

The Beatitudes: Jesus' Way of Living (Part Two)



Matthew 5:6–8

Bro Kory Cunningham

I have a few questions before we get started. Raise your hand if the answer is yes. When you got here this morning, did you eat a donut or a muffin? If you did, just raise your hand. Ok, leave it up. Okay. If you are planning on eating a donut or muffin, or coffee or milk as you leave, raise your hand, and leave it up. If you plan on eating or drinking something today, raise your hand. All of us, right? Yeah. We are going to do that. The reason I asked that is because in one of the Beatitudes, Jesus is going to talk about being hungry and being thirsty, and one of the reason that hits with all of us is because all of us are hungry and thirsty from time to time. Now, there are a few secrets about Hardin that you might not know when it comes to donuts, coffee, milk, those things. The first thing you need to know is we actually have a 'HOT' sign. If you have ever been to Krispy Kreme Donut, you know when the signs on, your car automatically pulls in.

It just does, you are going to pull in because the HOT sign is on. They are hot, you to have them. Well, we have a hot sign here at Hardin Baptist. When the car carrying the donuts pulls under the awning at 7:30 and the trunk opens, that's a hot sign. And if you will follow those volunteers as they bring their boxes and put them down, there will be steam rise up when they open the box, and you can have a hot donut. I'm not kidding; they are unbelievable! Also, when I meet with guests who are visiting our church and ask how they liked our church, one of the things I get repeatedly is, "Do you know what I love? You guys have the coldest milk in the world." It really is a thing; we have the coldest milk. I hear that over and over again from milk lovers. Now this morning, we actually have cold brewed coffee. I heard it's got a lot more caffeine, so I actually drink a whole one of those and I'm a little bit jittery this morning.

We all have those desires, right? We all hunger. We all thirst. God made us that way. He built us that way. It is a strong urge to keep us alive, and it's an ongoing urge, which means we have to keep eating and drinking. Jesus is going to relate that to how to flourish in the Kingdom of God. We are going to read three new Beatitudes, and we are going to see that what Jesus wants us to do as Kingdom kids is to eat right, to do right, for the right reason. We are going to go ahead and read the ones from last week, so we are actually going to read six of these Beatitudes, starting in verse 3.

Scripture

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

I don't know if you ever been in that moment where you are just hungry and thirsty and it's almost as if you are going to die if you don't get food or water. You have probably all been in that moment where it feels like you have to have something. My kids know whether I'm going to church or

whether I'm going farming by how I leave the house. If I'm going to church, I'll just kind of leave the house. If I'm going farming, I have a Yeti cooler and I have a one-gallon Yeti jug of water. I have learned over the years that whenever my granddad used to ask and my dad now asks if I can come and help and say it will just take an hour, that always translates into it could be all day long and possibly all night. So I learned to pack a lunch and to especially pack a jug of water because I have spent so many days in a tractor cab or in a hay field, and I didn't bring any provisions and I felt like I was going to die because there's no water, there's no food. So I carry a big old gallon jug of water and extra food because I know I don't want to be in that place where I am thirsty or I am hungry.

See, hunger and thirst are strong desires, desires that you have to meet. You can't ignore hunger and thirst. It's made like that so you will eat and drink and stay alive. So Jesus, in this Beatitude, says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." So, my question is what do you hunger for? Because Jesus is going to be clear that the 'for' really matters. What comes after the 'for'? Because we all hunger, we all thirst, but 'for' is going to be really important. So the first question we are going to ask collectively of ourselves is what do we hunger and thirst for? How you eat is going to determine whether you are flourishing, whether you are blessed, or whether you are weary, tired, and unsatisfied, so it's going to really matter how we eat. So, when Jesus says this Beatitude "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness," the original people who heard this — like we all know moments we have been hungry and thirsty — but you can imagine the audience listening? They all have experienced hunger and thirst probably way more than we have because they didn't have vending machines. They don't have indoor plumbing so they don't have a faucet they can turn and just fill up a cup of water and drink it. They don't have McDonald's fast food drive thru. According to historians, if you were a Jewish man during Jesus' time, you would have meat one time a week. At least once a week, you would get meat, and other than that, it was pretty much bread, some vegetables, and some fruit. So you can just imagine these guys were hungry a lot and they are in an arid place so there is a lot of sand, a lot of desert, low water. So you can imagine women walking for a great distance, you might have

