

**HOW IS YOUR SPIRITUAL APPETITE?**  
**Matthew 5:6**

**INTRO.:**

1. The “Daily Manna” a daily devotional site, told this story in its August 25, 2009 devotional:
  - a. It was the worst earthquake in Armenia’s history and one that left more than 55,000 victims. Two of the survivors of that horrible catastrophe were Susanna Petroysan and her four-year-old daughter, Gayaney. They were in an apartment on the 5th floor, but when the earthquake hit they ended up buried in the basement of the nine-story apartment house. After hours of being trapped in the darkness, Gayaney said, “Mommy, I need a drink. Please give me something.” But, there was nothing for Susanna to give her daughter. She was trapped flat on her back. A concrete panel eighteen inches above her head and a crumpled water pipe above her shoulders kept her from standing. Feeling around in the absolute darkness, she found a twenty-four ounce jar of blackberry jam that had fallen into the basement and gave the entire jar to her daughter to eat. It was gone by the second day and Gayaney continued to beg for more - especially for something to drink.
  - b. Susanna was certain she would die, but because she wanted her daughter to live, she did all she could to try and preserve her life. She found a dress, and used it to make a bed for Gayaney. Even though it was bitter cold, she took off her own stockings and wrapped them around her child to keep her warm. The two were trapped for eight days and every day her daughter continued to beg for something to drink and at some point in those long hours of pitch darkness Susanna had an idea. She remembered a TV program about explorers in the Arctic who were dying of thirst, and one of them, doing the unthinkable, slashed open his hand and gave his friend his blood to drink. She said, “I had no water, no fruit juice, no liquids. It was then that I remembered I had my own blood.” Her groping fingers, numb from the cold, found a piece of shattered glass. She sliced open her left index finger and gave it to her daughter to suck. The drops of blood weren’t enough. Not understanding what this would do to her mom, in desperation little Gayaney cried, “Please mommy, I want some more. Cut another finger.” Susanna had no idea how many times she cut herself, but knew if she hadn’t Gayaney would have died. Her blood was her daughter’s only hope.
2. Hunger and thirst represent two of the most basic necessities of human life.
  - a. When Jesus says “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst,” He was talking about the two most intense longings of the human body.
  - b. While it is not quite the same as the story we began with, we still all know what it feels like to come home from work or school, and raid the cupboards and say “I’m so hungry!! Where did I put the Oreo cookies? Where is that bag of potato chips? And when is dinner going to be ready? I’m starving!!!!”
  - c. Again we all know what it feels like to work outside on a hot August afternoon, and say “I’m so thirsty I could drink a gallon of water.”
    - 1) A few sips of ice tea is not enough to quench your thirst.
    - 2) In fact, you may be tempted to dump a bucket of water on your head because you are so parched.
3. In Matthew 5:6 Jesus is saying:
  - a. “Blessed are those whose craving for the things of God is just as intense as the craving for food and water.”
  - b. “Blessed are those who are yearning to taste and see that the Lord is good!”
  - c. “Blessed are those who are hungry to live righteously in His presence!”
  - d. *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*
4. This AM I want us to approach this beatitude a little different manner than we normally would.
  - a. Rather than digging into the beatitude, I want us to look at some people in the Bible who were living out this beatitude in their lives.
  - b. And then I want to make some practical applications as we talk about some of the things we can to have a healthy appetite for spiritual things.

**LESSON:**

I. The Bible mentions several people who had a colossal craving for God.

A. 1<sup>st</sup>: Moses.

1. In Ex. 33:18, Moses was talking to God when he said, *“I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!”*
2. To get the full impact of this statement we need to put it in context.
3. Moses could have said, *“I know I just spent 40 days and 40 nights with you on Mount Sinai. I realize that I am the only one who has ever spoken with You face to face. But I am so hungry for you that I just cannot get enough! I want to know you in the greatest way I possibly can! I want to experience you like I have never experienced you before!”*
4. In Ex. 33:19-23 God responded to Moses request and told him what He would do: (Read).
5. The next day Ex. 34:5-7 tells us how God fulfilled this promise: (Read).
6. Moses immediate response was to fall down and worship God (Ex. 34:8).
  - a. But this event also changed his life.
  - b. It gave him the courage to continue leading the people of Israel (Ex. 34:9).
7. Those who are hungry for the things of God will be satisfied.

