.

The thrill of lust leaves you with a deep sentiment of guilt and loneliness. The drugs and alcohol cannot keep you from waking up in the real world again and again with your messed-up relationships. Money and success are relative because you feel that you never have enough. And the new toy and the new gadget you're buying, a few months from now, a few years from now,

you're going to think it's old and you're going to dismiss it. We drink from broken cisterns and we eat bread that does not satisfy.

C.S. Lewis, an old Christian author, says this, "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." Let me say that again. "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, then the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. Makes sense.

Now what does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness, though? So we see that how we can try to find satisfaction in other things and be hungry and thirsty for what we think are other things, with we're not actually rightly hungry and thirsty for the right things. What does it mean to be hungry and thirsty for righteousness?

First, the Greek word for hunger literally means to be needy, to suffer deep hunger. And the Greek word for thirsty carries the idea of genuine thirst. These are the strongest impulses in the natural realm, the need for food and the need for water. We cannot survive more than a few days with any of them. You probably can survive without food for like 40 days or so or more than that. But for sure you cannot survive without water and it's not healthy for you.

So there's a deep, genuine, real hunger and thirst for what? For righteousness. The Greek word for righteousness means to be right with God, to be approved by God, to have a right standing with God. Righteousness is being pure in heart before God, who alone can see the heart.

Now, in the context of the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount, I think that the righteousness Jesus talks about is a bit more specific and goes beyond the forensic or the legal meaning that this word carries from most of the other places in the New Testament.

Here's what I mean by this. Paul usually uses the word righteousness as a declaration in a judicial system. You're either right with God, you're not right with God. It's more like a judicial declaration. Jesus, here goes a little bit more specific. Yes, you're right with God, but here's how that that declaration should affect your inward life. It's not only when you're right with God, you're just good with God, that that righteousness, that declaration will have an impact in your own life. Internally. It's going to transform something in you. You are going to be declared right, but immediately there's a work of God in you.

And here's how this righteousness is played out. This is the sanctification process. This is the righteousness that is played out. This is what you'll see if you say to someone, hey, I'm a righteous person. I'm right with God. Okay. Do you have this characteristics of righteousness in your life? This is what Jesus is getting to. And I'm saying that because Jesus is specific about this word righteousness here, seems like there's a connection between these Beatitudes.

So listen to, for example, the first three beatitudes. They have this idea of emptiness. Yes. This idea that you are poor in the spirit. Then that leads to mourning for your sin. Then that leads to a place of humble and it gets you to a place of being truly feeling like you need Christ and you're in a place where, like I truly need Jesus, need to truly get those things from God. I don't have. That's the righteousness.

And then the next ones, once you get to that place, He says, you'll be satisfied and immediately there's positive things happening. You're going to be, it says in verse, in verse seven, you are going to be merciful and pure in heart and peacemaker. So He's filling you with these things. And then He says, now you're going to be persecuted for this righteousness, verse 10. So you're, you're striving for these things. God is giving you these things, and then you're gonna be persecuted for them. What are these things?

Three main things. Merciful, pure in heart, and peacemaking. Now these are summarizing the Christian life, if you will. There's ways in which you deal with others in the sense that you have this mercy, react merciful reactions to people instead of dealing with them how they need to be dealt with. You have mercy because God showed you mercy, you show them mercy. Mercy means do not treat someone according to how they deserve. That's a sign of someone who has received God's righteousness in them.

And then He says, another sign is that you're pure in heart. What it means to be pure in how we're going to talk about this. It means to have purity, to walk in integrity, to be a same person, whether you're in public or you're at home. You want to walk in the light, you want to be pure in your mind, in the ways and things you do. That's what you're striving for. Maybe sometimes you, you're not always able to do it, but that's your desire. You want to live a life of integrity. You hate duplicity, you hate pharisaical lifestyle.

And then you're a peacemaker. You want to make peace with people. Not a peacekeeper, but the peacemaker. We're going to talk about the difference, because conflict sometimes is good. It brings to the surface problems that you might have, but your desire is always to make peace, bring things to a resolution, bring the Gospel in.

