

SOTM : ***“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled”***  
**Matt 5:6**

Let's look at some words!

Righteousness.... Biggest single theological area of debate for the last 500 years. Reformation is centred around it. The division between Catholic and Protestants of Europe is focussed on this. So it is huge!

So what do we understand by it's meaning?

In current culture it is largely misunderstood. Politicians carefully craft their policies based on what 'the public want'... and righteousness is not in it! People in the west do not desire it and consequently not many even understand it's terms. As 'right' is in it, there is an assumption that it means it is all about being right. At it's heart it is once again that Jewish yearning for Shalom. The peace found in completeness. Things in their intended place. Think in terms of God's desire for earth, relationships & our very being.... in it's correct 'right' place, and therefore fulfilling and beautiful.

Can we reach this? Matt 5:20.... do we hunger & thirst for the unobtainable?

To add to what we have said before.... The word in Greek Makarios 'Blessed'... I am with you / on your side. It is a place of real fulfilment... in the greek there is no 'are'... thus it loses any sense of future tense and is a declaration into the now.

William Barclay:

OK into the passage...

Remember who we have here... People from the Decapolis (Gk) and Galilee (Jew). All under the Roman occupation. Many of the people in this culture were working the land for survival, but in the occupation, this land was seized. So family run businesses were just destroyed, and many were desperate. This also in a land where running water into the home was not an option! Instead, it was common for dust and sand storms to blow up, taking a lone traveller by surprise... Cover up & weather it out.... no water to help.

When Jesus said Hungry & Thirsty, these people knew what he meant.

So Jesus was saying, as a declaration, that there is a blessing... in those who want to see the restoration of Shalom... those who ache for it like we have a need for the basic sustaining things in life.

The ache for this can be on many levels:

Global: Greenpeace / Greenham Common.... it's not right. What is going on breaks the peace, shalom... hungry for a different way.

Systemic: the order of the way things are done... education, government, business... where is there a heart cry for a restoration from the brokenness?

Relational: People... made in the likeness of God, relational... when that breaks.. like divorce.

Personal: Our own brokenness... that habit, addiction, frustration.... God I've done it again... We really get Paul when he said.... I do the things I don't want to do and don't do the things I should do. It has such a familiar ring doesn't it?!

Yet in that place, where we ache for the better way, for the shalom to be restored... it is there that

Jesus is declaring that he is there, and it is in this place that we are filled.

It is when our very being craves that things should be right. That justice be in place, that shalom is restored, that it doesn't have to be this way.... that God is with you!

Let us be clear what Jesus is saying:

There is no command..... No advice on what to do..... No information.....

It's down to the yearning of your heart.

Why is this such a radical thought..... it's 'coz we like laws.

Common thoughts:

That it is saying we should strive to be without guilt or sin..

1. Leon Morris
2. Matthew Henry
3. The Demands put on us RB

The ppl who get it right..... God blesses them...?! NO That's not good news... Just another law.

Many still add an escatological view on this... that the fulfilling comes when Jesus comes again.... How did that sound to the crowd before Jesus?

The point is, that the blessing is to those who don't have it.... they haven't got anything, they are still in a process ie. Hungering & thirsting.. so God is declaring he is with them... not when it is all sorted out, but in the process.

We are exposed to a world of need.... and we are all in the struggle.... So God's promise is that he is right IN the struggle of how to work things out. The decisions where we are not sure and we are desperate to do the right thing.... that it where God says he will be, that is where we can be filled.

That is good news.. This is Gospel.

The Gospel is Now..... Jesus is with us now in the working out of it.

Here is the best bit.....We are called to be carriers of the good news!

We know it doesn't always go well... there are bad days and times

Psalm 88.... pretty Dark days... Marvin  
Psalm 89.... same place... totally positive!

Yet both have a heart that yearns for God.... what ever our place, he is in it with us.

Yes we still question, and struggle. No it doesn't always go well... But the promise continues in Matt6:33

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”

Kingdom heart.... hunger & thirst (seek) righteousness (shalom).... and the rest will be sorted out by the creator God who's choice it is to walk with us personally through every situation, good & ill, every heart cry for the right thing to be.... HE IS WITH YOU.... ON YOUR SIDE.