

Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness
Matthew 5:6

Introduction

What is it like to be hungry? That is not something we Americans actually know much about. Sure, there are the times you have worked hard, your blood sugar has dropped, and you are looking forward to lunch or dinner, but I am talking about real hunger, something very few twenty-first century Americans have known. There is complaining about having the better foods, but there is food. I experienced that when I was in my mid-teens and went on a fifty mile backpacking trip for a week. We carried enough food, but by the end of the week we were just tired of gorp and freeze-dried stuff we had been eating, so we started talking about what we wanted to eat when we got back to town. We wanted something different, but we were not actually hungry. What would it be like to be hungry to the point that getting food - any food - preoccupied your thoughts?

What is it like to be thirsty? I mean really thirsty! That I know a little more about. I worked several summers in the desert and would normally drink more than a gallon of water during the day and then drink a quart of Orange Juice or more on the way home and still get a large glass of water when I got there. There have been times I have been dehydrated to the point I was starting to physically slow down and I could relate to the deer in Psalm 42:1 panting for the water brooks. The thirst became a driving force that caused me to set aside what I was doing in order to fulfill the quest for water.

This morning I want to look at the broad topic of hunger and thirst from two broad perspectives. The hunger and thirst for the things of this world and the hunger and thirst for the things of God.

Hunger for the World

There is a natural bent in man to hunger and thirst for the things of this world for we are creatures of it. Much of what is desired is legitimate if it pursued with the right motives and in righteousness. However, the tragic fact is that because man is naturally sinful, he not only hungers for what is sinful, but he also perverts his thirst for what is legitimate with selfish motives and sinful means. There are many examples of this that could be given, but for the sake of time I want to give three general examples - physical pleasure, material possessions and power.

Physical Pleasure. God made man with five physical senses each of which can bring pleasure when pursued and fulfilled properly. Words such as smell, aroma and fragrance are used many times in the Scriptures and often in relationship to the sacrifices to the Lord which are soothing to Him. When Mary anointed Jesus' feet with nard, its pleasant fragrance filled the room (John 12:3). Proverbs 24:13 commends eating honey for it is good and sweet to the taste. Psalm 34 commends man to see that the Lord is good and instructs him how to live that he might see good during his life. Hearing is pleasant when it is good news and joyful music (1 Chronicles 15:16). Even the physical pleasure of intimacy between a man and a woman is commended in its proper context. Proverbs 5:18-19 instructs husbands to "*rejoice in the wife of your youth*" and "*be exhilarated always with her love.*" Song of Solomon describes God's blessing of marriage. Eve was created because "*it was not good for the man to be alone,*" and God fashioned her to be one that would "*correspond*" to and "*be suitable*" for Adam. Physical intimacy was not just for the purpose of procreation, but also for the pleasure of companionship in which she comes alongside him as his helpmeet. The depth of the relationship is seen in the command

at the end of Genesis 2 that the man is to leave his mother and father and “cleave,” or glue himself to his wife.

Man has the ability to pervert all of these things into sinful and selfish pursuits of what the apostle John called the “lusts of the flesh” in 1 John 2:16. An improper pursuit of taste results in gluttony. An improper pursuit of sexual pleasure results in immorality. Tragically, we now live in a society that has decayed to the point in which many if not even a majority of people have pursued physical relationships outside the bounds of a monogamous marriage of one man and one woman. Why?

Some do this as a way to gain what they mistake for love. This elevates something that is in actuality a minor part of life into a central position. Confusing a physical relationship with love distorts both and trades a beautiful gift from God for a facade. Some pursue illicit relationships in the quest to escape the pain of loneliness for a few minutes. Others still are just hedonistic and have no problem using other people to gain for themselves a few moments of physical pleasure. The pursuit of immorality is the opposite of love because it is a quest to satisfy a hunger and thirst for selfish desires.

The Scriptures give many warnings that the fornicator, the adulterer and the sexually perverse will not be part of God’s kingdom (Leviticus 18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). God tells us to flee youthful lust and immorality and instead pursue righteousness (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22). God provides a way for the satisfaction of all legitimate physical desires, but when that hunger is pursued outside of God’s boundaries, it is the lust of flesh which brings sin and condemnation.