Now, if you think that that's just my interpretation, actually, I want you to see that this kind of idea, I think, continues in the whole sermon, that this is what Jesus has in mind with righteousness. He is specifically thinking about how this plays out.

So, for example, if you look in verse 20, Jesus says, "I'll tell you, unless righteousness exceeds that of the scribes, and your righteousness, excuse me, exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." So He says, this is what God's righteousness requires, and if you don't exceed it, you'll never be in heaven.

Now, in verses 21 onward, He's giving six illustrations of how our righteousness must surpass the righteousness of the law keepers of the law, the Pharisees. And if you have a Bible, you can just look at the headlines. Verses 21-26. We must not only not kill, but. But also not have anger against the brother, but seek peace. We need to be peacemakers and have to show mercy towards them. Verse 27-30. We must not only not commit adultery, but more than that, we must not look upon a person lustfully. Pursue purity, pure at heart. Verses 31-32. Overall, we should pursue peace unless the purity of the marriage is broken. In regards to divorce, verses 33-37 pursue integrity and purity of speech in the things we say and promise. Verses 38-42. We should not retaliate, but pursue mercy. Not treating someone according to how they deserve. Verses 43-

48. We should not only love our neighbor but more, we should love our enemy and pray for those who persecute us. We should be peacemakers.

My point is this. Jesus has some specific righteousness in mind. Yes, it's a declaration, it's a judicial act, but it also has impact into your heart. If you say that you are a changed man, you need to show some fruits. If you say that you are a freedman from your sins, you need to show some fruits. This is the fruits of this righteousness that Jesus talking about.

Now, I want you to see this. This is important. Here's the hunger and thirst for righteousness. This is not just hungry, it's a starvation. It's like getting to the bottom of the greatest desire you can have. Because sometimes we can say, well, I'm hungry about this or that. And it can be just a kind of fleeting thought or a fleeting emotion.

And what I mean by this is that some people have some hard times in their lives. Whether they have hard times in their marriage or maybe in their relationship with their kids or their spouse with someone in their world. And they come to the church and they come to God and they just want the fix. They're not really starving, they're hungry. And then God kind of gives them a little bit of a fixer. They get enough so they get by, their marriage gets better, their life gets better, and then off they go. And then they kind of, you know, continue to live this life of just cruising. And when you ask them, hey, what happened? You be in Bible study or the, oh, you know what? It's all good now. It's all fixed. My marriage is great now. I have all the life together. I'm done with it.

Now that's actually what false conversion is, where you are thinking that you truly became a Christian when you never did. You just apply some biblical principles to your life and it worked and you felt happy about it and you moved on. But there's not this deep starvation for the right things.

And someone pointed this out that the prodigal son, if you remember, if you remember, he got to a place where he was hungry and he said that he started feeding himself with the husks of the pigs, but when he was starving, he went back to his dad.

When you're hungry, you're trying to still grasp the things of the world and you kind of have a feeling of like, yeah, I need help, all that, but you're still trying to do it your own way. There's still room for you. When you're starving, there's no more room for you said, there's nothing I can do. I need to go back to my Father. You see the distinction. You need to come to a place of brokenness.

I shared this in the previous two services. I didn't have it in my notes, but I hope it's helpful. It's not meant to be self-serving. It's just meant to see how God can work. This experience I had years ago, I just actually came to Trinity in 2012 and I was doing missions and then they asked me to do. The elders asked me what tried to do junior high ministry. So my commitment was I want to meet with every dad that has junior high students under my care and I want to tell them that I'm there to just come alongside them because that's their primary responsibility to come alongside their kids.

And there was this one sweet girl. Her dad was not part of our church, actually. Her parents were divorced. Her dad was in a second marriage. And I talked with the mom. I said, I really want to meet with a dad because you guys have dual custody. Like, yeah, he's not really a guy who's interested in things of God. He's very arrogant, actually.

He's going to be probably very dismissive of you. And I don't think you should meet because you're not going to like it. And I'm like, no, I want to meet.

So I keep trying to meet with him. At one point, he says, yes, I'll meet. And he has a very high position. He was the president of this educational school online all through the country. Very well to do. So we meet at the Starbucks and he says, oh, you have an hour or less than that. And I tried to ask him some questions, but immediately goes and tells me how he does things and how great he is. And he speaks most of the times. And he just keeps telling me how wonderful man he is and everything is just great. And everyone should just praise him of how wonderful he is. And he made me like he kept asking questions that it felt condescending and belittling.

