



A SERVE DEVOTIONAL

*For the Lord is good
and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues
through all generations.*

Psalm 100:5

Text:

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

Summary:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ... Biblical righteousness is a twofold concept. On one hand, it has to do with right relationship with God. On the other hand, it has to do with the kind of right living that flows out of right relationship. In the Old Testament, the word righteousness is frequently synonymous with justice. Using that word-pair of justice and righteousness as a lens to understand Matthew 5:6, we'll explore what it means to be satisfied or filled, literally like being stuffed after having had a huge meal.

Personal Quiet Time:

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

Of the beatitudes that get misappropriated, this verse is one of the more popular. It's rarely an explicit abuse, but we certainly live our lives in the following context: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will satisfy themselves."

Or to put it another way, everyone does what is right in their own eyes. As short-sighted humans we are often not capable of seeing God's righteousness at work. In Amos 5 we discover that God's deeply religious people are called to account. Verses 21-23 indicate God's displeasure with the religious posturing of the people in Amos' time. I imagine they felt strongly that they knew what God's righteousness entailed, and that they were deserving of being nourished by God's provided justice and righteousness. But verse 24 indicates that they would not receive the water to be quenched, or to be refreshed. "But let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." If they were not careful, they would be swept away!

So we cannot seek our own righteousness, and we cannot misapply justice for ourselves. But we ought instead to be about the business of feeding and sustaining our neighbors. When we see someone hungering and thirsting for righteousness it should prompt us to follow the mandate Jesus gave to Peter: feed my sheep.

What we practice when we engage in acts of service, and in SERVE is in part this righteousness that seeks to heal, to nourish, and to revive those around us. SERVE reminds us that our community of faith is intended to reflect the image of Christ with humbled servant hearts for each other. The Beatitudes remind us of our communal obligations to each other as well.

Like comfort in the midst of mourning, we cannot do it for ourselves, and we cannot do it alone. What we practice in SERVE is this communal mindset which feeds and sustains those in need.

Reflection Questions:

Reread Matthew 5:6, and spend time reflecting on these questions:

- What does this verse reveal about who God is?
- What are you hearing about who you are?
- How does this impact the way you live into God's story today?

Prayer

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.

Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.