

# The Blessedness of the Hungry and the Thirsty

by Michael Durham

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking righteousness and pursuing a life of holiness, rather than seeking happiness or personal gain, and promises that those who do so will be filled and blessed.*

**Duration:** 54:32

**Scripture:** Psalm 23:1, Psalm 34:8, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 5:6, Luke 15:17, John 6:35, Revelation 7:16-17

**Topics:** "Blessed"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. He encourages listeners to return to the Father's table and seek spiritual nourishment instead of being satisfied with worldly pleasures. The preacher quotes Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China, who reflects on his 40 years of missionary work and the valuable lesson he learned. The sermon concludes with the assurance that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled, as promised by Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Well, the text I pray the Lord be pleased to speak to us from is the gospel according to Matthew chapter 5 and verse 6, Matthew chapter 5 verse 6. I want to speak on the theme, the blessedness of the hungry and the thirsty, the blessedness of the hungry and the thirsty, Matthew chapter 5 verse 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. The Bible shocks the system and jolts the mind. It says things that are contrary to the socially acceptable attitudes of today.

We should not be surprised by that. It's our logic that's faulty. We shouldn't be suspicious of the absolutes of scripture, but rather we should be skeptical of our own thinking and convictions.

Friends, our text is an example of contrary truth. We don't think that the state of hunger and thirst is something to celebrate and we certainly would not call it a state of blessedness. Our Lord doesn't mean the kind of hunger and thirst we prosperous Americans experience right before we sit down at a meal, oh no.

No, he's speaking of a brutal hunger, a hunger that mocks its victim. He's using the metaphor of starvation. Blessed are they that starve and are dehydrated for they shall be filled.

That's what he is talking about. And when the television screen shows the emaciated children with their bloated stomachs, we either turn the channel or turn our face because the state is not blessed but ghastly.

And we think of this kind of hunger in terms of pain, not gain, poverty, not prosperity.

What then can Jesus mean? Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Jesus said those who starve, those who yearn for righteousness are the blessed ones. This word blessed can be loosely translated happy.

And I say loosely because mainly we in our modern American culture have redefined the word happy to mean something very superficial. Therefore, the word blessed is the better word. It means simply this.

We're happy because God has favored us. We have experienced the favor of God. Therefore, we are happy.

And that's what our Lord is communicating here. So here's our task for this hour. Why are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness blessed, happy and favored of God? This is the most essential question I believe I can pose to you this morning.

Why is it that those who are hungry and thirst and starving for righteousness would be happy, blessed and experiencing the favor of God? I have six reasons I want to share with you. Number one, these who are blessed have come to understand that what they once hungered and thirsted for doesn't satisfy. They've come to understand that what they once hungered and thirsted, thirsted for does not satisfy their hunger and their cravings continue.

The heart still palpitates, still beats and longs for satisfaction. They can't find contentment no matter how prosperous they might be, no matter how wonderful life is going. There's just something internally, something that is the whisper of discontentment.

But there must be something else to life. Surely this is not the reason for my existence. And there is always that gnawing of the conscience.

These have not always hungered and thirsted after righteousness. They've been enslaved by the same desires that any man and woman is born with. You see, the heart is a desire factory.

It manufactures desires one after another. And you'll chase this one desire and you're tired of it. And then the heart will produce another one.

And off you go again until that one proves dissatisfying. And then you're off again after another that the heart produces. This is the way the human heart is made.

It is a desire factory. It is a propelling machine motivating you to pursue the desires that it gives you. And so all of us, everyone in this room has been guilty of this.

Some of you perhaps presently still in this state of satisfying the desires of the heart, not with God, but with God's gifts. This is always what sin really is. We have believed the lie.

The devil has suggested a definition of sin as something bad, something grotesque, something out of the ordinary. Well, it is all of that, but it's much, much more than that. It is simply trading God for God's gifts.

That's what Paul tells the Romans in chapter one, verse 25, for they have exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the creator. So everything the sinner's heart pursues is something that God has made the created. But the problem is that the gifts of God cannot

satisfy the true longing of the heart.