Anyhow, at one point I said, hey, I just want to tell you one thing, and I'll be as straightforward as I can. And I'm just fresh out of Romania here in America. I don't know how you guys talk about things, but I said, you know, here's the thing. I think you're one of the proudest men I've ever met. And I think God will do a lot of He has to do a lot of work in your heart. But I'll give you my card, and when God breaks you, I'll be here for you. How dare you talk to me like this. I'm like, that's because if He has mercy with you, I should pray after I leave this God will have mercy with you and break you because there's nothing I can do. And you don't need me. You don't need anyone. But you don't realize you actually need more cries than ever.

Oh, he dismissed me. Six months later, I get a phone call. It's him. He wants to meet with me and he wants to get some insights from me. Okay, I meet with him and he says, he just lost his job. He was caught driving under the influence and it wasn't his fault all these things. He's a great guy. People don't understand and all these things that happen around him and his world and again, talk about him forever again. And I said, oh, he wants me to help him out. I said, honestly, I'll give you back my card. There's nothing I can help. You're still not broken, man. I don't think I can help. Call me again in three months or something when you feel like you really need Jesus. You don't need a helper, you need a fixer. And I'm not that one. He was shocked. Like, you don't invite me to church. And I'm like, you don't need church, you need Jesus. And right now you don't have a place for Him because you still think that you can actually manage it. So I said, here's the card again. Call me again in the future.

Three months pass by and then I get another call from him. This is God's grace, by the way, that all of this fell into this place with for him. I get the phone call and he's broken. Like, I can hear on his tone, he's crying. I mean, with him, he lost his second wife. She kicked him out of the home. No more job, no nothing. And he's like, Andrei, I don't have anything, man. I'm really desperate. And I'm like, oh, good, this is a good place to be. Let's come to Brother-to-Brother. Let's meet. And we put him in a trajectory here. I think Don Harris is here this morning. Donald helped with like having some guys around him. And the Lord saved him and changed his life. Unfortunately, a few years ago, passed away from a disease that unexpected.

But God saves people when they're broken. He doesn't just want to help you out. He wants to totally do an overhaul of your life. Do you realize that that's what you need, though? Because if you just think he's going to patch you up, probably you can get some good advices. Biblical advice always help, by the way, in marriage and life and work. But they're not actually going to fix your problem. They're not going to fix your problem.

To be hungry is not enough. I must be starving to know what it is that God's heart is for me. So what happens with the ones who are hungry for righteousness? They are satisfied by God. They're satisfied by God because apart from God, we can never be satisfied. The world around us and its pleasures will always leave us wanting some more.

That is why our text emphasizes that they alone will be satisfied. No one can know anything of dissatisfaction unless they follow Jesus Christ and they have to do it fully. You cannot find satisfaction apart from Christ.

In John 4:14. I think Nathan mentioned this verse at the beginning of worship, "But whoever drinks some of the water that I will give him," this is Jesus speaking, "will never be thirsty again. But the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life."

John 6:35 "Jesus said to them, I am the Bread of Life. The one who comes to me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty."

Psalms 107:9 "For He has satisfied those who thirst and those who hunger. He is filled with food."

Isaiah 55:1-2. "All who are thirsty, come to the water. You have no money. Come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why pay money for something that will not nourish you? Why spend your hard earned money on something that will not satisfy? Listen carefully to me and eat what is nourishing. Enjoy fine food."

By the way, the word is shall be satisfied. It's almost immediately. It's not just something that happens in the future. Yes, there's going to be a day we're going to sing about at the end of the service, about the day when we're going to sit around his throne and we're going to be fully satisfied. But until then we have the satisfaction here through His Spirit on a daily basis.

But I also want you to see something different here. I want you to see that the objective of this people is to receive righteousness. And there is as a result of the fact that they are satisfied and receive the righteousness that only God give them, they are obtaining happiness. Blessed, happy are the one who pursue righteousness.

