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Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst

Matthew 5:6

Prayer: *Father, we do again thank you for your grace, we thank you for your mercy, we thank you for your words, and Lord, I thank you for this Sermon on the Mount that we are studying, just the immense amount of wisdom that is in it. And Father, we just again pray as we are opening up your book again to look into it that we would have the privilege of your Holy Spirit, that you would accompany us as we open up your book, guide us into your truth, give us the ability to see it, to hear it, to understand it, and to make it a permanent part of our lives. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, the Sermon on the Mount is not a "how to" sermon. It really is a "this is" sermon. Jesus is really laying out a picture of kingdom citizens, how they think, how they act, how they react. And so far we've seen that kingdom citizens are, number one, poor in spirit. That means they understand they have absolutely nothing to offer God. We've seen also that they mourn, they mourn this fallen kingdom, they mourn their own sin, they mourn the Lord's

suffering; and they are meek, they trust that God is in charge and that he knows what he's doing.

Well, today we are going to switch gears just a little bit, we're going to back up a little bit and review some of the distinctives that make a kingdom citizen. We need to make some distinctions, some clarifications of just what a citizen of the kingdom of God is. See, the Sermon on the Mount, it's not a list of rules that we have to live by in order to get into the kingdom of God, rather it is a simple description of what genuine Christians are like. And it's important especially today to understand what a real Christian is, because there are myriad of different answers to the question: What is a Christian? For the vast majority of the people in the United States, it means somebody who's not Jewish, somebody who's not Muslim. I mean, even among Protestant evangelicals, there's much controversy and disagreement about what it is that makes a person a Christian. Sadly there's much error. And so by way of a long introduction, I want to look at two of the false camps that people frequently divide into when it comes to identifying real Christians. Let's call them the legalists and the easy believers.

First let's take a look at the legalists. Now the legalists are performance experts. They believe that the Christian life is all about doing and that doing is everything. They have a very long

list of rules that Christians have to live by, and it is how you perform according to those rules that determines what kind of a Christian you are. The Pharisees were the premiere legalists of their day. They took the ten commandments and they managed to codify them into over 600 different rules that govern every single aspect of how you were supposed to live. Well, they were terribly mistaken.

Now easy believers are the exact opposite. They reject performance. They believe that doing is a fine thing but it is strictly optional. They're easy believers because they believe that faith entails no more of you than a nod of agreement to a certain set of principles. Well they, too, are mistaken. Both sides actually rent scripture out of its context in order to prove their point. See the legalist believes that God does his part and man has to do his part and that salvation is a 50-50 deal and it can be taken away if we no longer keep up our part of the bargain. The legalists believes that we are saved by grace plus something, and it's always something that we have to supply. On the other hand, we have easy believers who believe that what you simply believe inside your head is going to be determinate as to where you're going to wind up. I mean, just agree to who Jesus is and what he's done for you and you're in. I mean, they believe you are saved by grace but it's a grace that doesn't necessarily change

anything. And so we ask who is right? And the obvious answer is neither. Both sides are terribly wrong. Both sides misunderstand that Christians are new creatures. New creatures are just that, they're new. They are altogether different. *2 Corinthians 5:17* says: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* The old is gone, the new has come.

And so we ask what is it that happens to create this new creation? I mean, what makes a Christian a Christian? Well, the best working definition I know of what a Christian actually is is actually very simple. It is someone who has the living Spirit of God living within them. I mean, God makes that clear in *Romans 8:9*. This is what he says, he says: *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* Now, you can cut across any behavioral, culture, denominational line by defining a Christian as one in whom the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of God lives. And the scary part of that is it removes all of the external factors that the legalists and the easy believers love to pounce on. I mean, how you dress, how you talk, your culture, your habits, none of those is proof of the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit.