They were never designed to do that. God's goodness to you, God's grace, God's gifts were only meant to lift your heart towards the giver. They were only to extenuate his love towards you.

Do you know what I mean? Let me give you an example. In my own life, even after becoming a Christian, I had to painfully learn this lesson for there was something in my heart called an idol, a desire that I coveted more than anything else. And the Lord exposed that idol in my heart and said, you love it more than you love me.

And I said, but what I can see that, that gift, I can hear that gift. I can feel that gift. I can't hear you.

I can't see you. I can't touch you. And then the Lord gave me hope and deliverance.

He said, that gift is an expression of my love to you. So the next time you hear that gift, see that gift, feel that gift, experience that gift. That's my love for you.

And what happened? It set my heart free. My heart was free to look beyond the gift to the giver and experience the love of God, which does satisfy. But the problem is the sinner has yet to discover that.

They're being cheated. They're being deceived. The great tempter has come to them and they know it not.

They simply think they're following the dictates of their own heart. They're fools. They've been blinded by the God of this world and they cannot see that behind those desires is an enticer, is a manipulator, a liar.

They would have them to believe that that one thing will satisfy, will finally bring the peace and contentment they're longing for. The utter, sheer nonsense and madness of it all to think that the creature can be more satisfying than the one who made it. And yet this is the pursuit of millions if not billions of people this morning.

And they have to come to that sad conclusion that the husband, the wife cannot complete the heart. The child, the parent, the new car, the promotion, the dream vacation, the ambition. These are all good things in themselves, are they not? Take the man who's a workaholic.

This is his idol. This is his heart's desire to be successful. Listen to me.

Don't criticize the man for his work and his initiative and his desire for success. That's a gift from God. God doesn't want you to be a failure.

Not at all. Success is a gift given to us by the Lord. And so he works day and night.

He neglects his family. He eats and drinks his business. He dreams about it.

He sleeps with it. He wakes with it. It's on his mind constantly day and night.

The problem with him is success has now become the desire that he believes can satisfy his heart. No, eventually if he gains the whole world, the heart will remain restless. Because the gifts can never take the place of the giver.

They weren't designed that way and your heart was not made to be satisfied in the gift. And so these are blessed because they realize they're fool's errand. You know what a fool's errand is, don't you? It's a

completely pointless and futile mission.

It's a waste of one's time. It'll never succeed. It's like trying to grasp a rope of sand.

It's impossible. And these are blessed to know that this pursuit and these things that I've longed for and chased after and spent my life for, oh, these are not going to make me happy. This is not favor and blessedness and they're happy to know it.

They're blessed to know it. They're blessed to be offered a major course redirection. The greatest thing God can do to anyone here who's lost today, who's not really a true Christian, is to give you a course redirection.

It's what we call repentance. Here I'm going in this direction, but God has opened my eyes. I'm seeing, I'm pursuing a one-way trip to constant misery, emptiness, and vanity.

Not even talking about hell. I haven't even got there yet. The hell that people possess within their own bosoms, their own souls, we carry it around in us.

We're on a direction that cannot satisfy what God made you to be. And then there is that eternal consequence, unfathomable, hard to explain, frightening to even try to attend. A fool's errand.

They're blessed to know that God has offered them a redirection in course. And the blessed hunger and thirst after righteousness does not mean, please listen, because some people have a false concept of Christianity. Christianity does not mean that you never seek some of those old pleasures and desires ever again.

It's not perfection. Sometimes we do, do we not? You that are believers, can you not say amen? I have done so after being a Christian. My heart's pumping out desires right and left, and I have been deceived by some of them.

And once again, I pursued them. Yes, the flesh lusts against the spirit, and sometimes it seems to prevail. But all however, the spirit lusts against the flesh, and it will always prevail in the end.

It's like the needle of a compass. You can shake your compass and get the needle off of its true north. But the prevailing influence of the gravitational pressure and the constant tug of the northern pole will pull the needle eventually back on course.