sandstorms coming, and they probably haven't drunk anything all day. Now, they have sand all in their mouths and they are thirsty, probably far more than we have ever been. They are hungry and thirsty. They know what it feels like to be starving to the point of they are almost going to die if they don't get food and drink. So when Jesus said blessed are those who hunger and thirst, they are thinking...hunger and thirst, we know what that's like. It's like you are going to die. It's like you have to have something. Jesus is saying yes, that's what I want to take. I want to take that desire that you felt, that desire that you have all walked in, and I want to point that desire to something deeper. He is using a physical urge, hunger, and thirst to point to a spiritual reality that we are people that hunger and thirst for more than food, for more than water. We hunger for deep things. We hunger for ultimate things.

What Jesus is trying to get us to see is that as people who hunger and thirst for ultimate things, we have to have the right ultimate thing, or you are never going to be satisfied. See, we could rewrite this Beatitude to reflect that. We could say this, "*Weary* are those who hunger and thirst for _____, for they shall *never* be satisfied." You can add anything you want into that blank, and if it's not righteousness, if it's not the Lord Jesus, it's not going to work. You can put success. Some of us are pursuing success. We want success. We think if we just get to the right career path, the right position, the right amount of money, the right stuff in the bank, the right things, the right car — if we just have success then we are going to flourish and we are going to be satisfied. But success can't do it...*weary* are those who hunger and thirst for success. Maybe it's influence. You are pursuing influence and you think if you just have enough influence, then you will be happy if enough people know you, cheer for you, and repost all of your stuff. But the reality is *weary* are those who hunger and thirst for influence. They will never have enough followers. They will never have enough influence. You can add anything you want into Jesus' saying, and if it's not righteousness, it's not going to work. You won't flourish and you won't be satisfied. You'll be weary and tired and you will be empty.

Jesus says blessed are those who hunger and thirst for...now let's put the correct thing in there. What are you supposed to hunger and thirst for?

Righteousness. What does He mean by righteousness? What does He mean when He says hunger and thirst for righteousness? Well, John Stott will point out that there are really three different ways to interpret righteousness. One is like a legal sense, like justification before God. One is in a moral sense, like doing the Ten Commandments. The last is in a social sense, like doing the right thing for those around you. So there are different ways to interpret righteousness, and I think what Jesus is trying to get us to see is that this is not hunger and thirst for imputed righteousness, but for imparted righteousness, as Sam Storms will point out. This is not hungering and thirsting to be justified before God because this is a sermon to believers, this is a sermon to Kingdom kids. So this is a sermon that we read and listen to as those who have been justified before the Lord. What do we need to do? We need to desire right things. We need to desire the right type of life. This is that imparted righteousness that we get to live out in real time. This is not justification; this is seeking after sanctification. I love what John Stott pointed out speaking of the Beatitude "blessed are those who mourn" (we talked about last week that is mourning of sin). He would say, "It is not enough to mourn over past sin. We must also hunger for future righteousness." It's not enough just to be sad at all the wrong things we do, but that should turn into longing to do the right thing, longing for future righteousness where we do right. We want to desire the right thing. Instead of always being mad because I desire the wrong thing, I want to be the person that desires the right thing because that's where flourishing comes from. That is how I can be satisfied. Jesus is using food and drink to say it really matters how you eat. It really matters how you drink. You have to eat right, and that means you have to desire the right thing because satisfaction is on the line.

There was an imagery in the Old Testament, Jeremiah chapter 2, when God talked to the people of Israel and says you have committed two evils. The first thing is you have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters. So why does God show up as a fountain of living water? It is because He knows He has created us for thirst. We are thirsty. We want to be satisfied. So He says that He is a fountain of living water and our thirst and desires are meant to be met in Him. So the first thing they have done that's evil is they have turned from God, the fountain of living water.