Let me put it this way. At the risk of seeming irreverent, let's talk about instead of a new believer, a brand new bird. Okay. And I want to just get a sense of how a legalist and an easy believer would treat a brand new baby bird. Okay? The legalist would have the requirements of this bird and so would the easy believer. The legalist would say to the bird, okay, now that you're a bird, here's what you have to do. You must grow feathers. You must flap your wings. You must fly south. You must build nests. And certainly you must sing. Do those things and you will become fully a bird, so says the legalist. The easy believer's requirements, they're altogether different. They would just tell you raise your hand and take the bird pledge. Go forward with your wings raised and sign the bird registry. Okay, now you're a bird. And by the way, you don't need feathers, you don't need wings, you don't even need to fly south, build nests, or sing, just believe that you're a bird and you're a bird. Well, you know, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that this doesn't work. I mean, neither the legalist nor the easy believer are capable of making non birds into birds. There is something internal inside a bird that determines "bird-dom." Well the same is true for Christians. They are changed permanently and internally by an act of God. Again, *2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* You see, a Christians have characteristics of the new creature that he

or she is and they are as undeniable as feathers on a bird. He or she has a hunger for the kingdom of God. He or she has a desire to please God, to grow in the things of the Spirit and to avoid sin. These come from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Legalists and easy believers both place these drives outside of a person rather than inside, and they're terribly wrong. In many ways, believers are like birds. You see, birds have this God given drive that compels them to fly south, to build nests, to sing, they can ignore that drive and they can just get lazy and just stay put and not fly south for the winter, they can take their chances that they can survive the winter and some do and some don't, by and large their lives don't work. But at the risk of stretching this analogy a little too far, the same is true for Christians. You see, we are given a new drive and a brand new appetite at our rebirth. The Holy Spirit is the author of that appetite. He supplies the new drive within us when he takes up residence inside us, and it really is that simple. It's not what you do, it's not what you don't do, it's who is alive inside you. If you are a child of God, then God has taken up residence inside you, and to repeat, God makes that clear in *Romans 8:9*, he says: *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* Furthermore Paul says in *1 Corinthians 3:16*: *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's*

spirit dwells in you?

Well, now, if the Spirit of God lives in you, you're going to have some certain earmarking characteristics, certain fruits. We call those fruits the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said in *John 15:5*, he said: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."* Here's the point. Genuine believers in Christ produce this fruit because they have a compelling drive to fruitfulness. And that drive comes from the Spirit of God living within them. And this fruit shows God's presence within and it also glorifies Jesus's father. Again, just picture it this way. Jesus says he is the vine and we are the branches. Now I want you to picture the vine. I mean, it is rooted and you are rooted in the vine in such a way that your connection to God is buried because the vine goes right into the ground and you can't see underground, you can't see where the vine is connected, you can't see what is flowing through it, you have to make some assumptions. And the only way to tell if the connection is to the real vine and to the Holy Spirit to see whether that is genuine and real is to go out to the end of the vine where the fruit is and look at the fruit. It is the fruit that's going to tell you where the root is. *John 15:8*, Jesus said: *"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."* God doesn't

leave us to guess what that fruit consists of. He says in *Galatians 5:22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* You see, those externally visible manifestations of fruit are the product of a compelling internal force. And just as birds are driven to fulfill their roles by this internal force, so too are Christians, and that internal force is the Holy Spirit. Again, *Romans 8:9: Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* See, when you are truly born from above, God's Spirit indwells you and you are permanently and radically changed. I mean, new creatures have new characteristics. And here's where the error begins to come in. You see, both legalists and easy believers mistake these new characteristics for requirements. Legalists observe the characteristics of born again believers and they think, okay, here's what you have to do to be a Christian. You got to read your Bible, you've got to pray, you've got to go to church, you have to walk and talk a certain way. They define faith by these requirements. Well, easy believers also turn characteristics into requirements, but they define their faith as freedom from requirements. I mean, their motto might be *John 8:36: "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."* You know, many easy believers believe that Christians are free to live lives that are identical to the rest of the world. And they understand *Romans*

10:9 to say: *If you confess by your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* Now they understand those words as saying, well, first of all, what do I need to do? Oh, I need to confess. Okay. Jesus is Lord. Not a problem. Then you need to believe that God raised him from the dead. And if you confess that you believe that Jesus is Lord and God raised him from the dead, then you're saved. Hey, that's a a piece of cake. What's missing? Well, there's three different words that are very important to this specific area and it's those words "in your heart." See, there are many who confess with their mouth what they believe with their heads and not with their hearts. But if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, then that heart knowledge has become the most important thing to you in your entire life. And it's not a requirement of believers; it's a characteristic.