You see, these are why they're blessed. This is why they're happy. This is why they're favored of God.

That even though their heart may be deceived and for a while pursue the gift over the giver, something within them, some power, some influence, some strength beyond their own is always moving them back to their true north, to the heart's true satisfaction. And this disruption only proves, only proves their blessed position in Christ. It only proves that the desires that they once pursued and thought would make them happy, all that they had lived for, now cannot do so.

What better proof that you've been converted, that you cannot stay in these things. They don't satisfy like they once did. No, no, you've tasted a finer food.

You have drank from sweeter wines and you're not satisfied till you're back at the father's table. Well, second, they're happy, they're blessed, they're experiencing the favor of God because there's a great

freedom from those enslaving desires. A freedom, a great freedom from those enslaving desires.

You see, the natural desires literally ruled us. They dominated us, they enslaved us. We thought, as I said earlier, that these were things that we chose of our own free agency to choose and pursue.

Yes, but you were a victim of your own desires. You couldn't break free of them if you wanted to. You're like the man in Romans 7, who's here? Enter the sound of my voice that's in that predicament.

The more you try to do what's right, the more you fail. The more you try to determine to do God's will, the more you fail at obedience and you find that there's a new law operating in the body and the members of your body. It's the law of sin and death.

But all things be unto God. These natural desires and their powers have been broken by new spiritual desires that now dominate. You see, the Christian life is not one in which God says, okay, I've forgiven you of your sins, now I want you to live for me.

That is not the gospel. And if you have been blinded to believe such, I want to set you free, if God would be gracious to do so today, to inform you that that's never possible for any of us, including me. No, no, no.

As a newborn baby desires his or his mother's milk, so does the Christian hunger for righteousness. Why? Why? Because God instills that. He puts that in you.

He creates that as an appetite. Now, it's important we stop and ask this question. What does this word righteousness mean? Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.

What does it mean? Well, it means two things. First, it means a rightness with God. That's what the word righteousness means.

Rightness, just like it sounds. Rightness with God. You want to be in a position that you're justified before God.

That means you're acceptable to God. Who's here today and wonders if God really truly loves you? Any? I was in that predicament for 26 years of my life, and I was even a preacher. I wondered.

I really didn't believe God loved me. I believe he could love you, but I didn't really believe he loved me. I was beyond the pale of his love.

Can he really love me? This is the struggle this morning. Can I really be accepted by him? Yes, you can. How? Well, you sang about it just a few moments ago.

Jesus Christ hung on the cross, and the Father inflicted upon him the just punishment that you deserve, that your sins had mounted up against you, and the law of God demanded, condemned, guilty, deserving of the penalty. And Jesus willingly took it. He suffered.

He bled and died. He suffered the Father's rejection. He was rejected, forsaken by God, as all of us should be.

He was not found acceptable to God so that you might be. It's not in your goodness. It's not in your churchianity or your self-righteousness.

No, these things are given to us by God. Blessed are they. Blessed to be right with God.

But if you should stop there, you will have missed, terribly missed what Jesus is getting after here. It's not just positional righteousness, because all we who have been born again have that. We shall not be filled.

We have been filled. We've already received it. This is future.

It's not just positional righteousness that we want, but personal righteousness. We're not content just to be saved. Did you hear me? There is a spirit that's almost like the real spirit of God that says, prevails in our churches.

Preach from pulpits. But now that you're saved, it's all taken care of. Now when you die, you get to go to heaven.

That's all that's required. You to be right with God. Your sin's forgiven.

My dear friend, if that's contentment for you, if that's enough, you have yet to be born again. You've yet to be saved. You've been once again led away by a desire that will not in the end satisfy.

No, no, no. Blessed are they that hunger, starve for righteousness. We're not satisfied just to be right with God.

We want to be like Him. We want to love that which He loves and hate that which He hates. We desire to be holy, be holy, for I am holy.

Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. It's not enough to have prayed the prayer and been baptized and joined the church. That will not get you inside the celestial city of God.

No, sir. Only holiness. Only holiness.