Materialism. Material possessions are not sinful. Job, Abraham and David were all very godly men who were extremely wealthy in their time. None of them show any signs that their material wealth became a stumbling block to them. The same is true of Solomon. It was his wives, not his wealth, that turned his heart. Proverbs 13:22 even commends the man that collects possessions in order to leave an inheritance to his children's children. The problem for man is not in having material possessions, but in the attitude toward them whether the person is actually wealthy or not. What the apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:10 is that it was the love of money, not money itself, that is a root of all sorts of evil.

Our society is marked by hunger and thirst for riches and material gain. Some of this is in keeping with the lusts of the flesh because of the physical pleasures and comforts wealth can purchase, but this also fits the apostle John’s description of the lust of the eyes. It is an amassing of material things to please the sense of seeing all that is owned.

Many people are willing to do nearly anything to get what they want and build their empire. They do not have qualms about lying, cheating, stealing and slandering those who get in their way. It is a hunger driven by a short-sighted perception that does not consider eternity. They set as their goal in life the amassing of things such as a large bank account, a big house and new cars, or as one bumper sticker put it, “*he who dies with the most toys wins.*” But life is not a game and everyone leaves all their toys behind upon death. What foolishness to trade your integrity for pieces of wood, metal, rock or plastic no matter what the shapes or products into which they have been fashioned. Do you realize that the more things you own, the more things own you. Why? Because your wealth must then be spent on the repair and maintenance of what you currently have, or you will need to upgrade or get more of them. Then, when you get tired of that stuff and consider it junk, you have to pay someone to haul it away.

The misery of the materialistic person will be great when they face God. Like the Pharaoh's of ancient Egypt, even if you have all your stuff buried with your body, you can’t actually take it with you. And adding insult to the injury, all that stuff they worked so hard to attain will one day be burned up according to 2 Peter 3:10-12. Jesus admonished us to lay up our treasures in heaven and not on earth where they can rot, decay or be stolen (Matthew 6:20).

Power. This is another area that is often abused, but power within the guidelines of Scripture is both right and necessary. Parents are to have power over their children and are commanded in many places to

exercise that authority (Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 19:18). It is even a requirement for church leaders in 1 Timothy 3:4. Governments are to be given authority from God to keep order in a nation (Romans 13:4). Elders in a church are to “exercise oversight” over the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2). But the pursuit of power can be quickly perverted into evil by what the apostle John calls the “*boastful pride of life.*”

People want power because they are proud and think that if they can control everything, then life will be good and fulfilling. Some will even resort to murder and mayhem to gain power for themselves. Others are more “civilized” and just claw their way to the top of the corporate ladder or to a political position through deceit, slander and bribes. But once they reach that position of power, their world is really no better. First, people have a tendency to rise to their level of incompetence, so most power seekers get into positions beyond their ability which causes trouble. Second, they find there is always either someone above them they cannot control, or someone below them seeking to usurp their position, or both. They still have the frustration of not being able to control everything and constantly looking over their shoulder because of the danger of someone rising to replace them. Besides, life is short and they will not remain in power long.

There is also the matter of God resisting the proud but giving grace to the humble. King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon ruled one of the greatest kingdoms that ever existed. However, he became so proud that he sought to receive glory that only belongs to God, so God caused him to go insane and he lived out in the field and ate grass like a cow. His sanity returned only when he began to humbly worship God. Life is about glorifying God, not gaining power for yourself.

Mankind sinfully hungers and thirsts for physical pleasure, material possessions and power. The Apostle John categorized them in 1 John 2:15 as the “*lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life*” and added that they are “*not from God*” and are “*all passing away.*”

What happens to those who eventually find out that their sinful pursuits are not satisfying? Many seek to numb the pain by trying to escape through alcohol or drugs. Again, it is not that alcohol and drugs are evil in themselves. In the proper context it is very good to numb the pain. I have yet to meet anyone that would argue against giving someone pain medication prior to, during and immediately after surgery! Again, the object may not be sinful in itself, but the motivation and manner in which the world pursues brings about sin.