I bet if you asked most of the people who are lined up on Fifth Avenue as they're watching the Easter parade, do you believe Jesus rose from the dead? I bet you most of them would give you a resounding "yes." I mean that is mere belief. It's a start. But it's nowhere nearly enough. It's not heart belief. And it's heart belief that is characteristic of kingdom citizens. I mean, Jesus himself responded negatively to mere belief. In *John 2:23* it says this, describing Jesus, it says: *Now when he was in Jerusalem at*

the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. So Jesus would not even entrust himself to "mere" belief no matter how impressive it looked. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus says: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" Jesus is describing saving belief, but he's not describing it by requirement, he's describing it by characteristic. Saving belief is characterized by the desire to do God's will. And that only happens when something has happened inside your heart. And what has happened is that you become a new creature and that new creature has a brand new heart that God himself has placed within you. If you're a Christian, you have within you a life force that compels you to do exactly what Ezekiel 36 says. And what Ezekiel 36 says is this, God says: I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. So the

question is what now causes you to walk in his statutes and be careful to obey his rules? The new spirit that God has placed within you.

Now again, this gets very confusing, so I want to try to either add to that confusion or clear it up by explaining with another analogy. I want to talk about this spiritual life force that's inside you. This spiritual life force that characterizes the presence of the Holy Spirit is very similar in many ways to a different life force, to a life force that operates continuously in every single person who lives. Now I define this life force as a characteristic and not a requirement, even though in every respect this life force is a compulsion. You do it because you must. You do it 17 to 30,000 times a day. We call it breathing. See, if you are alive, it goes without saying, you breathe. No argument for that. Now I may be required to pay taxes, and I may be required to drive under the speed limit but I hardly think of myself as being required to breathe. I mean, to suggest that breathing is a requirement is to suggest that it is something we consciously have to be paying attention to all of the time, but obviously we don't. I mean, it's so much a part of us that we don't think of it as a requirement at all until something threatens to stop it, and we call that drowning or suffocation. And we avoid that at all costs.

So here's the question: Does that make breathing a requirement for life or does it make it a characteristic of life? 12 to 20 times a minute life itself compels us to inhale and exhale. And I can confidently state that if you live, you are compelled to breathe. But I don't think any of us are walking around with long faces because we're under the compulsion of this life force. See, we don't see this as a requirement at all. We see it simply as a characteristic of all living things. Now as a natural life force within us compels us to breathe, so a supernatural spiritual life force within us, within born again believers in Jesus Christ, compels us in a certain direction. It compels us to want to learn who God is in the Bible. It compels us to want to obey him when he lays out in that Bible what is pleasing to him. That's what it means to walk in his statutes and be careful to obey his rules. That's also why Jesus so effortlessly pairs our love for him with our desire to obey him. I mean, they both stem from this inner compulsion, this drive, this Holy Spirit presence within us. Hence Jesus could say in *John 14*: *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will go to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words."*

You see, Christians supernaturally have within themselves a desire to know God, to obey him, and to grow more like him; but those are not requirements. Those are characteristics. The legalist will

say it's a requirement. You must desire to know God, you must obey him, you must grow more like him. In essence he's saying you breathe because you must. Well, the easy believer will correctly condemn those as requirements, but then he goes on to say that mere belief is more than enough and what he's suggesting is that breathing is optional. Both of these errors miss the point completely, because Christians have the Holy Spirit of God within them, they have a compelling drive that seeks to conform us to the image of Christ, and that drive, like breathing, is a characteristic. It's not a requirement. I breathe not because I feel compelled to but because live people breathe. I seek to love and obey Christ not because I'm compelled to but because real believers seek to love and obey Christ. It's really just that simple.