And only God can make you holy like Him. And that's why we still hunger and thirst. There's something implanted with me.

The Christian desires holiness because it's my nature. It's a new appetite. I didn't create it.

I didn't make it happen. I didn't decide one day, well, I've got to stop this. This is going to be a ruinous end if I don't.

No, no. God supernaturally, miraculously implanted this desire. And I don't always follow it.

I've already confessed that that's often true of us. But something is true also about that. It never relents.

The desire remains. It's always there. Is it in you? Is this craving inside? Is this longing? This dissatisfaction with what progress you've made in grace? And this longing to be more like your Savior? Do you often find yourself in your prayer closet weeping, weeping, broken that you're so much like what you once were? Then you are like Jesus.

Is there a godly sorrow for this? Oh, my dear friends, this is the true state of those who've truly been born again. This is what's going on inside. They can't help it.

It's been implanted. It's been given to them from above. It's a motivation that they can't shake, nor do they want to shake.

It propels them. It keeps them. It keeps them on the narrow King's Highway.

Do you see this? The Christian seeks holiness and thereby finds happiness. This is why they're blessed. Martin Lloyd-Jones stated on this very text, whenever you put happiness before righteousness, you'll be doomed to misery.

If you put happiness in the place of righteousness, you'll never get it. You can't. Notice the text.

Look at it. Notice what it does not say. It doesn't say righteous are those who hunger and thirst after blessedness, does it? Did you hear me? Righteous are those who hunger and thirst after blessedness.

Happiness doesn't say that. No, no. It says blessed.

Happy are they who hunger and thirst after what? Righteousness. In other words, the main aim, the goal is not happiness. It's righteousness.

It's to be holy. It's to be like Christ, to glorify him in word, deed and thought, to be more like the Savior. This is the great propulsion of their life.

It compels them. It motivates them. It moves them along in this world.

And as they pursue righteousness, they are happy. It's not that we care nothing for happiness as Christians. Oh no, it's simply not the main thing.

Or you can say it this way. Righteousness is our happiness. Can you say this, my friend? This is the test of Christianity today.

God has put you here on examination day and he will not grade on a curve. It's pass or fail. Does this motive consume you? Is it the object of your waking hours? Is it the longing of your soul? Righteousness is experienced as well as in your position.

Thirdly, they're happy and they're blessed, favored of God to be pursuing valuable and worthy things rather than the worthless. Hallelujah. My life has been set free of feeding on the husks that the swine would eat.

The prodigal got so hungry that he would eat on the pods, husks that pigs would eat. As a metaphor of the non-Christian life, he's spending his life on the worthless, the things that cannot please or ultimately make him happy. I've been freed from that and now I can pursue the worthy things.

But all I want to remind you and warn you at the same time of what Charles Spurgeon warned his congregation when he preached in that great pulpit in London, England back in the 1800s. Here's what he said. Always distinguish between seeking heaven and seeking God, between shunning hell and shunning sin.

For any hypocrite will desire heaven and dread hell, but only the sincere hunger after righteousness. The thief would shun the prison, but he would like to be once more at his theft. The murderer would escape the gallows, but he would readily enough have his hand on his dagger again.

The desire to be happy and wish to be at ease in conscience. These are poor things. Did you hear that? Poor things.

The true and noble hunger of the soul is the desire to be right for righteousness sake. Oh, to be holy, whether that should mean joy or sorrow. Oh, to be pure in heart, whether that would bring me honor or contempt.

This, this is the blessed thirst. All other things are worthless. This is the true value to pursue God himself.

More about that later. Number four, the fourth reason that they are quite happy and blessed is that they have a promise of being full. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

And the Christian is certain of it because of the person guaranteeing the promise. Who's promising this? Our blessed Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, son of God, son of man, the omnipotent creator, wisdom, the logos, the word of God. This is Christ who has made this promise unto you.

And when God promised Abraham something because he could swear by nothing greater, he swore by himself. And it's impossible that God should lie. Dear sir, dear madam, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, there is this certainty in your soul this morning that you will be satisfied.

