

“Wonderful News for Those Who Hunger for Justice”

A BETTER LIFE Sermon Series | Week Four | Newbreak Church

September 26th, 2021

This week is about how Jesus commends those who long to see His will in our world.

For more insights relating to this week’s sermon, see <https://newbreak.church/blog/>. We post a new blog every Friday which coincides with the sermon passage or theme from that day.

Start Here

- What is your favorite Fall flavor OTHER THAN pumpkin?
- When was a time you felt hungrier or thirstier than ever before? Describe the experience (When? Where? Why?).

Going Deeper Into the Message

Point 1 – God celebrates those who hunger and thirst for His will in our world.

Wonderful news for people who hunger and thirst for God’s justice! You’re going to be satisfied. (Matthew 5:6, N.T. Wright’s translation)

Understanding this beatitude comes down to digging deeper into two Greek words: *dikaiosynē* and *chortazō*.

The Greek word, *dikaiosynē* (which is appropriately translated as either *righteousness* or *justice*) is overwhelmingly concerned with right conduct, with living the way God requires. Righteousness is proper conduct conformed to God’s character. Consider its Old Testament roots. New Testament scholar Jonathan Pennington says: “This covenantal justice [righteousness] is ultimately God’s work of setting the world to rights, his saving activity, though we are called to participate in this and are the beneficiaries of it.” **It is an ethical framework in the present that is influenced by the kingdom’s end-goal vision.**

The fourth beatitude ties closely into Matthew 6:33 since “seek[ing] first the kingdom of God and His **righteousness**” lends itself to having “all these things” (daily provisions) being added or **satisfied** by God. **God is basically saying: “You worry about the Kingdom and I’ll worry about you.”**

Those who hunger for righteousness will inevitably “be satisfied by God” (it’s a passive verb, indicating that we receive satisfaction from God). The verb comes from *chortazō*, which is a graphic word in Greek used also for fattening animals, which implies being well filled and fed. Those who say they are *chortazō* are full to the brim, not anything less than gratified (think Thanksgiving!). Notice the more literal usage of this verb in Matthew 14:20 and 15:37 where the crowds were “satisfied” by the amount of food Jesus miraculously provided for all to eat. It is the perfect metaphor to complement the one started at the beginning of the beatitude.

The one who starves for righteousness will be satisfied by God. In essence (as Jesus foreshadows through His multiplying the food), God’s future kingdom will be where no one goes hungry or thirsty anymore, they will be filled—with all the literal and metaphorical meanings that are to be taken with the beatitude. God’s people will be satisfied with a world where God rules and righteousness reigns (2 Peter 3:13).

It is worth observing that the beatitude does not congratulate those who are, as a matter of fact—righteous; instead, it lifts up those who are hungering and thirsting for conformity to the will of God, not those who think they have attained it. Residents of God’s kingdom need not be righteous to begin their discipleship journey, they simply need to long for it with the metaphorical intensity of hungering and thirsting.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What does it look like for you to “hunger and thirst” for God’s will?
- What can you do to foster a greater craving and desire for God’s justice and righteousness?
- The second part of the beatitude says that we will be “satisfied” by God. Have you experienced this sort of satisfaction and fulfillment when you are living out God’s righteousness and justice? What does it feel like? How does that encourage your faith?

Read: Mark 2:1-12

Point 2 – Help bring God’s justice to those who need it most.

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest gospel and generally describes events and experiences of Christ in a very quick and succinct way. In this story though, Mark takes his time to paint the picture and set the scene for the reader to consider. As you read this story together, imagine what it was like to be in that room with Jesus, listening to his preaching, and feeling crammed together like a sardine in a can. All of a sudden, while the greatest preacher that has ever lived is giving his message, the roof of the house starts to open up and a man is lowered into the room. Since there wasn’t any room to get the man through the door, these four men climbed onto the roof while carrying their paralyzed friend, attached some type of rope to his broken body, and lowered him at the feet of Jesus. Wow! What a story. Have you ever been a friend like that before? Has someone ever been that kind of a friend for you?

This story exemplifies the power of Jesus to forgive sins (verse 5) and to heal (verse 12). It also shows us what compassion in action looks like. It’s one thing to feel moved with compassion by the plight of another and it’s an entirely different type of compassion to take steps to bring relief. There will always be reasons or excuses for why we shouldn’t act in compassion. **These four friends didn’t let a full house or an intact roof stop them from helping another person experience God’s touch. Sometimes we need that kind of grit and determination to help bring relief when others need it.**

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Who do I see hurting, or in need, around me? What can I do to meet the physical needs of one person this week?
- How far would I go to help someone I love? How far should we be willing to go to show God’s love to others? What does that look like?
- When do I care most about the needs of others? Do I believe God will satisfy my hunger and thirst for righteousness? What would satisfy me in that area?

—ACTIVITY—

Take some time this week, or in your Life Group, to identify injustices around you. Write them down and pray over them. Ask God to open your eyes to the hurts and pains of others. As you consider and/or discuss the injustices around you, is there one particular need that stands out to your group? If so, how can you incorporate that into your SERVE CHALLENGE Project this semester?

When you do this, contemplate how God satisfied you in meeting that need. Was it worth it? Would you do it again? Did God keep His word to you?

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?