

MATTHEW 5 - THE BEATITUDES

**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST
FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS,**

FOR THEY WILL BE FILLED.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

MATTHEW 5.6

dikaiousune - equity (of character or act)

(1) righteous, (2) justice, (3) the state of being justified

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness . . .

- ▶ This is the fourth “need” beatitude of faith.
- ▶ Jesus promises blessing for those who have nothing and can do nothing about their condition.
- ▶ In Jewish thought, there is no such thing as a righteous person who was not righteous with God.
- ▶ The Sermon on the Mount is much about “doing” but Jesus begins first with the awareness of one’s need and the promised provision of God for such a one.

*They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.*

*All have turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good, not even one.*

PSALM 14.1, 3

*All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our
righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a
leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls
on Your name or strives to lay hold of You . . .*

ISIAH 64.6-7

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

LUKE 18.13-14

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. . . . What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

ROMANS 7.22, 24-25

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— He did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

ROMANS 3.21-26

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

Then I heard the voice of the LORD saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

ISAIAH 6.5-8

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

JOHN 7.37-38

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

REVELATION 22.17



Jesus does not bless those conscious of their righteousness, the self-consciously successful, the achievers, the people of the victorious life. Rather, God's promise here is given to people for whom righteousness, victory, vindication, and right conduct seem painfully missing.

The meaning of starvation and thirst here is this: these persons believe they cannot live unless they find righteousness. These people long for what is right; they crave justice; they cannot live without God's victory prevailing; for them, right relations in the world are not a luxury or a mere hope, but an absolute necessity if they are to live at all. They long for the vindication of God's justice in the world.

F. D. BRUNNER, *The Christbook*

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

MICAH 6.8

I cannot be right with God and yet be unconcerned about people and conditions that are not right.

*The righteous care about justice for the poor,
but the wicked have no such concern.*

PROVERBS 29.7

*“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up
for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal
wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”*

JEREMIAH 23.5



At the Last Judgment I shall not be asked whether I was successful in my ascetic exercises, nor how many bows and prostrations I made. Instead I shall be asked, Did I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoners. That is all I shall be asked.”

MOTHER MARIA, Orthodox nun who rescued Jews during World War Two. Arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Ravensbruck, she cared for the physical and spiritual needs of other prisoners. On Good Friday, March 31, 1945, with the gunfire of the approaching Russian army audible in the camp, she took the place of a Jewish prisoner who was to be sent to the gas chamber, dying in her place.