

3rd in a series on the Sermon on the Mount

*Blessed are those who hunger
and thirst for righteousness for they
shall be satisfied*

WHAT DO YOU CRAVE?

William Blake, that genius of more than a century ago, once sketched a little man standing at the foot of a ladder reaching to the moon; with uplifted hands, he is crying, "I want, I want." Man is an incarnate want. Each of us is an ~~applied~~ embodied hunger. The question before us is not, "Do you want anything?" but, "WHAT DO YOU CRAVE?"

Normal human beings crave food for thier bodies. We crave love, affection and comradeship. We crave a sense of significance - and what strange tricks we play on ourselves, and upon others, to achieve this. We crave security; it is an elemental need. Watch a ^{baby} ~~baby~~ -- no discomfort seems so great to an infant as feeling physically insecure, unless it be physical hunger. One child's nervousness was cured by being tightly wrapped in a blanket so that he would feel himself held and protected. ^{infant} We never wholly outgrow this craving for security. By giving ourselves to a full and servicable life in the community, in human relationships, many of these basic hungers can be satisfied.

WE CRAVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. ~~The~~ Jesus knew that we all have deep hungers; but he also knew that the truly happy person hungered for something more -- something which includes all these others. Jesus called it hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

When it comes to hungering and

(1) The hungering and thirsting which this beatitude describes is ^{anota} ~~a~~ hunger which ~~can~~ ^{cannot} be satisfied with a midmorning snack; the ~~thirst~~ ^{Thirst} of which it speaks is no thirst which ~~could~~ can be satisfied with a cup of coffee or a glass of ice-tea. It is the hunger of the person who is starving for food, and of the person who will die unless he drinks. Therefore this beatitude becomes a question and a challenge. ^{The challenge is:} In effect it demands, "How much do you want ^(crave) righteousness? ^{The challenge} Do you want it as much as a starving man wants

of God?

food, and as much as a man dying of thirst wants water?" How ^{intense} ~~intense~~ is our desire for righteousness.

(2) This word righteousness would be better translated as "GOODNESS." This is a better translation because we tend to think of righteousness ~~as~~ in the legal sense -- that is -- of a person who will pay one hundred cents on the dollar, but will never cross the street to ~~say~~ give a helping hand to his brother. Whereas to Jesus, the righteous man ~~went~~ ^{and} extra mile for his brother, and patterned his life after the idea of, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (acts 20:35). Righteousness in the N.T. sense did not mean doing your duty; ^{IT means Obey God} it meant doing the will of God. -- And that is why Jesus is saying that anyone who saw into the meaning of such righteousness or goodness --- "hungered and thirsted" after it. (Righteousness)

Maybe I can put it another way. The great ~~hunger~~ of which this beatitude speaks is the hunger for God -- God's very self, and His rule in life. (Some people have it who do not recognize it for what it is. Now and again one of them pierces past all his screens and realizes that under various disguises he has been hungry for the eternal God.)

Therefore, When we approach this beatitude from this point of view it is very demanding, and ~~indeed most frightening of all the beatitudes.~~ But ~~not~~ only is it the most demanding beatitude; ~~it/its~~ in its ~~own~~ way it is also the most comforting beatitude. Behind this beatitude is the meaning that the man who is blessed is not necessarily the man who attains and achieves goodness, but the man who longs for it with his whole heart. If blessedness came only to the person who achieved, then none would be blessed. ^{But} blessedness comes to the person who, in spite of failure still seeks the will of God in ~~and~~ for his life.

Like: Job
Thou He slay, yet will I
serve Him

Do you crave God and His friendship? You must hunger for it, passionately, says Jesus. Only deep desire will drive us to realize what we want. If God is only an elective, ~~and~~ an option, ^{IF God is only a Sunday thing, then} the other desires we have will overthrow our search and divert our quest. ^{For Example} The man with a taste for religious discussion, or an interest in ethics, or just in a social ^{concerns} gospel, is not the person who will find God. The person who finds God is the person who hungers and thirst for God. ^{The amazing thing is that that hunger is within us - if we will let it out.}

③ It is people like this -- those who hunger and thirst for God -- who will "be filled or satisfied." (This means literally, "They will be nourished.") There is no assurance that anything we desire ~~passionately~~ can surely be achieved -- nothing except this goodness (or righteousness) of which Christ spoke. ^{I believe this is literally} ~~It is~~ ~~literally~~ and ~~universally~~ true that if we desire it with all ~~of~~ our souls, it will be ours.

Christ promises this happiness to those who hunger and thirst after goodness, that is after God. The preceding Beatitudes concern some form of attainment, disciplined feeling, and enlightened conscience. But the condition of hunger and thirst is not associated with any kind of virtue -- only with striving, yearning dissatisfaction. Blessed are you who are discontented with yourselves, who long for Christlike goodness. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst before they actually get the Food and drink. They are the happy ones/

just
The scholar hungers and thirsts for knowledge, and knowledge he gains, although it is never complete. The fearful seeks courage and finds it; the scientist craves to penetrate the secrets of the unknown and is pleased if granted. The soul craves the ultimate satisfaction --- God Himself.

There are many ^{ways} roads to the presence of God. --- beauty, truth, reason, prayer --- but there is one road above all others. -- The way of Christ himself. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). We feed on Him in our hearts by faith. He is the food of our spirits. In Jesus we find the secret of endurance and lasting happiness.

Do you crave God as one who craves food or drink? Do you desire to know God and have Christ as your Lord and Saviour? If you do then you will be satisfied. You will be saved. And you will help to bring in a new age in your life.

Jesus said that the secret of true happiness is to be found in those who have an overmastering passion for God and His rule.

So, then, the translation of this fourth beatitude could read:

O the blessing of the man who longs for ~~truth~~ goodness as a starving man longs for food, and a man dying of thirst longs for water, for that man will be truly ^{saved} satisfied.

What are you craving in life? Is it God -- or some other means to happiness?