

Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

(Matthew 5:6)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever been so hungry that you felt you could not wait until time for dinner? Or so thirsty that you felt you must have a cold drink right now? Some people have those same cravings for the things of this world. Some people think money will satisfy. Others think they need pleasure.

But, have you ever noticed that even if you eat to the point that you hurt, you always get hungry again? And, you never seem to have enough money or time to do fun things. That's the problem with earthly things, they never really satisfy you permanently.

Just as your body needs food and water, the inner you (your soul and spirit) needs something to satisfy it, too. Jesus says the only thing that can satisfy your inner hunger and thirst is righteousness, that is, doing right.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us as we continue to study the types of attitudes that You want us to have. Teach us this morning about what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Give us all a earnest desire to please You with our thoughts, words, and our actions. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

Lesson

We've been studying *The Beatitudes*. Who can remember what a beatitude is? A beatitude is the blessing you get from God when you have the kind of attitudes that please Him. I call them "*Be-Attitudes*" because they are attitudes that ought to be in our hearts. God gives us blessings when we allow Him to control our thoughts and feelings.

The Beatitudes tell us about the kinds of attitudes we should have to receive blessings from God. Jesus came to earth to teach us these things so that we could live happy and fulfilled lives. So, it's important for us to understand His teachings.

Let's review the beatitudes we have learned about so far.

Review

[Teacher, as you review these verses, have the children observe the text in their own Bibles. Lead them to understand the meaning of the words by asking questions and getting responses from them.]

The **first** beatitude is found in Matthew 5:3,

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

We learned that God is really pleased with us when we know that we are "*poor in spirit*" (that is, we know that we are lost without Jesus). He promises that once we turn to Him to ask Him to forgive us of our sins, we receive the right to go to Heaven when we die. It says, "*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

The **second** beatitude is found in Matthew 5:4,

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

We learned that this means that we will be truly happy if we are sincerely sorry about our sins. What is the blessing? God comforts us! God promises to forgive everyone who confesses their sins and to restore them to right standing before Him.

The **third** beatitude is in Matthew 5:5,

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

We learned that we will be truly happy if we become humble and stop trying to be the center of attention. What's the blessing? God promises us "*the earth*." This is total appreciation for your life here on earth: your health, friends, family, fresh air and sunshine, etc. You see, when we begin to take our eyes off of ourselves, we start enjoying the beauty and the bounty of the earth around us. That's when we get the most out of life. And, we look forward to being with Jesus in the life to come.

And now today we'll be looking at the **fourth** beatitude,

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6)

Let's try to understand what Jesus is telling us here. We know what it is to be hungry and thirsty for food, but what is "*righteousness*?" If you are righteous, you are doing what is good and right in God's eyes. So, what Jesus is saying here is that you will be happy if you hunger and thirst after doing what is right and good. That is, if you really earnestly desire to do the proper thing.

You could say the verse this way, "*Happy are those who long to be just and good for they shall be completely satisfied.*"

What is the blessing God promises in today's beatitude? (*To be filled* — complete satisfaction deep down in our heart and soul.) It makes you feel really good to be good and to do right, doesn't it?

Do you really want to do right? You need to know how to hunger and thirst after righteousness. How do you know what the right thing to do is? If you hunger and thirst after righteousness, you will read God's Word and pray. You'll enjoy being with other Christians in church and Sunday school. As you seek God and do right, you will be filled with great inner satisfaction; you will be blessed with true happiness.

But, only Jesus can help you do all these things. When we receive Him, He gives us His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21), and then He gives us the power to live right. When Jesus died on the cross,

He took the punishment for all our sins. He took our spanking, so to speak, and erased our sins. This makes us right before God. God sees us as righteous. And then when Jesus ascended into Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to make the right choices to do the right things in life.

Have you ever been tempted to cheat on a test or to lie about something? Did the Holy Spirit speak to your heart about that being a wrong thing to do? Right at that point in time you had a choice: you could either do the right thing or go with your other idea. Did you know that sometimes those other ideas can come from the devil? We need to learn to listen to the still small voice of God who is constantly helping us to make the right choices in life. He speaks to us not in our ear, but into our hearts. People who don't know Jesus, can't hear His voice.

Being "*filled*" by doing right gives you lasting happiness because you know you are in the center of God's will.

Closing Prayer

Lord, when we look around us in this world, we see so many things that are just not fair. We long for the day when we live with You in Heaven where everything is going to be perfect. I pray that You will come quickly, Lord, and make everything on this earth as it is in Heaven. In the meantime, please help us to hunger and thirst to do what is right and good. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Centers

Craft Corner

Game Center

Beatitude Bingo. Call out the words, one-by-one. If a child has that word he places a marker over it. The first child to get a row of markers in any direction is the winner.

Make Bingo cards using the card pattern on page 17 and the following words:

Beatitude	Blessed	Called Sons of God
Comforted	Compassion	Earth
Grieve	Happy	Hunger & Thirst
Inherit the earth	Jesus	Kingdom of Heaven
Meek	Merciful	Mourn
Obtain Mercy	Peacemakers	Persecuted
Poor in Spirit	Pure in heart	Rejoice
Reward in Heaven	Righteousness	Shall be Filled
Shall See God		

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What's an attitude? (A way we show others what we're thinking or feeling.)
2. What's a beatitude? (A beatitude is the blessing you get from God when you have the kind of attitudes that please Him.)
3. What's righteousness? (Doing right; making the right choices)
4. What does it mean to "*hunger and thirst after righteousness*?" (To earnestly desire to do what is right in God's eyes.)
5. How do you eat and drink of righteousness? (Pray, read your Bible, obey, tell others about Jesus, and go to church.)
6. Who helps you make the right choices so that you can be righteous? And, how does He help you? (The Holy Spirit speaks to your heart.)
7. Where do we get ideas about doing wrong things? (Satan, friends, TV, movies)
8. How does God speak to you? (Not in your ear, but in a still small voice in your heart when you read His word.)
9. Has God ever spoken to you?
10. What is the blessing God promises in today's beatitude? (To be filled)
11. What does it mean to be filled? (To have complete satisfaction deep in our hearts and souls)
12. What can you do this next week to hunger and thirst after righteousness? (Pray, read your Bible, obey, tell others about Jesus, and go to church)

Beatitude BINGO

The following card is an example. Use the blank on the next page to create your own Bingo cards.

Poor in Spirit	Kingdom of Heaven	Mourn	Comforted	Meek
Inherit the Earth	Hunger and Thirst	Shall be Filled	Merciful	Obtain Mercy
Pure in Heart	Shall See God	FREE	Peacemakers	Called Sons of God
Persecuted	Blessed	Beatitude	Rejoice	Reward in Heaven
Jesus	Righteousness	Happy	Compassion	Grieve

Enter words at random into the spaces to create unique Bingo cards for each player. Copy each card onto a different colored card stock and laminate them for future use.

		FREE		