If you are among the ones who pursues happiness as a final goal, you're going to be doomed. People who come to the church and listen to the Gospel and makes them move towards Christ because they want Jesus to make them happy, they miss the whole point. There's a lot of people, unfortunately, that come to church because they have these needs. We just talked about that. There's this longing for something better. And instead of us talking about the problem and the

churches talk about, hey, your problem is sin, you need Christ, we just give you some patches. Here's how you a better husband. Here's how you keep your anger under control. Here's how you deal with this, deal with that. But we never actually deal with the problem. And the problem is sin.

You need to come to the realization that you need Christ. You need Jesus. You don't just need Him to fix your marriage because your spouse can die the day after he's fixed and you start again. It's not only about fixing your workplace because you might be just fine or you might not have a work anymore. Our greatest problem is to deal with sin.

You see, if you have pain in your body. And I deal with this all the time when my wife and I are talking about different situation when our kids are hurting, you don't just want to give them pain medicine, you want to see what's wrong with them. Because if you only give pain medicine to alleviate their pain, that's not going to take the problem away. It just makes you think it's going to go away, but it's not going away. It might actually even worse. But you're so under the pain medication, you actually don't recognize that you have a problem.

And the Bible says our problem is sin. That's why we have so many shallow conversions in churches because a lot of pastors preach on the needs. Instead of teaching this very problem, which is salvation from sin. You have to preach to the issue, the main issue, so that you can actually get people to be where they want to be.

And I want to say this because some of you have issues in your marriages, Some of you are issues with your kids, some of you with your spouses, some of you with your boss. And you're always thinking that if they only could change, that my life would be happy. You're trying to, can I learn some tools and how can I learn some tips or make it better? I want to tell you that all those tools, all those tips, all those counseling sessions you might have are useless if you're not longing and are hungry for the righteousness of God.

What really will change your life is when you draw a circle around yourself and it says, what does the Lord ask of me? How can I show mercy, purity of heart, and peacemaking? How can I do that in my own circle, regardless of how I'm treated, regardless of how the ones around me respond to what I do?

Because if Jesus is your example, Jesus not always treated very well, was He? And He did not excuse His behavior by the behavior of others. He actually did not retaliate when He was reviled. He did not spoke back. He did not was. He was not just returning evil with evil because they are doing it.

I think if we approach this life in our lives through these lenses, I promise you, our marriages, our lives personal life would be better. Because our focus is, I just long to be more like Jesus. I don't want to be happy. I want to be happy. But that's going to come as a result of me pursuing righteousness. That's the path for happiness.

So an application in closing here. Are you one that has tasted from Christ? Have you ever experienced the living waters and the Bread of Life? Let me give you some characteristics of

someone who has experienced this. How would you know? Here's some marks that someone pointed out, and I think they're very helpful to us. Marks of genuine hunger and thirst for God's righteousness or someone who has experienced this.

First, there's a holy Biblical dissatisfaction with self. Dissatisfaction with self. And I said holy and biblical because you can be an unholy one, where you're always feeling like, oh, I'm just some worm. I'm nobody. I'm the scum of the world, scum of the world. I'm all this bad thing. No, you're not. That's unbiblical and unhealthy.

No, I'm talking here about the holy discontent where you recognize I am a child of God. I'm a son and daughter. That doesn't change. God is my Father. He's pleased with me because of Christ. But I know in my heart that I want to pray more. I want to be more merciful. I want to be more pure in my heart, my thoughts, my life. I want to be more peaceful. I want to be more like Jesus. You never arrive. You never feel that. I had enough. I had enough Bible study. I don't need anymore. I have enough of this. I've done my share.

I share this all the time with the Family Shepherds we have. Half of the guys who come are 65 over, or at least a third. And I look at them and I said, brothers, I'm encouraged that you're here. I'm discouraged that you're here. And the reason why I'm discouraged is that for a younger guy like me, I'm thinking that when I hit 65 or 70, I don't need to be in groups like this because I already arrived. But you're telling me that you still have work to do, that there's no actually end to it. Now I get to be 80. And I'm still thinking, how can I be a better husband like man? Probably you should figure out by now, no, but they're showing up there and say, Andrei, is that it's getting better. But I never arrived there. And that's the encouraging thing to say. Hey, if those guys need more Christ. Well, they're so light years ahead of me. Do I not need Christ myself right now? If those brothers have been faithful husbands for 40, 50 years, shouldn't I strive to be a good family shepherd? You never arrived.

