What are you hungry for? Power? Praise? Possessions? Pleasure? Purity? What really motivates you? What would really satisfy you? "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Our physical hunger and thirst serve as a constant reminder to us that we are dependent creatures, not at all self-sufficient. Our hunger can be satisfied by something that is external to ourselves, but the craving will eventually return. Likewise, our spiritual hunger reminds us that we are dependent on God, someone who is external to ourselves. Like physical sustenance, this too seems to require daily replenishment.

Just as our physical life depends on food and water, so our spiritual life depends on righteousness. And it comes with a wonderful promise: we "will be filled" and satisfied. Later in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus clearly makes this our priority, and adds a similar promise: "Seek first His kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

John Stott observes that "righteousness in the Bible has at least three aspects: legal, moral and social. *Legal* righteousness [justification] cannot be Jesus' meaning here, since he was addressing people who had already been made righteous in the legal sense by belonging to him. *Moral* righteousness is an inner righteousness of heart, mind and motive. But biblical righteousness is more than a private affair: it includes *social* righteousness as well. Thus Christians are committed to hunger for righteousness in the whole human community as something pleasing to a righteous God."

If we were to write this beatitude from our "do-good-works mentality", we would probably say, "God blesses those who *are* righteous." Righteousness, however, is not something we *do*, it is something God *gives.* Hungering and thirsting imply the lack of fulfillment, a state of being that is never fully satisfied. Nevertheless, even those who have been made righteous before God in the legal sense (Romans 5:1; 8:1) will long for more, for personal purity, for social justice. A hunger and thirst for righteousness is nothing less than a passionate pursuit to do God's will on earth as it is in heaven, to be free from sin, to seek first God's kingdom and to reflect his character in our relationships and our leadership.

Dr. Billy Graham identifies four things which can ruin our appetite for righteousness: sinful pleasure, self-sufficiency, secret sin and neglect of our spiritual life. Are you hungry?

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1. How does being hungry and thirsty for righteousness *resemble* hunger and thirst in the physical realm? *Differ*?

2. How can you be filled yet still hunger and thirst? Is righteousness something we *possess* or something we *pursue*?

3. What did Jesus mean by bread and water? How does this apply to you?

   Matthew 4:1-4 — John 4:13-15

   John 6:33-35 — John 7:37-39

4. A time is coming when we will never again hunger or thirst. Do you think this was what Jesus meant?

   Revelation 7:16-17 — Revelation 21:1-7

5. What are you hungry for? What can you do to fill that need? (Proverbs 10:3; Matthew 6:31-34, Psalm 34)

"Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing." (Psalm 34:10)