And here's primarily how it works. The primary way that the Holy Spirit moves believers is by convicting us of sin. You know, David was a great man of God but he was man who was guilty of great sin, and he goes on to describe the Spirit's convicting power as the Spirit was within him by saying this in *Psalm 32*, he says: *For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.* See, the heavy hand

of the Holy Spirit never, never lets us wink at our sin. But you know, much of modern evangelism comes perilously close to just this. My early training in the gospel, my early training in sharing the gospel was centered on getting people to agree to their need for God. It was my job to get folks to pray the sinner's prayer, to ask Jesus to be their savior to save them from their sins. And what we were told, what we were trained to do is to tell them that day, that time, that hour was something special, to drive a stake in the ground, give them a card, say, here's the day, here's the time, here's when you completed the deal. The point was to get them to close the deal and having established them now as we thought, in Christ. You can always go backwards and then try to work on their sanctification, try to get them to live their lives in a Christ-like way. But then I discovered as I was learning more and more of the scriptures, that try as you might, you will never, never find that pattern in scripture. It's not to be found. And there's a reason why. You see, over the years I've learned that many of these folks who were saved that way were never really saved in the first place because nothing happened on the inside. I mean, they never became the new creatures in whom God the Holy Spirit was living but they became was merely deceived people who had raised their hands, gone forward and said a prayer. That doesn't make you a Christian.

Remember the parable of the sower? Jesus addressed that very issue. He said in *Matthew 13*, this is Jesus's words, he says: *He told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, and since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."* The parable defines four different types of soil and each of them represents a reaction to the gospel. There's the barren, there's the rocky, there's the thorny, and there's the good soil. And only the good soil is genuine. Now, two of these four soils represent false conversions. And the problem is that those false conversions, the ones that you see in the rocky soil and the ones that you see in the thorny soil, they produce conversions that look genuine, that looked real; but they're only temporary. The rocky soil believers receives the word with joy but it has no root and when persecution comes, he falls away. And the thorny soil believer hears the word of God and he receives it but the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth chokes it and it dies. The good soil alone is the only soil that hears the word and real life

begins and it grows and it multiples. Why? Because the Spirit of God is now living within. That's what makes the difference. The rocky and the thorny soil believers have only an external manifestation of belief, but believe me, that can change. You know, their new belief can dry up in the heat of persecution or choke in the weeds of this world. And man I know that because I have seen that happen many times. Real faith, genuine faith happens on the inside. It has to do with who you belong to and who lives inside you.

Now I say all of this by way of an incredibly long introduction to our text this morning. It's *Matthew 5:6*. Jesus says: "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*" Well, this is truly a unique statement and it goes to the heart of our dilemma as Christians. You see, we are people who are driven by our appetites. And whether it's money or power or sex or envy or whatever, one thing about our appetites, we are never, never satisfied. Well, here God in our text this morning is affirming a brand new appetite. In fact, it is the only appetite that God promises to satisfy completely. And God says all you have to be is hungry and thirsty for righteousness and you will be filled. God says present me with the appetite, just the appetite, and I'll see to it that you are satisfied. Well, the problem with us is that we don't have a natural appetite for God. Romans 3

tells us that no man seeks for God. And most of us, if we were honest, we would admit that it is really not righteousness that we're after; it's happiness. And one of the great secrets of all time is revealed here by Jesus, and what he is saying basically is if you want happiness, well, the answer is simple. Pursue righteousness. I mean, the actual text says: *"Happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled."* The problem is is the appetite for righteousness, the righteousness that God is speaking about, well it only comes from the God of righteousness who's living inside us. I'm not talking about an appetite to do good deeds and do good things, I'm not talking about joining the Red Cross or the volunteer ambulance corps or working for the Boy Scouts or any of those things, they may be wonderful things, God blessed things, part of common grace and I thank God for all of that; but the appetite that Jesus is referring to in Matthew 5:6 is a hunger for God himself. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."* Well, what is the righteousness that Jesus is referring to here? Well again, I would go back to the first three beatitudes that introduce this, the ones that Jesus spoke of at the very beginning when he said that the kingdom citizens are poor in spirit because they have nothing to offer God, that they mourn because they understand they live in a fallen kingdom, that their own sin is what put Jesus on the cross and they mourn that and they're meek

because they trust that God is in charge and that he knows what he's doing and all of this serves to introduce us to the place that only kingdom citizens recognize they need to go to. They understand one thing, they understand we're poor in spirit, we mourn, we're meek, trusting that God will provide for us what we so desperately need, and what we need is righteousness. It's the greatest need we have. It is a righteousness that all of us must possess if we are ever to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