B. 2<sup>nd</sup>: David.

1. In Psalms 63, David is in the dry desert of Judah.
  - a. While surrounded by the dry sand dunes of that parched land, David still has a longing for God.
  - b. Notice vs. 1-4: (Read).
2. Now notice what he says in vs. 5: (Read).
3. Because of David’s appetite for the things of God, this scripture came true over and over again in his life.
  - a. Psa. 42:1-2: *“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?”*
  - b. Psa. 73:25-26: *“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”*
4. Once again we see that those who are hungry for the things of God will be satisfied.

C. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Simeon.

1. In Luke 2 we met an old man by the name of Simeon.
  - a. Vs. 2 tells us he was, *“righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.”*
  - b. He was a man hungering for the things of God.
2. One day, he felt compelled to go into the temple courts.
  - a. Shortly after he arrived, Joseph and Mary arrived, and Simeon became one of the first people to hold the Christ child in his arms.
  - b. And then in vs. 29-32 he said: (Read).
3. Simeon proves once again that those who are hungry for the things of God will be satisfied.

II. But you may be responding, “That is fine and good for Moses, David, and Simeon, but not for me.”

A. Perhaps you are saying, “To be honest, I really do not have that big of an appetite for spiritual things.”

1. “Yes I believe in Jesus with all my heart, mind, soul and strength, but I do not have a deep desire to experience God.”
2. “I do not have an intense craving to study His word, and all that kind of religious stuff.”
3. “In fact, that really is not my cup of tea.”

B. I am going to go from preaching to meddling for a bit, because if that is your attitude then there is something wrong.

1. The problem is that you are filling your life with so many other activities that you no longer feel your hunger for God.
  - a. You are stuffing your life so full with the things of this world that you no longer have an appetite for the meat of God’s word.

- b. To illustrate what I mean, let me use an illustration you are familiar with.
  - 1) Mothers, why do you not allow your children (and your husband) to fill themselves up on candy, cookies, and junk food, just before time to eat a big meal you have been slaving over the stove cooking?
  - 2) You know that if they fill themselves up on that junk food that they will barely touch the nice healthy meal you have prepared.
- 2. Now do not get me wrong.
  - a. There is nothing wrong with watching a movie or TV, surfing the internet, or playing with your cell phone or iPod, or even eating some junk food.
  - b. But when these things take up the hours of our day at the expense of the time we spend in God's word or with Him, then we are in danger of suffocating our appetite for the things of God.
  - c. When we fill up on the things of this world rather than things of God and His Word, then we are in danger of ruining our appetite for the things of God.
  - d. When we load up on everything the world has to offer -- the books, the tapes, the DVDs, the video games and all that -- it is no wonder that we have no appetite left for the things that really matter.
  - e. When we fill our lives with the things of this world it is no wonder that we do not have a craving for God.
- C. Perhaps you are now thinking, "OK, I realize what I have done. I realize I do not have the relationship with God that I should have."
  - 1. So what do I need to do to get my appetite back?
  - 2. What do I need to do to get hungry for God once again?