The usual introduction to alcohol or drugs is a social setting of some sort and the person joins in because they want to belong to the group. However, when it is discovered that alcohol and drugs can provide an escape from pain for awhile, it can rapidly develop into a craving and then dependency. In Proverbs 31 King Lemuel repeats the oracle his mother gave him which warned about wine and strong drink because it would pervert his decisions. He then continues on to point out that such things were for those who were perishing and had no hope so they might forget their trouble. Alcohol and drugs are for those who have no hope.

The non-Christian does not have the hope for an eternal future that is the confidence of the Christian which only adds to the reasons they become perverse in their pursuit of the things of this world. Our hope is to be with God in heaven in eternity because we have been forgiven and redeemed by His grace through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That gives us a different perspective on the things of this world that are legitimate to pursue, but there is still an additional caution we need to heed.

Caution. Hebrews 12:1-2 gives the believer a proper perspective on what should be pursued in life. “*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

Not only are we to lay aside the sin which can so easily entangle us, we are also to lay aside every encumbrance. The picture here is of a runner in a race who strips away anything unnecessary to his

pursuit of the finish line. Obviously the runner must have to set aside sinfulness such as shortcutting the track, purposely tripping the other runners, or starting before the proper time, for such things would disqualify him. But the runner also lays aside other things that are not sinful, but just hindrances to running. Does a runner wear combat boots in a race? How about a knapsack with some water and high energy snacks inside? Why not wear a tuxedo, or if a lady, a formal evening gown? You could do any of those things if you wanted, but they would encumber you greatly. A runner runs with the goal of the finish line in mind. We do the same in the race of life and set our eyes on Jesus Christ who has left us the example of how to run.

I do not know what may be hindering you from running the race, but I pray you will set it aside regardless of what it is. Are you redeeming (making the most of) the time as explained in Ephesians 5:16, or do you let worthless things squander away the precious hours. Entertainment is one of the worst culprits in our society for doing that. I would challenge you to spend as many hours in study of the Word of God as you do watching movies or TV. Is your reading material helping you in the pursuit of godliness or dragging you down into worldliness? There are many wonderful Christian books of all types including biography, history, contemporary issues and fiction as well as theologies and Bible study aides that would be helpful. Do not mimic the world in its pursuit of either sinful things or things that hinder your running the race of life for Christ.

The Pursuit of Happiness. One of the problems contributing to the wrong pursuit of the things in this world is that people have set their sights on the wrong goal. Most often, physical pleasure, material possessions or power are pursued in the quest for happiness, or at least less unhappiness. But happiness is a by product and not a goal.

Happiness is like a rainbow - you can only enjoy it while it is there. If you try to pursue it, it just moves farther away. Think a moment about being happy? What are you thinking about? Why does that particular thing bring you happiness? Can you think of a time that it did not make you happy? Why not? Probably because you pursued it as a means to gain happiness instead of the normal reason you enjoy it. Let me give you an example from my own life to illustrate.

Most you know that I like chocolate. I enjoy it. It brings pleasure to my taste buds and a smile to my face. It is a very nice treat, but what happens if I get a little down and starting thinking that I can regain happiness by eating chocolate. The first couple of pieces are enjoyable, but quickly the satisfaction of a couple of pieces is not enough, so I go get more. Then more. Then more. Eventually I am thinking about the next piece before I have finished the current one. The consequence of that wild pursuit is not sustained happiness. I get a headache from too much sugar and my waist line increases neither of which make me happy. When happiness is pursued, the pleasure gained diminishes which increases the demand which decreases the pleasure, in a cycle that ends in misery.