The second thing they have done is they dug out broken cisterns that can't hold water. That's how they are trying to get satisfied. God said it's not going to work. He built them for Himself. He made them, their desires, and their longings, and until they find Him, they are not going to be satisfied. Until they find Him, they are going to be restless. They need, and we need, to come to Him. Of course, Jesus, hinting on that Old Testament passage, would say in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." Jesus is saying you are hungry and you are thirsty, and you are trying to get fulfillment in things like success, happiness, relationship, marriage, career, education, the right cause, the right movement, and all these different things. You are trying to make something else ultimate. It's like digging a broken cistern that can't hold water. It's not going to satisfy you because you need something ultimate, and the ultimate thing is Jesus. You need God and His righteousness. That is where satisfaction comes from.

One of the Puritans, Thomas Watson says this, "Hunger is satisfied with nothing but food. Bring a hungry man flowers or music; tell him pleasant stories—nothing will content him but food." How true is that? If you have a dying man who is starving to death, if you say I will give you a million dollars or I will give you food, the guy is going to take food because he is about to die, and what is money when you need food? He doesn't want flowers, he wants food because he is about to die. Then, Thomas Watson would say about us, "So a man who hungers and thirst after righteousness says, 'Give me Christ or I die!'" That is what it looks like to hunger and thirst for righteousness...Give me Christ or I die! You have an aching, you have a hunger, you have a thirst you are trying to fulfill in all these things of the world, and guess what? No matter how much you eat and or how much you drink, you can't get satisfied. He said none of those things is made to satisfy your soul. Only Christ can satisfy your soul, only His righteousness, pursuing His righteousness, living in His way of life.

My second boy, Finley, loved cotton candy. I mean, it's like his jam. Like, he would rather have cotton candy than dinner. He has asked many times, "Can I just have cotton candy?" "No. We are having roast beef. You can eat roast beef." "But I love cotton candy. It's better than roast beef." Well,

I would argue that point, but to him, cotton candy is way better. And cotton candy is good, right? As soon as it hits your tongue, these little happy feelings go off. You are just like, "Woo hoo, this is great!" Cotton candy is good, but as adults, we know what cotton candy is. It's literally just sugar. And yeah, sugar is good; it makes your taste buds explode. There's a sense of this is great, this is awesome, but when you eat and eat and eat cotton candy, no matter how good it feels, no matter how great it tastes, it can't ever satisfy you. You are going to be hungry and you are going to be thirsty. But if you sat down and ate a meal like roast beef, potatoes, vegetables, and a big old glass of water, hours later you are satisfied. See, that's what Jesus is trying to get these people to see. We are a people who are tempted to love cotton candy more than roast beef. We are tempted to love all of the things of the world, these sinful tendencies, all these things that our flesh craves after. Why? Because they feel good, they taste good, they seem good, they are exciting, and we eat and indulge but we are left actually more empty at the end. Trying to get full, we are more empty. Jesus is saying... *Come to me. I'm the bread of life. If you eat from me and drink from me, you will never hunger, never thirst again.* And by the way, that's supposed to work like food. With food, if you eat once then it's an ongoing desire that you continually eat good food. Jesus is saying come to me and never thirst and hunger again. That doesn't mean it's a one-time interaction with Jesus; it's an ongoing sanctification life. He says come to Him for that repeated desire, repeatedly get it, nourished from Him and you will never hunger or thirst again. He is the one who can actually satisfy your soul and the longings of your heart.

Here is what we have to know. We have a desire. We have desires. We want things. And the truth is we don't just want physical things, we want ultimate things. Jesus is saying the only way to get your desire for ultimate things fulfilled, it has to happen in Him. You have to hunger and thirst for righteousness, because only by righteousness, only by Christ, are you going to be satisfied. Doesn't that sound good? How would you like for your soul to be satisfied, for that longing and aching to go away and for you just to be satisfied? That's what Jesus is offering you. Flourishing are those who feast on Him because you will be satisfied is what the Lord is saying.