It cannot not happen. You could stop the sun and its rotation before you would keep God from keeping his promises. You could drain the oceans dry before God would cease to keep his word to you.

No, no, you will be filled. Think about who this is. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, who had compassion on the multitude and fed them when they were physically starving, caring for their bodily needs, bodies that would decay and die one day.

And my dear friend, if he would care for the body, why would he not have compassion on you and satisfy your greater hunger, the spiritual hunger of the soul? He will. You see, this is the whole basis of Romans 8 32. He who did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? How many things, all things, all that you need, all that your heart can desire in him, he will fulfill. Hallelujah. Well, you might object and say to me, but there are times I'm not sure of the promise because I'm so far from being righteous and holy in conduct.

Sometimes the desire for this righteousness you talk about, it's very weak. I understand that. I also understand the reason why you object and the reason you feel that way is because you're not looking to the one who made the promise.

You're looking at your faithfulness instead of his faithfulness. Listen to the word of God. Faithful is he who promised who will also do it.

He will do it. God will make you holy. The question is not how well are you making yourself holy? No, not at all.

That's not the question of this text at all. It's not my question to you this morning. Here's my question.

Are you hungering? Is there a thirst? Is there a strong desire within you this very morning? I'm not asking you, are you good? I'm not asking you what people say. Oh, there's a really neat person. I like him or her.

We're not talking about people's approval. We're talking about the king of kings and his approval. Does he look within your heart and does he see this craving, this starving, this dissatisfaction with your present

spiritual state that motivates you to go ahead and move on? That's what he's asking you.

And the question today is not looking within to see how faithful you are. The question is how you're looking to Christ. Look to him and see how faithful he is.

He's the one that promised to sanctify us, to save us, to get us home safely. And he will do it. Faithful is he who promised, he who will also do it.

Consider him faithful. Put looking at within. The only desire I pray that you will find this morning is the desire of our text.

The only thing I pray you see when you look within you is this hunger, this thirsting, this starvation for something more. Well, fifthly, they're happy, they're blessed, they're favored because they're experiencing a partial filling from God with the hope of a complete satisfaction someday. Let me repeat that.

Here's why they're happy. Here's why God considers them blessed. Because currently they are experiencing a partial filling with the hope of complete satisfaction.

One day that the authorized version with I'm using or even the ESV does not give us the full import. It doesn't quite translate it the way I think our Lord intended it to be understood. And I think Weymouth in his translation of the New Testament got it exactly.

Let me read it from the Weymouth translation. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be completely satisfied, completely satisfied. Those words are in the future tense.

By the way, for you scholars, you theologians among us, it's also in the passive tense, which means it's not something the person is doing, but done for them. That's crucial. I think not just for the theologian, but for all of us, this is what God has promised to do for me.

But he inserts this idea of completely, and I think it's there in the original text. And that's why I've read Weymouth's translation to you. There is meaning right now, present tense, hungry and thirsty in the present.

I am continually hungry. I'm continually thirsty for righteousness. And at this moment, there is fulfillment.

There is some satisfaction. There is some drinking, and there is some eating. Remember what Jesus said on the last day of the great feast in John chapter seven.

He said, If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink, for out of his inner being shall flow rivers of living water. There is a satisfaction that currently is taking place. Do you remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in John chapter four? Whosoever drinketh of this water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

Now we have a problem, don't we? At least I saw it. Here's my problem. If Jesus said to her, If you drink this, you'll never thirst again.

How can I now be hungry and thirsty? You see our dilemma? But thank God it's no dilemma for God. He simply wants you to understand that what you are now receiving is partial, but there's coming the full load eventually. What he does now is so good that it creates a hunger and thirst for me.

And for more. What Jesus is saying is not contradictory. He is saying when you drink and when you eat of me, you get so addicted.

You are so satisfied. You are so full of pleasure upon pleasure that you cannot stop wanting more. Jesus never bid us to eat one time.