See, in the very same Sermon on the Mount, Jesus flat out tells us the demands of righteousness on us and the impossibility of us ever meeting that demand. He says in *Matthew 5:20*: "*For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*" Then he goes on to say in *Matthew 5:48*: "*You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" Well, on the surface that sounds like really, really bad news. But we have good news in response to that. We have spectacular news in response to that. And the good news is that our righteousness does surpass the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. And it goes all the way beyond their righteousness, all the way to the perfection that God is demanding of us, because God gives us through Jesus his son perfection. I mean, if you are one of his own, you stand before God today perfect, not because you and I are sinless but because Christ has

given us the gift of his righteousness, and he's given it to us by imputation. There's another fifty cent word, there's another theological term. Let me explain to you what "imputation" means.

If you woke up tomorrow, God forbid you found yourself in an ISIS war camp, well, you know, the folks who were in that war camp wouldn't care much what you thought about war or peace, they would just recognize you as guilty and worthy of death. Why? Because you're an American citizen. Not because of anything that you did but just because of the group that you were born into, by imputation you would be considered guilty. Well, by imputation we are all guilty of Adam's sin because all of us have been born into Adam's race. He did the sinning, by imputation we get the blame. That's why we say in Adam's fall, we sinned all. Now before you start concluding how unfair this is, understand the good news. The good news is that the opposite is also true. You see, Jesus did the dying on our behalf, and by faith and by imputation, we get that credit. I mean, the simplest way of explaining this is that imputation is receiving the credit or blame for someone else's action, and by faith, we receive the credit of Christ's righteousness. *Romans 4:3 says: For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.* And then down further, verse 23, it says: *It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.*

So what God is telling us is that Jesus's righteousness will be imputed to anyone who puts their faith in him. Jesus did the work by offering up his perfect life on the cross, we get the credit of that sacrificed life by believing in him. That's what imputation is. And it works both ways. I mean, by imputation we're all guilty of Adam's sin. Now I didn't eat the forbidden fruit; neither did you, but that doesn't mean we're any less guilty. We are all guilty of Adam's disobedience and we are all made guiltless in Christ. You see, imputation works this way in the spirit world and it works that way in our world as well. It's why Paul could say in *Galatians 2:20*: *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I live now in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Well, we all know that Paul wasn't crucified, in fact he was beheaded, but Paul recognized that by imputation, Christ's death for him was his death as well. And the gift that Christ has given him and us was the gift of his own life laid down for his sheep. So when Jesus says, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied,*" he is offering us a righteousness that encompasses our past, our present, and our future. I mean, he saved us from our past by laying down his life and paying for it. He saves us here in the present by offering us today the gift of himself. You see, righteousness is not just a state of being, it is also a person.

Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God. And the closer you draw to Jesus, the more his righteousness becomes your righteousness. 2 *Corinthians 5:21* says: *He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*

Just think about that. What Christ is inviting us to do is to make his righteousness our righteousness. And it's a fact, the more you hang around Christ, the more you're going to be like him, the more like him you're going to become, and that's the reason why it says blessed are those who hunger and thirst for that righteousness, they're going to be satisfied. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sums up that satisfaction by saying this, it's "an intense longing and desire to be like the Lord Jesus Christ himself." And the more you aim your heart's desire at Christ, the more his righteousness becomes the source of your deepest satisfaction. You know, we all look for satisfaction but we look for it in all of the wrong places. We look for it in sex and money and power, alcohol, drugs, and none of them have the ability to deliver the satisfaction that they promise. I mean, if they did, you'd be satisfied, you wouldn't need them ever again. But you need them over and over and over again. I want you to just think of that word "satisfaction." Picture of word "satisfaction" apart from all of the bad means that we use to find it. Just picture a deep sense of contentment with

no hint of guilt or regret. That's exactly what Jesus Christ is offering to us.