Solomon certainly understood this principle. Solomon was the richest and wisest man that ever lived. In the middle part of his life he pursued what the world could offer. Chapter 2 of Ecclesiastes records this pursuit of happiness. He tried laughter (v.2); wine (v.3); material possessions including houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, ponds, orchards, male and female slaves, and large herds of animals (vs.4-8); Silver and gold (v.9); entertainment (v.9); sex (he had 1,000 women in his harem); and he had already pursued intellectual knowledge (1:18). Solomon's conclusion in verse 11, *"Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after the wind and there was no profit under the sun."* With all that in mind, his finally conclusion to the book in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 carries great weight, *"The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgement, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil."*

Our text in Matthew 5:6 states, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for (the) righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."* We discussed the meaning of blessedness in the introductory sermon to this

series. In brief, the word blessed was used to describe the happiness the god's of Greek mythology were supposed to enjoy because they were not troubled by the things of this world. It carries more the idea of a joyfulness that transcends the events of life whether personally favorable or not. Blessedness is not something that can be pursued for it is rather the by product of having particular character traits. We see that in each of the Beatitudes listed at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. These are not commands you can obey. They are statements of the blessing that belongs to those who have the character trait of righteousness that is listed, and each of these character traits builds on the previous ones. This morning we are considering the blessing of hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

Hunger for Righteousness - Matthew 5:6

The unbeliever hungers and thirsts after the things of this world from a motivation of selfishness even to the extent that charitable work is perverted as either a quest for personal happiness or the fulfillment of an obligation which is a quest to reduce the unhappiness caused by guilt. For the believer, the motivation and objective are very different from the unbeliever. The righteous hunger and thirst for righteousness. That sounds redundant, but the Greek text here actually includes the article. The righteous will be characterized by hungering and thirsting for “the” righteousness. The blessing of being filled comes from the pursuit of that correct goal.

What is “the” righteousness? It is the very thing in which we must surpass the Scribes and Pharisees if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20). That is the very point of the whole Sermon on the Mount. The scribes and Pharisees claimed to be righteous, but they were self-righteous thinking they would gain entrance because of their genealogical heritage and religious works. However, it does not matter what your blood line is or how pious your parents, you have to answer to God for yourself and the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:4). They did a lot of things they thought were righteous deeds that would earn them favor with God, but they forgot that Isaiah 64:6 plainly states that man’s righteous works are as a filthy garment before the LORD God. Righteousness is not gained by good works.

Righteousness is the quality of being righteous which means to *“be in conformity with moral law.”* To hunger and thirst for the righteousness is to desire to be in conformity with all the standards that God has set for us. What is God’s standard? It is repeated three times in Leviticus and quoted by the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 1:16. The Lord God has said, *“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”* The standard to conform to is the very holiness of God. We are to be hungering and thirsting for God's holiness in our own lives.

Jesus is the example of this standard of righteousness for He said in John 14:9 that, *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”* Paul said in Colossians 1:15 that Jesus is, *“the image of the invisible God.”* The writer of Hebrews said in 1:3 that Jesus is, *“the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.”* To hunger and thirst for the righteousness is to desire to be like Jesus Christ in your thoughts, actions and attitudes.

This is to be a very intense desire. The double image of both hungering and thirsting intensifies the idea being presented. This is not just wanting a meal at the end of a hard work day or wanting a better meal because you are tired of what you have been eating as in the illustration I gave earlier. This is an intense hunger as exists in someone who is adrift in a raft on the sea and has eaten very little for a month or more. This is the panting of the deer for water that David described Psalm 42:1-2. The desire is intense and fills the mind and directs all the efforts made by the body to satisfy that one goal of getting water.

Is your desire to be like Jesus Christ in personal holiness that intense? I pray that it would be! It needs to be! That would be overwhelming if this verse stood alone. In fact, it would be impossible because it is contrary to man’s natural character. However, it comes within the sequence of the Beatitudes and so it not only becomes possible, but it is the reasonable expectation of someone who is righteous for it flows out of the previous Beatitudes.