So, the first thing is we have to eat right, but not only eat right — that's about desire — but we also have to do right. That is in real-life practical application, we have to do right. So the question we are going to ask is do you show mercy? Mercy is going to be that doing right, doing right things. Back to the text in verse 7, notice it says this, "Blessed are [or it could be translated 'flourishing are'] the merciful, for [or it could be translated 'because'] they shall receive mercy." Flourishing are the merciful, because they will receive mercy. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. So now, we are not just desiring the right things. Now, Jesus is prompting us to do the right things, to be a person who shows mercy.

I love what William Barclay says about this Greek word. He says it's meaning is the ability to get right inside other people until we can see things with their eyes, think things with their minds, and fill things with their feelings. That's what Jesus getting at. The merciful — who are they? They are the type of people who get inside of other people, who are so compassionate, who walk in another person's shoes in such a way that they see the way others see, they feel the way others feel, and they think the way others think. This is not a casual...I am praying for you. This is not a casual...here is an extra dollar. This is showing up and serving a person in such a way that you would be called merciful — to be a person who steps into their shoes and care enough to be moved and do something about their state. It's to be merciful. It means to be compassionate. When we think about our Lord Jesus, was He not the most compassionate person? When He walked around, He saw people that no one else saw. People just caught His eye because He was intentionally looking.

We had Jim Foster from Culver's come in last week and he did a training with our staff. Speaking of food, I love Culver's! Culver's is just awesome. Like, I don't know how they do it, but when you go in there are teenage employees who are saying polite things and just serving you well. It's unbelievable what they do. I said, "Hey, Jim, could you come and teach us? I don't know what Culver's does but you have some crazy sauce here, and we want to just learn from you." So he came in and began to tell us his process. One of the first things he said was, "We want people to know that they feel seen when they come into our place. We have five

points of contact with a person." As soon as a customer opens the door and comes in, someone from the cash register says...*Hello, nice to see you.* That's touch one. And then when the customer gets to the cash register, it's...*Hey, how are you? What can I make fresh for you today?* That's point two. You don't get a sack and walk off; they give you a number and you go to the table and sit down. Then someone brings your tray to your table and says...*Is everything okay? How can I help you? Do you need anything?* That's touch number three. In about five or six minutes, another person comes back to your table and says...*Do you need anything? Is everything great?* That's touch number four. Touch number five is when you get up to leave, and they say...*Nice to see you. Hope you come back soon.* Those are five touches from a fast food restaurant and it is unbelievable. You feel it. You feel seen. So we tried to think...as a church, do people walking in our doors feel seen? Do they know that we see them? Do you feel seen because you are here? So, we are trying to train ourselves and our people on how we can be better at seeing those who come. We want to be intentional seers.

Do you know what Jesus is saying? As a Kingdom kid, you should be an intentional seer. You should intentionally try to see people, opening your eyes, looking around, making contact. When you see someone in need, what do you do? You bring mercy to them. You try to help them. Be like Jesus in Matthew 9. His bowels were moved; He felt compassion for the crowds because they were like sheep without shepherds. They were harmed and helpless, and so what did He do? He moved to action to heal, help, teach, and call. He entered into their world and made a difference. See, He didn't just feel the right thing; He did the right thing. And so, we as people, we have to eat right, but then we have to do right. As we desire righteousness, then we have to do righteousness. We actually look around and see people in need, enter into their story, walk a mile in their shoes, come around them, and walk with them so that we help them, because that is what merciful people do.

I was in my office typing away and Lilly comes in and says, "Kory, you gotta go down the road." I'm like, okay, and then she kind of tells me the situation. So I get my car and I drive down the road and pull up to this

scene of some church folks. They have just built a ramp on a guy's house and the reason is because they knew this guy's story, they heard who he was, and they know that that he's got about a four-foot climb to get into his trailer and he can't make it. He's got some issues with his legs, had some surgeries and he is wheelchair bound now, so he literally could not get in and out of his house, can't even go out in his yard. So what did this team do? They heard about this need and they didn't say oh well, let's just pray for that guy. No, they went and they bought wood, they drove to his house, and they got to make this guy a ramp so that he could now come out of his house. They looked through this guy's eyes. They wanted to know how he felt. They wanted to put themselves in his position. What if I was that guy trapped in my house? What would I want? I would want some people to come build me a ramp. They were merciful. They were compassionate. That's what people of faith are supposed to do. When you see a need, you are moved to compassion, you are moved to help, you are moved to do something.

