

Purposeful Living Hunger and thirst for righteousness

A plumb line...plus Jenga blocks, all broken down

Readings: Beatitudes 5:1-6 – read together (...recall last week when he said they were one of three core texts for new believers in early church)....

“Hey, that bit about hungering and thirsting for what is right sounds a bit like Micah 6:8...”;

“and it’s also like these words from the Prophet Isaiah...(e.g. 58:6-8)..”

“and didn’t Jesus say this in Luke 4:18 and 19...”

And yes he did say that...he gave teaching about our purpose to living – hunger and thirst for righteousness (what does that mean? – where everything is right as God wants it to be) ...many things in this world which are not right, not fair, situations where things are broken...like this pile of Jenga blocks...our relationship with God and other people is often not right, there are wars and hurtful arguments where people are not right; and there is poverty and oppression, and greed and need that are not right too...Jesus says we’ll be satisfied if we hunger and thirst to see those things put right, just as God wants them...we are going to explore this more and think more how we can do those things....

These beatitudes are really getting under my skin. They are wonderful, coming fresh to me and I hope to you. Wonderful too how they all seem to lead one into the other and overlap.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Not will be. Is. There is something about living well that means we have to recognize our own poverty of spirit. We have to come to God with open hands. Knowing our emptiness, knowing our need, yet also knowing how everything we have is a gift from him and that only with open hands are we able to receive all that he has for us. And only with the open hands are we able to give as we loosen our tight grasp on them.

This week we move on to blessed are the meek and blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

This is not about self-righteousness, a holier than thou attitude.

It is Gods righteousness, where everything is right!

Meekness is not weakness. Weakness is another aspect of being poor in spirit.

Meekness is all about Yielding to a clear goal. It’s about following a vocation. That there is something bigger than you are in this life. Meekness leads us into understanding what we are here for, what our purpose in life is.

It’s a bit like the English football team training hard. Sacrificing effort and time all for the goal of winning the European cup. Following the higher calling than our own agenda.

But if we want to live well **with clear purpose** as Jesus teaches us he tells us that the higher calling on our lives, God’s purpose for our lives is that his name is hallowed, his kingdom comes, his will be done – not ours!

We also had the phrase blessed are those who mourn last week. For unless we learned to mourn for how his name is not hallowed, unless we are in mourning that his kingdom is not fully here yet, we will not know what our vocation is, what we are being called to work with God to achieve.

Do you cry out with the hymn writer to God?

*Where is Thy reign of peace,
And purity, and love?
When shall all hatred cease,
As in the realms above?*

*When comes the promised time
That war shall be no more—
Oppression, lust, and crime,
Shall flee Thy face before?*

And we are blessed when we do not just feel this, mourn for this, but are hungry to see it put right, thirsty for change.

We sometimes think of this simply in terms of our being in right relationship with God – and it is that – but it is so much more – to hunger and thirst for righteousness is where our faith gets stuck into politics and ethics and real life issues.

It's working for right relationships wherever they are wrong - between nations or individuals or groups; it's about bringing justice wherever there is injustice...wherever the scales are not balanced; wherever the plumb line is not straight.

We are to be hungry for fairness, thirsty to see food provided for the hungry and poor, and it is about bringing healing where there is brokenness and restoring the marginalized;

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, **for they will be filled**. It's a strong word, meaning satisfied, full up, stuffed full.

Jesus says, that our own spiritual hunger is sated only when we are working to ensure no one else is physically hungry, or when anything is not right as God wants it to be.

It cuts right across our society values – where satisfaction is so often about material things, or fame for me. It challenges our understanding of faith as being a private thing, just about me and God – for, as James writes: true religion is this: to feed the hungry and provide for the widows...

Where do we need to stop taking the anaesthetic of apathy and allow ourselves to feel as God feels about his broken world? Where do you and I need to listen to God's heart, listen to our hearts, and listen to the news, for where things are not right.

How should we pray? How should we act?

First part is to own up to our apathy and our selfishness, acknowledge our closed hands and lack of trust and faith in God's provision for us, and ask God for a fresh hunger and thirst for his glory, his kingdom his will to be done...

Talk part 2 – – introduce Mathew 5:13-16 and some idea of how we might be ‘game changers’ to see God’s justice and righteousness come into the world – through our actions...

Blessing

Hear the teaching of Jesus:

' Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it.' Go now to do God's will; and the blessing ...