It begins with being poor in Spirit. It is a crises of identity in which the proud human comes to grips with his spiritual poverty and is humbled. He is nothing and has nothing to offer his holy Creator who is

self-existent and self-sufficient. In spiritual destitution he comes as a beggar before God and is granted entrance into the kingdom of heaven. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. In learning the truth about sin and righteousness as the Holy Spirit convicts him (John 16:8), he mourns over not only his own sin and the affront it is to God, but also the sins of others and the curse on the world because of sin. He finds comfort in being redeemed by Christ and forgiven his own sins (Colossians 1:14). He finds comfort in having the hope of the gospel to give others and the hope of the future redemption of this currently cursed world. These truths push him further to developing the character of meekness as he commits himself to following the Lord whatever the circumstances because there is an increasing love and trust of Him. His reward will be reigning with Christ when He establishes His millennial kingdom. Hungering and thirsting after the righteousness arises from these other qualities in the logical response of now also turning from self fulfillment and self protection and toward God in desiring to walk in holiness with Him. The quest of life changes into wanting to be like Jesus Christ in both thought and deed.

Here are five marks of hungering and thirsting for righteousness

- 1) Dissatisfaction with self. The person who is satisfied with their self righteousness will see no need for being humble before God.
- 2) Freedom from dependence on external things for satisfaction. Earthly things no longer satisfy the hunger.
- 3) A craving for the Word of God and to be in prayer. The Bible and prayer is our source of nourishment.
- 4) Finding pleasure in the things of God in all circumstances.
- 5) Unconditional desire for righteousness - a longing for it no matter how God chooses to provide it.

Being Filled with Righteousness

The wonderful blessing is the promise in the factual statement that those that do hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled. This is an extremely important blessing because unless you are righteous you cannot enter heaven. Hebrews 12:14 puts it bluntly calling for people to *“follow peace with all, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.”*

To some that seems too difficult because being holy means being perfect and no one can be perfect. That is correct. Holiness demands perfection and no one can meet those qualifications on their own. That is why this is preceded by being poor in spirit, mourning and being meek. Only God can make you holy and that is exactly what He does in Jesus Christ.

As Paul explains in the book of Romans, no one is righteous before God. The immoral (1:18-1:32), the moral (2:1-16), and the religious (2:17-3:8) are all unrighteous and guilty before Him (3:9-23). Yet, God justifies the unrighteous as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ for He is the just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Him (3:24-27). As Paul explains further in Romans 10:9-10, *“⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”* As Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 5:21, Jesus, who knew no sin became sin on our behalf, *“so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* Those who hunger and thirst for the righteousness will be filled with it by God through faith in Jesus.

Some react to this and say that is too easy. Well it is easy in the sense salvation comes by grace through faith as a gift of God and not through any works lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8). It is easy in the sense that you cannot earn it. At the same time it is not easy because it goes against the natural pride of mankind. This requires a man to humble himself and become poor in spirit in order to come to God begging for His mercy and grace, which He gladly grants in Christ. Any man who tries to attain salvation on his own merit is not saved and will not enter the kingdom of God.

While we are made righteous before God by His grace through justification by our faith in Jesus Christ, hungering and thirsting after righteousness does not end there. We are saved from sin and made righteous in our position before God at the moment of justification, but we are also being made

practically righteous in our manner of living in the present through the process of sanctification. We become more and more like Jesus Christ in character by continued hungering and thirsting after righteousness, being meek, mourning over sin and being poor in spirit.

The ultimate fulfillment of this Beatitude will be when our positional holiness and practical holiness meet and we are conformed to the image of Christ in perfect holiness. That will be our glorification. That is the hope of God's promise that not only will He continue the good work He has started in us (Philippians 1:6), but that He will conform us to the image of His Son on the day of Christ Jesus. Or as 1 John 3:2 states so wonderfully, "*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.*" We hunger and thirst for that day!