Jesus says that you will flourish if you are merciful. Why is that? Well, there is a reward because those who are merciful will receive mercy. So, it's actually a reward to this. It's not just that you will flourish, but you also have a reward. How does this work? I think practically there is a blessing, and providentially there is a blessing. So how is it a blessing if you are a merciful person? Do you know what I have noticed? Merciful people tend to have more friends. Have you ever noticed that? If you are merciful and compassionate, and love people and care for people and meet other's needs, typically, you have a couple of friends because people tend to like people who care for them. Have you ever been to a funeral of a merciful, compassionate person? The line is long, right? You better get there early because there are so many people they have touched. There are so many people they have helped. They are lights in the community because they help out. They are generous. They are the person who always cooks a meal, who always sends flowers, always does the generous, thoughtful things. They are merciful. They are compassionate. They are always putting themselves in the shoes of someone else, and then meeting that need. Just real practically, those people are the ones that when they are

down and out, an army of people shows up to meet their need because they have affected an army of people.

So just practically, if you are a merciful person, you are probably going to receive mercy in your time of need. It just works out. That's why you are going to flourish. But also, I think providentially there is also a real sense that if you are merciful, you will receive mercy from the Lord. I mean, Jesus repeatedly will tell parables about a servant who does something wrong and he's not able to pay his debt back. Then you have the king who forgives the servant and sends him away. Then the servant goes and another guy owes him like just a little bit of money, but he doesn't forgive the debt. He doesn't show mercy and has the guy locked up. Then what happens? The king hears about it and the king has him locked up because he's not going to get mercy if he doesn't show mercy. Jesus is not trying to teach you that parable to say that if we give mercy then we get mercy, but that if you have received mercy, you will be a person who is merciful. If you are not a person who ever shows mercy, who ever cares for someone else, there's a good chance you don't have the mercy of God over you. When you experience the forgiveness and love and mercy of God, when you realize God helped you from your helpless state to get you back on your feet, when you see people in helpless state, you are likely to help them get back on their feet. Why? Because you have been there. You know what it feels like, and God gave you mercy; therefore, you are one who goes and gives mercy. So, blessed are those who are merciful. They receive mercy.

I think practically from other people and providentially, you can know that you are under the mercy of God because God has changed your heart. And speaking of heart, we are going to ask our last question. Are you pure in heart? Look down with me in verse 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." So, flourishing are the pure in heart because they will see God. Now, what exactly does it mean to be pure in heart? I mean, why does Jesus use heart? Why does He say, blessed are the pure because they will see God. Why does it say heart? Well, I think for one, the Pharisees and the scribes and some of the crowd that were listening, they would be able to check all the purity boxes. Like, they have got purity rings

on they are good to go. Everything is right. All of the moral laws, they have kept. Paul, before he came to Christ, would actually say he has never done anything against the law, and no one can ever bring an accusation before him. He was pure on the outside, but on the inside, things were different. So Jesus is not saying flourishing are the people who are pure on the outside, who just keep all the outward rules. No, He's saying flourishing are those who are pure of heart, that it is an inward reality that from the inside you have a pure heart.

Now, what does it mean have a pure heart? Well, partially it is that there is a moral purity to it—like you are fleeing sin, you are pursuing Christ. That is definitely part of it, but I don't think that's exactly what Jesus trying to get to when He says blessed are the pure in heart. What pure in heart means is to have a unified heart, to not have a mixed heart, to not have mixed motivations for why you are doing what you do. You see, you have to eat right, you have to do right, and you have to do right for the right reasons. You have to have right motivations. Pure in heart is talking about your motivations. Why do you do the things you do? Is it really to serve? Is it really for the glory of God? Is it really for Christ's Kingdom, or is it a lot about you? Is it really for some other motivation? Is there some other reason you are doing something, or is it just because you love and you want to serve and you want King Jesus to be made known? So, I think that pure in heart has to do with sincerity of heart. Do you have a whole heart? It's wholly devoted and you are serving for the right reasons.