You know, *Psalm 37* says: *Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.* So the question that we need to ask ourselves this morning is do I have within me that desire? It's a natural appetite. It's a characteristic of kingdom citizens. Let me say it again. It's a characteristic; it's not a requirement. But you know, it works like any appetite. It grows only by being fed. And so the question is: How do I feed this appetite? And the answer is pretty simple, it's prayer, it's fellowship, it's Bible study, it's worship, all of those things that we know of, those are appetite enhancers. The more you partake, the greater your hunger grows; the greater your hunger, the deeper your satisfaction. You see, Jesus satisfied our sin debt in our past by dying on the cross. He satisfies us in the present by being for us and in us the very righteousness of God, and he will satisfy us eternally in the future. We are appetite-driven creatures. What we seldom realize is that the deepest appetite we have -- now this is the appetite that every single one of us was designed for -- the deepest appetite we have is the appetite for God. From the day we were born we spend all of our efforts trying to satisfy the varying appetites. We start out for an appetite for mother's milk and we don't stop until we pursue

all of the other appetites until we die. But it is then that we will begin to unpack a satisfaction that has alluded us all of our lives. You see, the satisfaction that we found on earth, no matter how deep, no matter how broad and how wonderful, it always had its limits.

You know, in some way, some ways I feel sorry for the uber rich, the ultra, ultra wealthy. They get to experience everything that this world offers and it is they alone who understand how greatly everything on this earth falls short of full satisfaction. You know, the perfect meal, the perfect home, the perfect vacation, even the perfect sunset somehow leaves us hungry for something more, something just outside our grasp. No one summed up our dilemma better than C.S. Lewis who said this: "If we have find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world." Lewis is precisely right. See, for citizens in the kingdom of God, the best is always yet to come. What this world could not give us is the full expression and the deepest pleasure of God himself. You see, God and complete satisfaction in God is precisely what we were designed for. Not only that though, it's what Jesus came to earth to ransom and rescue us for. God designed birds to fly, he designed fish to swim, and he designed us to glorify Him. We were put on this earth to put on display God's character and his

attributes, to demonstrate who God is and what he does. And the reason we find satisfaction so illusory is because we so seldom fully expressed what it is we were designed for. All of that's going to change when this life ends and we finally and fully enter the kingdom. And what God promises to his kingdom citizens is an infinitely growing capacity for satisfaction in him along with an infinite ability to satisfy that. I mean, take the best thing that earth could ever offer you. Repeat it. And then repeat it again. Repeat it over and over and over till you've experienced it ten thousand times. I don't care what it is. I mean, I don't care, it's going to run its course whether it's the four thousandth sunset or the nine thousandth perfect meal. But ten thousand experiences of the limitless vastness of God, it's only going to increase your capacity for satisfaction ten thousand fold. And God alone is going to be able to satisfy that. Just picture an infinitely growing appetite along with an infinite capacity to satisfy that appetite, and you get an inkling of what we're going to find in the God who created us. I mean, you and I have never experienced that on this earth. It'll be our daily experience in heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ is righteousness personified, he will be what grows and simultaneously satisfies our appetites. That's as close as I can get to describing what heaven is going to be like, and that's why Jesus can say: *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."*

Let's pray.

Father God, we are amazed at how little we know and how little we understand of what is in store for us, of the incredible plans that you have for us. I mean, it's nothing to say that we shall judge angels, but the idea of an unlimited capacity to grow in satisfaction and to continue to grow and always be satisfied with you, Lord, is beyond our ability to understand. I pray for grace, I pray for understanding, I pray for the excitement that accompanies what it means to be a member of this kingdom, and I pray that you would understand and that we would understand the difference between characteristics and requirements. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.