The Secret to Happiness
“Happiness Through Hunger and Thirst”
Matthew 5:6
Pastor John Miller

Introduction: How’s your appetite? A good appetite is a blessing.
1) It’s a sign of good health
2) It’s a roadway to growth
3) It’s a source of enjoyment

* What is true of the body is also true of the soul. Just as the outer man needs food and water, so does the inner man!
  o Jesus said in Matthew 4:4- “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by…”

* Not only is the fact that we eat important, but what we eat is important.
  o Illustration- You are what you eat.
  o It’s true in the spiritual realm.
  o If we are Christians living in the Kingdom of Heaven, we will have a different appetite than the unsaved.
  o The unsaved hunger for pleasure, possessions and power.
    • 1 John 2:16- Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life.
  o The child of God hungers and thirsts after righteousness.
    • It’s the mark of those living in the Kingdom of Heaven.
    • Today, we will look at how this fourth Beatitude ties in with the first three (v.v. 3-5).

* The fourth Beatitude opens with (v. 6) “Blessed.”
  o “Happy are the hungry”
  o “Hungry for happiness”
  o “Hungry for righteousness”

* What does Jesus mean by “righteousness?”

I. What Kind of Righteousness Do We Hunger For?

A. It is not a self-righteousness like that of the Pharisees!
   1. (v. 20)- “For I say unto you…”
   2. The Pharisees were neither holy nor happy.
   3. Legalism doesn’t bring happiness!
B. It’s not primarily an “imputed” or “positional” righteousness.
   1. **Illustration** - The epistles of Paul

C. It is an “imparted” righteousness of “practical” righteousness
   1. It’s sanctification (God makes me holy)
   2. It’s a hunger and thirst to live a holy life!
      a. To live right with God and man, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
   3. **J.C. Ryle** - “He means those who desire above all things to be entirely conformed to the mind of God. They long not so much to be rich, or wealthy, or learned, as to be holy.”

* It’s a hunger and thirst for God and to be like God, Who is holy!
  o It’s not enough to just (v. 4) “mourn” over my sin, I must “hunger and thirst after righteousness.”

* **James Boice** - “The people described in this verse are those who want to be righteous, to live a holy and obedient life, to walk according to God’s Holy Word.”

* Do you want to live obediently and righteously?

II. What Does it Mean to Hunger and Thirst?

* It’s a metaphor for “intense desire.”
  o Jesus was speaking to people who really knew what it meant to “hunger and thirst.”

* Pictures of people who were thirsty for God:

   A. Moses
      1. **Exodus 33:18** - “Please show me your glory”
         a. The prayer God loves to answer the most!

   B. David
      1. A man after God’s own heart.
      2. **Psalm 42:1** - “As the deer panteth after the water brooks, so thirsteth my soul after thee, O God.”
      3. **Psalm 63:1** - “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.”

   C. Paul
      1. **Philippians 3:10** - “That I may know Him and…”
2. Beware of those who claim to have attained in their spiritual growth!
   a. Paul said in Philippians 3:12-14 - “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

3. Beware also of anything that dulls or deadens your appetite for God!
   a. (v. 6) “…they which do hunger and thirst…”
   b. It’s a continuous action (a life-long passion)
   c. It’s “hungering and thirsting”
   d. Don’t let other things get in the way!
   e. Feed on God’s Word (the Bible), and fellowship with God’s people.
      i. 1 Peter 2:2
      ii. Matthew 6:33 - “But seek first the kingdom of God…”

III. What is the Promise to Those Who Hunger and Thirst?

* (v. 6) “…they shall be filled.”

* “They” is emphatic—so “they only”
  o Only those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are “happy” or “blessed.”

* Only God can fill the empty heart!
  o Illustration- Jeremiah 2:13 - “For my people have committed two evils…”
  o Illustration- John 4- Jesus with the woman from Samaria

* Psalm 107:9 - “For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

* Psalm 34:8 - “O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

* Luke 1:53- Mary’s Magnificent- “He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.”
  o Illustration- The rich young ruler (contrast- the prodigal son)
CONCLUSION

* What are you hungry for?
  o Are you thirsty?
    o Isaiah 55
    o John 7:37-39- “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying ‘If any man thirst, let him come…”

* Bernard of Clairvaux- “We taste thee, O thou Living Bread and long to feast upon thee still. We drink of thee, the fountainhead and thirst our souls from thee to fill.”