He did not say, Come to the table once and get your full, your fill and that's it. No, no. He is the experience.

Even when the night of the arrest before he sits at the table and he says what with the bread and the cup taking, this is my body, which is broken for you, isn't it? He uses eating metaphors here. This is the cup, which is the cup of the new covenant. My blood, which is shed for you.

He put presents himself as a banquet, as a meal, as something that satisfies the cravings of the spiritual aspect of our being. And yes, you come to Christ this morning and I tell you that you will have discovered a pleasure unlike anyone you've ever experienced before. It's better than anything I have ever experienced.

You see the pleasures that the world has, which are the gifts of God. Let me be more specific. Let's take the gift of sex.

Isn't it a wonderful thing between a husband and a wife? And it's a beautiful thing. It's a glorious thing. That's a gift given to us by God.

But the enemy comes along and perverts it with our own perverted hearts. And we begin to pursue it outside the parameters of a good and holy God. And we find it never satisfies.

It doesn't do what we think it will. But my dear friend, there is a pleasure that exceeds even the physical pleasures that God has given to us in holy matrimony, in food, in success and wealth, in comfort and health, all of these things. I'm telling you, there is a fountain filled with blood.

You sang about it this morning. Not only will you can plunge and lose all your guilty state, but it will give you pleasure. And thy presence is fullness of joy at thy right hand.

Pleasures forevermore. However, the experience of those pleasures are partial. And we hope for something better yet to come.

And hope always suggests that something better is coming. I'm safe from sin, but not yet from its presence. Something is better coming.

I'm giving healing, but not yet a body that cannot get sick. Something better is coming. I have comfort in the Holy Spirit, but he's the down payment of our inheritance.

Something better is coming. I have fellowship with Christ, but only through a glass darkly. Something better is coming.

I have some sweet times of communion with God, but they are interrupted, punctuated by times of feeling alone. Something better is coming. We have great worship here, but we worship what we cannot see.

Something better is coming. And one day, joyfully we will lay prostrate before his throne so that we may gaze and gaze and gaze upon his beauty. Oh, dear friends, fellowship divine.

Yes, that's my experience now, but all my heart is not satisfied with that. I want more. I don't want to see through this glass darkly anymore.

I don't want my fellowship interrupted. No, no. Something better is coming for us.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be completely satisfied. The Christian life is a blessed life, but it's incomplete on this side of heaven. But when that which is perfect has come and that which is in part shall be done away.

No more prayer closets where you have to get your heart in the right mood and frame of mind. No, no. Walking in his presence, the sunshine of his smile, always visible and felt part will be done away.

Then that which is complete, perfect shall come. Hallelujah. We will be filled and eternity will never give us it all.

Well, number six, unless they're blessed, they're happy. They're blessed, they're happy because God has given them the hunger and thirst for him. I've saved the best for last.

It is. I don't know if you can understand what I'm saying. If Jesus were in hell, I would want to be in hell because I've never found one who loved me more than him and whose love feels my heart's desire like him.

I love his gifts. He's blessed me with the best friend as a wife, my soul's twin, but she's a little candle compared to the son of God's love. I'm thankful for all of you, dear friends, but there's a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

We're happy. We're blessed today. We're favored because we get to hunger and thirst for him.

It's the evidence. Now listen carefully. It is the evidence of spiritual life.

Dead men do not hunger or thirst. If there's no craving for Jesus himself, my dear friend, be sure your heart is still locked and bound in sins. Dark night.

You're not yet a Christian. I don't care how religious you might be. I don't care if you believe the Bible is God's word.

My dear friend, the subject of Christianity, the test, the grand test is do you hunger and thirst for Christ? The old man now no longer a young apostle, but broken in body, beaten with rods, stone shipwrecked. Now in his crippled condition still at the age, old ripe age of life says, Oh, that I may know him. There it is.

That's the quest of the heart of God. That's the quest of the child of God. This is the evidence you've been born again, that you continually crave God.

And even in your seasons of wandering, being deceived that other desires might satisfy support and save you like Christ can. You eventually discover that's not true. You come back because there is nothing better to come back to.