Blessed are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness
January 19, 2014 - Matthew 5:6

Introduction

Hunger for the World

Because man is sinful by _____, he hungers for sin and can easily pervert what is legitimate to desire

Physical Pleasure

God made man with five _____ each of which can bring pleasure when pursued and fulfilled properly

Smell - John 12:3 / Taste - Proverbs 24:13 / Sight - Psalm 34 / Hearing - 1 Chronicles 15:16, Proverbs 25:25

Intimacy in _____ - Song of Solomon, Proverbs 5:18-19

Man _____ physical pleasure into the "*lust of the flesh*" (1 John 2:16) - gluttony, immorality

Confusing a physical relationship with _____ distorts both and trades a beautiful gift from God for a facade

Scripture _____ the fornicator, adulterer and sexually perverse - Leviticus 18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

God tells us to _____ youthful lust & immorality and instead pursue righteousness (1 Cor. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:22)

Materialism

Job, Abraham and David were all very godly men who were extremely _____ in their time

Proverbs 13:22 _____ those who leave an inheritance to their grandchildren

_____ of money, not money itself, is the root of all sorts of evil - 1 Timothy 6:10

Life is not a game, your stuff will own you, and you _____ your toys behind when you die

It will all _____ (2 Peter 3:10-12), so lay up your treasures in heaven instead of on earth (Matthew 6:20)

Power

Parents (Prov. 19:18), government (Rom. 13:4) & church leaders (1 Pet. 5:2) each have a proper _____

_____ motivates the quest for power and control so that life will be good and fulfilling

People tend to rise to their level of incompetence & and at best positions are only held a _____ time

God resists the _____ - Nebuchadnezzar - but gives grace to the humble

When the world does not satisfy, many people turn to alcohol and drugs to numb the _____

Proverbs 31 - _____ and drugs pervert judgment, they are for those who have no hope

Caution - Hebrews 12:1-2

We are to lay aside both sin and anything that _____ us in the race of life & faith

Ephesians 5:16 - _____ the time in making your short life count for the cause of Christ

The Pursuit of Happiness

Happiness is like a _____ - you can only enjoy it while it is there, & it moves farther away if you pursue it
Ecclesiastes 1 & 2 - Solomon understood by experience the _____ of pursuing pleasure
Blessedness cannot be pursued for it is the by product of having particular _____ traits

Hunger for Righteousness - Matthew 5:6

_____ is the motivation and objective of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ
The righteousness cannot be attained by lineage, _____ or and good deeds - Isaiah 64:6
Righteousness is conformity with God's moral law of being _____ as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16)
Jesus is the _____ of righteousness - John 14:9; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3
Hungering and thirsting with the intensity of one who is _____ and dehydrated
It is the _____ response to being poor in spirit, mourning over sin and being meek

Being Filled with Righteousness

Hebrews 12:14 - without _____, no man shall see the Lord
Only _____ can make you holy, and that is what He does through Jesus Christ
We confess and believe in Jesus (Rom. 10:9-10), and become the _____ of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21)
Salvation is by God's grace through faith as a _____ of God - but it only the humble will receive the gift
It continues in _____ throughout life in the desire ever more be like Jesus
Its ultimate fulfillment will be at _____ when become like Christ (1 John 3:2)

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up. 2) Count how many times the words "hunger" and "thirst" are said. Talk with your parents about what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness and how you can be filled with it.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Have you ever been really hungry or thirsty? Describe it. In what ways is it proper to desire pleasure for the physical senses - smell, taste, sight, hearing, touch? In what ways does man pervert those desires into sin? What ways are material possessions a blessing from God? How does man pervert that into sinful materialism? What is the proper authority of a parent? Government? Business owner? Church leader? How does man pervert power into an evil pursuit? Why do people turn to alcohol and drugs? In considering Hebrews 12:1-2, what is the difference between a sin and an encumbrance? Why must both be laid aside? What encumbers you? What will you do about it? Why is the pursuit of happiness not satisfying? How does blessedness differ from happiness? What was Solomon's conclusion about the pursuit of pleasure (Eccl. 2)? What is righteousness? How do the previous Beatitudes lead to hungering and thirsting for righteousness? How would you know if you are hungering and thirsting for righteousness? How is righteousness obtained? What has God done? What are you to do? Why is hungering and thirsting for righteousness ongoing even after justification / salvation? When will the believer be completely filled with righteousness?