That's what I'm talking about. Like this unholy. Excuse me. Holy discontent. Holy discontent. Where you're feeling like, I want more, I want more. I want more of Christ.

Second characteristic of Mark is freedom from dependence on external things for satisfaction. Freedom from dependence on external things for satisfaction. Hungry men cannot be satisfied by things that are not food. For example, if I come home hungry and my wife says, hey, I prepare the bouquet of flowers for you. And now I'm like, great. Where's the food? Oh, no, no. The bouquet of flowers is lovely. I've been working in it all day long. That's great, but I'm hungry. Or just play some beautiful music.

So when you are truly, or have truly experienced being hungry and thirsty for righteousness, you don't run to those things. They're nice. Bouquet of flowers are nice. There's a place for that. But my heart is for this. For God's things. It's good to have a good career, but it's not where I find my satisfaction. It's good to have a good family, but it's not where I find my satisfaction. I'm not dependent on these other circumstances. Thank God for them if they are there. But that's not where I find my final satisfaction in.

Thirdly, craving for the Word of God, which is the basic spiritual food He provides his children. By the way, a hungry man does not have to be begged to eat. If you're hungry, nobody has to tell you, hey, would you mind please eating? Do you have a hunger for God's Word? Or do you have to be asked, hey, would you mind reading your Bible? Would you mind joining a Bible study? A hungry man doesn't need that.

The more we see God's righteousness, the more we will want to devour Scripture. Feeding on God's Word increases our appetite for it. By the way, more you eat of God's Word, more you want. That's why it's good to eat on it even when you don't feel like it. I just don't feel like reading the Bible. So what, you might not feel. Your kids might not feel like eating broccoli, but you have to have them eat broccoli. So go for it being God's Word. More you put that in front of you. You make a conscious effort to put it on. You make a conscious effort to.

For example, when you in the car, instead of listening to radio or podcasts, they're saying the same thing, by the way, over and over again. Nothing happens. It kind of gets you excited a little bit, but nothing new under the sun. How about listening to God's Word? How about listening to Christian music that is uplifting, encouraging. You make a choice. You are what you eat. No? And if you eat God's food, God's Word, you're going to be able to share that. But if you don't eat it, how in the world are you going to share it to others? You have to just discipline yourself for this, otherwise it's not going to happen.

Fourthly and finally, pleasantness of the things of God. You find pleasure in the things of God, and you're not critical. You look for all the good things in the things of God. Yes. There's times when there's bad food from the pulpit in different churches. You have to recognize, man, that's not good food. That's actually toxic food. I'm talking here about some times when you're, like, not receiving what you probably like. Someone pointed out that a famished. Actually, this is Proverbs 27:7, A famished man. To a famished man, any bitter thing is sweet. Sweet. If you're famished. If you're hungry, you're not going to be critical. You're going to take it and say, that's God's Word. And some chefs are better than others at preparing the food from the pulpit or from a Bible study. But you're like, hey, you know what? Ultimately, it's God's Word. It's God's food. I praise God for that. We are what we eat. Who are you? Who am I? Are we people who are thirsty and hungry for righteousness? Is that what people see in us and through us?

Let's pray. Father, thank you for Your Word. I thank you for just a reminder of what You asked us to. You want us to be hungry and thirsty for righteousness. I recognize, Lord, in my own life that at times I fall short. And, Lord, I pray that you would help me and my brothers and sisters here to come back to Your Word, to put ourselves under the word of God so that we can be even more hungry and thirsty for the things of God. So, Lord, help us to discipline ourselves in feeding ourselves with Your Word, being under Your Word, and ultimately to seek You. Lord, if there are people here who don't know You, I pray that You would remind them that You draw them to Yourself. Don't let them continue to pursue the things of this world trying to find meaning and satisfaction. The things that You didn't mean them to find satisfaction, they cannot. So Lord, I pray that they would run to You, draw them to You. We pray this in Jesus' name and all God's thankful people said amen.