But when one is ill, the first thing to leave is what the appetite. So let me speak to you clearly, clearly. If you're not starving for God, if you're not starving for God, it's most evident that you are in one of two places.

Number one, I've already given that you're not yet a Christian, not yet a Christian, not yet a Christian. A couple of weeks ago I was near Augusta, Georgia doing a revival meeting. Never been there.

Didn't know anybody, but I'd received the invitation to come and preach. And on the last night of the meeting, a man stands up in front of his whole congregation. He's a member of the church and says, I'm not yet a Christian.

We begin to pray for him. I prayed for him and I asked the church to start praying. A woman began to pray, crying for him.

As soon as she got done praying, another man stood up, her husband, and said, I'm in the same position he's in. 68 years of age, member of the church, in church all of his life. You know what he said to me the next day before I departed? He wanted to have lunch.

He wanted me to make sure that I understood that that night, that night before God had saved him. You know what he said? You know I read passages I'd read before, but this time I understood them. I've heard Christians tell me all of my life.

God speaks. He says things. He shows them things in the Bible.

I didn't know what they meant. But now I do because he's been doing it all morning. His countenance had changed.

His demeanor had changed. He was a completely different man at the age of 68. He was born again, born new by the power of the spirit of God.

He can do that for you if you're not yet a Christian. Oh, do what he did. Call upon the name of the Lord and look to Jesus for your salvation and your righteousness and you will be saved.

The second position you can be in if you're not starving for God this morning is that you have been filling yourself on the husks of this world. You're a Christian, but you've been off your feed. You've been off your regular diet.

You're now eating junk food. I try not to eat sugar, but on these trips like this, it's really difficult. And I've eaten a little bit more sugar than I'm used to and I can tell.

I've got an ankle that kind of pains me a little bit when I eat the sugar. I'm not eating the healthy, the good stuff that fuels my body. I'm now eating stuff that I should not be eating that my body really doesn't want.

If you've been filling yourself on the husks of this world, if you're like a child finding the cookie jar and filling yourself up before dinner, the reason you don't eat dinner is because you're full of cookies. Dear friend, that's the problem this morning. You're like that prodigal, you're trying to fill your belly with the husk of the swine, but it doesn't satisfy.

JN Darby, an early leader of the Plymouth Brethren said it this way, to be hungry is not enough. To be hungry is not enough. I must be really starving to know what is in his heart towards me.

When the prodigal son was hungry, he went to feed upon husks, but when he was starving, he turned to his father. Did you hear that? That was good. I'm jealous when somebody else says something good like that.

I should have come up with that. That is really good. When he was hungry, he ate what the pigs were eating.

When he was starving, he turned to his father. If you're a child of God, you heard that right then and something sparked in your heart. I've been feeding on the swine and I need to get back to the father's table.

Come, get up from where you are and run to the father. The table has spread and he's waiting for you. Ultimately, these are happy, blessed and favored by God because it's God.

It's God who satisfies them. I meet Christians now in so many different places in the world. I meet pastors almost everywhere I go without exception.

I have to deal first with the pastor before I can even deal with the church. Pastor not too long ago, got up in front of his church after the meeting was over and he said, I just got to confess to you all. I have taken Jesus routinely.

I've taken my ministry routinely, my devotional life. I've just been going through the motions and I'm empty today, but God has revived me. Because dear friend, only God can revive you and sustain you.

Do you delight in him? Is there something within the soul, your soul that only Christ touches and you've experienced the touch of God? He's played the strings of your heart and the melody that's come forth is sweeter than any sound you've ever known. Don't you long for that again? Have you been away from the father's table? Have you been feeding on the husk and the sweets of this world and your appetite for righteousness has severely lessened? Well, friend, then I would give hope that you are a Christian and you're hungry. You're starving this morning.

There's something saying I got to get back to the table. F.B. Meyer, a man of God and great preacher in his own right, quoted the missionary to China, Hudson Taylor in the 1800s. Listen carefully.