I'll give you just a couple of texts. 1 Timothy 1:5 says this, "The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart [there is our word] and a good conscience and sincere faith." A pure heart has to do with a good conscience and a sincere faith. That sincerity — you are genuine person, you are doing these things for the right reasons. 1 Peter 1:22 says, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love. Love one another earnestly from a pure heart." So, love each other earnestly, sincerely, from a pure heart. So pure heart has to do with a right motivation for why we do what we do. The psalms would say this, Psalm 24, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart..." So if you

want to go see God, if you want to walk into God's presence, you need clean hands and a clean heart. Well, that does imply purity, but it also implies something more. It means not also worshiping idols because notice what he says, "...who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully." In other words, having a pure heart coming on the mountain means you are not also worshiping another god or telling lies. It's not a mixed bag; it's not loving God and also loving the world. It's being all in with the Lord. It's a sincerity. It's a wholeness to your obedience. So blessed are the pure in heart.

I just want to be honest. This is really hard. Jesus says little lines and they sound really good in cards. But then, you try to go live this out and you see that this is really, really hard. Just try it this week. In all of the things you do, try to ask yourself if it was done pure in heart. Did I do that just for the good of my neighbor and the glory of Christ? I catch myself so much thinking I'm doing great. Nope, I'm really not doing that great. For example, last week I'm leaving the office and I just look around and noticed the downtown campus does not look well...weeds are everywhere. The yard is not mowed and it's just kind of a wreck. So I'm thinking...who do I call? But then, I'm like, I can do this. I can go down, get a weed eater, and mow. So I get a trailer and I'm thinking it's Wednesday and I pick my kids up one o'clock, so I will get all the kids and we will just knock it out real quick. It will be a service project for them, trying to teach them we need to serve because this is what Jesus' people do. So, it was a pure motive, okay, pure in heart. I am going to serve, the kids are going to serve, and it's going to be great. What I didn't think about is when I got there with my trailer at one o'clock, every other parent also got there at one o'clock. So now, there's an entire line of people wrapped around the building and I am unloading mowers and weed eaters. I go get my kids with my head held high and chest out and say, "Hey, kids! Come out. We are going to go serve. I know everybody's going to home, but we are going to serve." My kids are like crying, "We don't want to do this!" I am like, "Come on. We serve. That's what we do." So, we go out to give it a try. I start handing out weed eaters mowers. So here I am weed eating just to serve, right? That's why I'm here. I want to serve the Lord. So here I am weed eating, and all of a sudden, I realized there's a line of cars behind me

and I caught myself giving a wave...Hey, I'm just weed eating! Yeah, just coming to serve! Just weed eating! Yeah, just get your kid and go home, it's fine, me and my kids got it! See this sweat? It's kind of hot! I caught myself. I would send Crider to the backyard and I would go to the front where all the lines are...just serving here, just serving with my heart! Before long, I thought, what am I doing? I literally came here just to serve, and then all of a sudden serving turned into being seen — and how subtle that shift — I was there to serve, but now I'm here to be seen. I'm here so that others would see me and applaud me.

How many of us as Kingdom kids, do the same thing? We come with a good motivation. We just want to serve the Lord, serve King Jesus. We just want to serve, but then people show up and now it's about being seen. We are going to drop that cake off, or we are going to bake that casserole, and we write our name really big on it, not just because we want the dish back but because we want some credit back, right? We need a little bit of glory. Jesus says that is not a pure heart. A pure heart is your serving not to be seen, but just to serve, just because you love. We do this so many times in so many ways. I mean, as a husband we are doing all these honey-dos, not just because we love our honey, but because maybe she will love us, right? That is kind of a mixed emotion. And then our honey, it's like they are loving us, but not just because they love us, but because they want us to do those honey-do's, right? It's this little mix of emotion of doing something, but hoping something else happens. So many times in life, we do this. Instead of serving, we want to be seen.

But Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." I mean, think about the reward — they shall see God. I have read the Old Testament, and not many people see God. And people who want to see God? God is like you'll die if you do so it's probably not a good idea. But Jesus said if you are pure, you will see God. Now, we see in Revelations that we get to see God face to face, but I think right now, there is also practical application that seeing God is experiencing Him in a deeper way. It's experiencing Him in a vibrant way right here, right now. How? By having a pure heart. By truly serving others and serving the Lord, you will experience the glory of Christ all around you. You will experience an

intimate relationship with Jesus because you don't have one idol in your hand and Jesus in the other hand; you just have Jesus. You have a pure heart.

To close, I just want to show that Jesus didn't just tell us to do this; He also did this Himself. Jesus lived all these out and then He invites us to follow and do the same. What does Jesus say? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...Umm, have you read the gospels? Jesus was a man who hungered and thirsted for righteousness, in such a way that sometimes He forgot about food. In the story of the woman at the well, I love when Jesus and the disciples come up and say, Rabbi, eat! He is like...*Oh yeah I guess it is lunch time.* Well, what does He say? He says... *I have food that you don't know about. My food is to do the will of my heavenly Father.* When Satan said, I know you are hungry because you have been fasting for forty days, so turn that stone into bread. What does Jesus tell him? *Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from my Father.* Jesus was a man who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. His food was to do the will of God, and He flourished and He was satisfied, and He is telling us we must do the same.

Yes, the world has of cotton candy, but it's not going to satisfy you. What you need is Jesus. What you need is His righteousness, to live in His way, and then we will be satisfied. So Jesus did it, and then He invites us to walk with Him and also do the same. So when Jesus said blessed are the merciful, He just doesn't say it's a good suggestion, He walked as our merciful High Priest. Think about the incarnation. Jesus left Heaven to walk in our shoes, to become one of us, to see through our eyes and feel through our feelings, to think what we think, to live our experience because we were in a helpless state. The incarnation is a merciful High Priest coming down to us so that He can sympathize with us. He can feel compassion towards us. His whole ministry is seeing the unseen, going to them, walking in their shoes, and fixing their problems. He was a merciful man. And He says, you go therefore and be merciful because if do you will receive mercy. Jesus was *the* person who had a pure heart. All of His motives were to love us and to serve His Father. His motives were pure. Jesus had a pure heart and He saw God. He is inviting us to have a pure

heart so that we will see Him who is God. See, Jesus is not just telling us suggestions. He lived these things. He lived the flourishing life. And now, He is inviting us to join Him in the Kingdom, to have a true life is flourishing. And I just want to say that you can't do this apart from the gospel.

So remember, the Sermon on the Mount is to disciples. The crowd is listening, but it's to the disciples. That is why Jesus has already told us to repent and to follow. And now believers, as we hear this sermon two thousand years later, have to understand this is only possible through the gospel. See, it first takes the cross. You have to come to Jesus by way of the cross. At the cross, you have your sins forgiven. His death, burial, and resurrection are what save you, but the cross is not all there is. There is also an empty tomb, which means not just your sins are dealt with, your sins are actually forgiven and done away with. When Christ rose from the dead, He justified you, He made you right, so now you can be a person who pursues righteousness. So it's not just a cross, it is an empty tomb. But it's not just an empty tomb, because after the empty tomb, He ascended up on high, and do you know what happened after this? Now you have Christ in you, the hope of glory. You have a cross, empty tomb, and now you have Christ in you, and with Christ in you, you now can be one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. You can be one who is merciful and pure in heart. How? You do it in Christ and through Christ to receive the blessed life that Christ lived. See, this is in the gospel. This is for the gospel. But we are a gospel people. We are a people who have a cross, an empty tomb, and the Holy Spirit inside of us. So, when we come to texts like this, we know that yes, they are hard. When we weed eat, we want somebody to see, but we don't have to. We war with that desire. We repent, and then we walk in the Spirit so that we are the people that eat right and we do right for the right reason, because that is what a flourishing life is. That is a life that is satisfied. That is a life that receives mercy. That is a life that sees and experiences God. Let's be those people. In Jesus, live like Jesus to experience the flourishing life that He offers us.