

Refuge City Church — February 18, 2024
Gospel of Matthew: “Are you hungry?” (Matthew 5:6)

Introduction

- Jesus introduced us to the kingdom with the understanding that we need to recognize our spiritual bankruptcy and mourn the severity of our sin.
 - Our total dependence for life and salvation can only be found in God through Jesus.
- We now carry on in who we are to be, or what our attitude should be like.
- We are to be poor in spirit, mourn, and now...

[verse 6] “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...”

- “Hunger pangs” = caused by contractions in the muscles of your stomach and intestines due to the release of the hormone ghrelin when your stomach is empty.
[signals the brain to let the body know it needs nourishment]
 - Specific reasons why you may be experiencing hunger-related pangs:
 - You’re not eating at the same time you usually do.
 - You’re eating significantly less than usual.
 - Your last meal didn’t fill you up as much as you thought it would.
 - You’re skipping meals.
 - Your physical activity has increased, and your body has burned up more calories and thus needs more food (energy).
 - You ever experience hunger when you’ve definitely eaten enough food?!
 - That’s a result of the *quality* of food you’ve eaten. It didn’t include enough of the proper nutrition your body needs.
 - This applies to “thirst pangs”/dehydration as well. You’re not drinking enough water and your body is sending you signals that it’s running on empty.
 - Sometimes we consume food, when we should be hydrating. Therefore taking in the wrong thing based on the signals we receive.
- Let’s look at this spiritually... we’re talking about the desire for *personal holiness*.
 - Are you even experiencing a hunger for righteousness??
 - You may not be diving into a deeper holiness because you’re keeping yourself satisfied with lesser spiritual nutrition.
 - Are you recognizing the signals the Holy Spirit is sending you when you need to eat?
 - Is there a lack of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and/or a lack of self-control in your life?
 - Those are tell-tale signs of spiritual emptiness.
 - **CONSIDER:** How are you filling the emptiness?
- There is a necessity/command to be holy. So how should you resolve the emptiness?
 - *You’re not eating at the same time you usually do.*
 - You need a more consistent eating & drinking pattern in God’s Word.
 - **Luke 5:16**, “But he would withdraw to desolate places and *pray*.”

- **Luke 4:16**, “...And as was his custom, he went to the *synagogue* on the Sabbath day...”
- **Mark 10:1**, “...and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.” [use your gifts]
- *You’re eating significantly less than usual.*
 - How often are you feeding on God’s word? Are you eating enough?
 - There is a paradox in dieting that I can never seem to understand... you can actually increase your food intake, as long as its the proper type of food, and still be healthy!
 - **John 6:27, 35**, “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life... I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”
- *Your last meal didn’t fill you up as much as you thought it would.*
 - How many of us return to the fridge or cabinet looking for more, right after we’ve eaten?
 - Maybe the Holy Spirit is prompting you to go deeper into the Word and Prayer?
 - **John 6:11, 26-27**, “[feeding the 5,000] Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, *as much as they wanted*... “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. *Do not work for the food that perishes*, but for the food that endures to eternal life...”
- *You’re skipping meals.*
 - Stop making excuses why your don’t read, pray, or attend church on a more consistent basis...period.
 - **Luke 10:39-42**, [Mary & Martha] “...Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving... “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”
- *Your physical activity has increased, and your body has burned up more calories and thus needs more food (energy).*
 - **Hebrews 10:36**, “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”
 - Consider why we need endurance in this life. The pursuit of righteousness is a lifelong journey.
 - Dad always used to give the advice to “newbies” in the faith... start with 7 minutes a day. When you realize that’s not enough, bump up those numbers!
 - Stop settling for what’s easy, and what fits nicely into your schedule.
 - Are you content to fit God into your life, or should you wrap your life around God?!
 - **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control...”

Conclusion

- “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, **for they shall be satisfied.**”
 - I know we’ve all eaten meals, and afterward, you just want more! You’re satisfied, but it’s a satisfaction that leads to wanting more and more.
- Humanity strives for everything in this world to bring them satisfaction, and they’re always falling short. So they pine for more and more of what can not truly satisfy them.
 - **Psalm 42:1-2**, “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God...”
- So we should long for the righteousness of God that is everlasting!
 - **Joshua 1:8**, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall *meditate* on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”
 - “Meditate” = hagah [*Hebrew*; inarticulate sounds; mutter; growl]
 - You ever eaten food that was so good, or you were so hungry that you made sounds as you ate? What is the sound of satisfaction after a good meal?
 - This is what we are called to do with the Word of God. Feed on it. Find satisfaction in it.
 - **Psalm 1:2**, “but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”
 - **Psalm 34:8-10**, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! ... those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”
 - **Psalm 63:1-5**, “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. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,”
- Be humble, gentle, self-controlled, but go after the Word of God and His righteousness like a growling lion, and let God satisfy you!