

HUNGER AND THIRST

Psalm 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

The Sermon on the Mount is structurally similar to the Mosaic law in that it begins with a reminder of God's blessing and grace. The first five beatitudes emphasize that God's blessing comes (or is understood by) those who recognize their need of His mercy. The Mosaic law begins with a reminder of God's gracious rescue of his people from slavery in Egypt, the Sermon on the Mount is a reminder of God's salvation by Him first blessing us.

The Sermon on the Mount describes the way of life that God calls his people to display as a means of showing the world the character of its Creator. Israel was to be a kingdom of priests, mediating God's character and will for the rest of humanity to all the earth, Jesus' followers are to be salt and light in the world so that it might see their good works and glorify God. Both the Mosaic law and the Sermon on the Mount end with a description of the blessing that comes to those who follow their teaching and the trouble that comes to those who disobey.

Having said that, it is also very important to avoid two errors in interpreting the Sermon on the Mount.

- First, it is not a description of the requirements for *entering* the kingdom of God. Jesus taught this material to those who had already responded to his call to follow him.
- Second, it is an idealistic description of the way life will function after God has fully established his kingdom in the future.

These teachings are descriptions of what life looks like for followers of Jesus as they try to be faithful to Him as He has been first faithful to us. We are to live as ambassadors of God's kingdom in this world now. The Sermon shows us what life should look like for a heart that has been melted and transformed by the gospel of grace.

The words "Hunger and thirst" express desire that reflects back to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. *Psalm 63:1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*



In Matthew "righteousness" has the connotation of the personal righteousness given to us and justice in the broadest sense. These people hunger and thirst, not only that they may be righteous (that they may wholly do God's will from the heart), but that justice may be done everywhere. All unrighteousness grieves them and makes them homesick for the new heaven and earth—the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13). Satisfied with neither personal righteousness alone nor social justice alone, they cry for both: they long for the advent of the messianic kingdom.

When we see the suffering in the world and realize Jesus' heart for the suffering world, we get a glimpse of hunger and thirsting for righteousness. So often we are torn in places we don't know what the right choice is, in those times God will say "bless you." Jesus' announcement is that God's blessing is for those who are aware of the tension, find themselves in it and are honest enough to say, "I don't know *what* to do."

The religious impulse is "God's blessing is for everyone who can follow the law," but Jesus' blessing is for those who don't always have the right answer, those who can't resolve the tension, those who live with an ACHE for righteousness... they are blessed. We don't become idle with indecision, but because we love and serve Jesus, we seek to be a blessing even when we are praying for guidance to figure it all out. It is being part of Abraham's covenant and promise "*you will be a blessing to all nations.*"

You and I must be a people who ask, "*how can I bless people?*" When we bless the way God intends for us to bless, as we have been blessed, it will whet peoples appetite for more.

YOUTH PARENT MEETING

7th-12th grade
Today at 12:20pm in the Classroom

CINDERELLA'S CLOSET

This Saturday, 10-3pm
Volunteer: youngblood@ourelement.org

ELEMENT U

A six week course on Apologetics
Starts Thursday at 6:30pm

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