I've been, this is what Hudson Taylor, that great missionary said. I've been a missionary 40 years in China. It is 40 years since I first landed on her shores.

I have done but little there. I have learned much and this of all things I have learned. Are you ready? I have learned to live alone with God, to know God himself, to know that his heart is love and that his heart motivates his hand to help in this statement.

After 40 years of ministry, that's what he learned, that only God can satisfy the soul. Come back to the table. Quit feeding on crumbs like the dogs underneath the table.

Remember that message? You're a child of the king. You should be seated at the table, not under the table with the dogs licking up the crumbs. No, no.

Get up on the table. Dine, dine. Isn't that interesting? What Jesus said to the church as he knocks at the door of their heart, he says, if any man opens, here's my knock and opens up, I will come in and suck.

Dine, dine with him and he with me. Fellowship is described as dining with God. No need to be poor because you can have Jesus as your property and possession.

No need to be sorrowful here for Jesus is the joy of heaven. Rise, get out of the pig pen and go back to your father. I want to conclude.

I love this statement. I found this in the book, *The Pursuit of God* many years ago. It's not Tozer's statement.

It's Frederick Faber. All our lives long, we might talk of Jesus and yet we should never come to an end of the sweet things that might be said of him. Eternity will not be long enough to learn all he is or to praise him for all he has done.

But then that matters not for we shall be always with him and we desire nothing more. That is the true test of Christianity today. How did you do? You can lie to me.

I will believe you. You can lie to me. I will believe you.

Lie to one another and you will be believed probably. But God won't believe you. He knows.

He knows the desires that propel your heart. The greatest gift of Christianity is not sins forgiven. The greatest gift of Christianity is not to have a family like this one.

The greatest gift of Christianity is not heaven yet to come. The greatest gift of Christianity is Jesus Christ the Lord and the redeemed. Only the redeemed can say amen.

Only the redeemed and mean it. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. Oh dear friend, if God has exposed you today, why continue the charade? Why? You fool no one but yourself.

That's the saddest thing about this whole deal is that you're the one that's being deceived. Come, shake yourself, arouse yourself, come to your senses and see that the table has been set and there's a place for you. If any man shall hear my voice.

If any man, that's you, come. God will receive you. If any man come unto me, I will receive him and in no wise cast him out.

You will be received today into the joy of all joy, the pleasure of all pleasures. You will be received in the very heart of God and there you will abide and he will abide in you. Fellowship divine.

Yes. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst. They shall be filled.

Amen. Let us pray. Our father and our God, we are grateful to you that you have prepared a table before us in the presence of our enemies and we feast upon it daily.

It's always spread that your fine dainties, your exquisite delicacies are always there for us. It is we Lord who are at fault when we are malnourished. Oh Lord, I pray you would speak to your children.

I believe you have. I believe that they are your children. They have had to have heard your voice if they've been away from the table.

It's the one Lord God who's deceived, lost in their sins, not hungry for the righteousness that you can give only through Jesus, but satisfied with their self-righteousness, their own goodness, their own morality. Lord, would you show them the utter futility of it all? Would you help them to see it's nothing? It's

absolutely nothing that can withstand the storm of your holy justice. It's building on sinking sand and their great house will collapse with a mighty thud one day.

Oh God, would you show them the utter vain and foolishness of pursuing the desires of their heart thinking they shall be satisfied by giving them the taste of your goodness? For you have commanded us to taste and see that you are good. Oh Lord, propel them towards you. Pick them up.

Cleanse them Lord. Give them new desires with that new heart. Write your law upon those hearts and save them from their sin and their futility Lord.

Grant this for the lovely name of Jesus Christ and his glory. For his sake I pray these things. For it is he who is worthy of all praise, adoration and glory.

It is he alone who suffered and bled and died for us. It is he alone that can give his body as bread and his blood for wine and drink. Oh God, I pray that Christ be shown here and these moments as your word takes deep root in hearts and produces the appropriate fruit that you've ordained.

We ask it now in his name. Amen.

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