### III. Let me suggest three things you need to do to restore you appetite for God:

- A. 1<sup>st</sup>: You need to cry out to God for help.
  - 1. As the previous beatitudes state, you need to admit that you have made a mess of your life and that you cannot do it on your own.
  - 2. You need to have the attitude that says, "Lord, I need your Word to live spiritually just as much as I need food to live physically. Through the years, I have been pigging out on many different things at the expense of your Word. I have ruined my appetite for spiritual things by gorging on the things of this life. I have been running after everything this world offers. But I have not been running after your righteousness. Please forgive me. Please give me back my appetite for you."
  - 3. When we have this attitude, Jesus promised in [John 6:35](#): "*I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*"
  - 4. So the first thing we need to do is cry out to God for help.
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup>: You need to back off the junk food.
  - 1. When was the last time you sat down on the sofa, turned off the TV and opened up your Bible and just let God speak to you?
  - 2. When was the last time you turned off the car radio on your way to work, or some other activity, so you could have a conversation with the Lord?
  - 3. When was the last time you turned off your cell phone and called out to God and asked Him, "Can you hear me now?"
  - 4. I love the way Isaiah put it in [Isa. 55:2](#): "*Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.*"
  - 5. God promises that if we will just back off a little on the junk food, and leave some room for the rich fare of His word we will find a great banquet awaiting us.

- C. 3<sup>rd</sup>: You need to add some spiritual food to your diet.
1. This can be done in a number of ways.
    - a. On Sunday AM Fred has been teaching a class on the Harmony of the Gospels and Wendell one on Romans.
      - 1) On Wednesday nights we also have several classes where we are meeting together to study God's word.
      - 2) Sitting in on one of the classes is a great way to add to your spiritual diet.
      - 3) It will add some spiritual spice to your life.
    - b. Let me also suggest that you need to begin to take some time each day to read the Bible.
      - 1) Ask God to make you hungry to learn His word.
      - 2) Ask God to help you see how it applies to your life.
      - 3) If you do not know where to start, let me suggest that you pick up one of our daily Bible reading schedules in the foyer and begin reading, even if it is only a few chapters a day.
  2. Psa. 34:8 says: *"O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!"*

IV. One final question I want to deal with this AM is: "How can I know if I am truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness? What are the signs that I am craving to live the way God wants me to live?"  
 --Let us notice two signs:

- A. 1<sup>st</sup>: If you are truly hungering and thirsting for righteousness you are going to have a greater appetite for God's word.
1. You are not going to be satisfied with just hearing a short sermon once a week on Sunday morning.
  2. You are not going to be satisfied with hearing the Bible expounded upon for just an hour or so a week.
  3. You are going to want to dig deeply into the Bible and see how it applies to your life.
    - a. You are going to want to study it at home.
    - b. You are going to want to study it with others.
    - c. You are going to want to learn as much about it as you can.
    - d. Jer. 15:16 says: *"Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts."*
  4. Let me illustrate this point a little differently.
    - a. One of the ways we know we are not feeling good is when we lose our appetite.
    - b. If Carol fixed me a big casserole of macaroni and cheese, and scalloped potatoes and green beans and I said, "No, I am not hungry," she would know that something was wrong.
    - c. Or if I went to a restaurant in the Ozarks and ordered a big country breakfast with that nice juicy smoked ham, and I ate only one bit and said, "I am not hungry," you would be checking my temperature.
  5. And the same thing is true with our spiritual appetites.
    - a. When you lose your appetite for the word of God, something is wrong.
    - b. When you no longer have a craving to learn the scriptures for yourself, something is wrong.
    - c. When you stop hungering to be the person God is calling you to be, then something is wrong.
  6. One of the signs that you are hungering and thirsting for the things of God is that you are eager to study the scriptures for yourself.
  7. Luke said of the Bereans in Acts 17:11: *"Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."*
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup>: If you are hungering and thirsting for the things of God, you are going to make your relationship with God the most important thing in your life.
1. You are going to sing with meaning, "All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him. In His presence daily live. I surrender all. I surrender all. All to thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all."
  2. You are going to want to read His word and talk to God every day, and you will have an empty feeling when you do not.

3. ILLUST.: Years ago Tom Landry, a former coach of the Dallas Cowboys, was being interviewed.
  - a. He was asked by a sportscaster, “What is the most important thing in your life?” expecting it to be his two Super bowl wins.
  - b. He replied, “The most important thing in my life is not my two Super Bowl rings. It is not my job as coach of the Cowboys. The most important thing in my life is my personal relationship with God.”
  - c. Tom Landry understood what Jesus meant when He said, “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*” (Matt. 5:6).
4. If you are truly starving for the righteousness of God, you are going to want your relationship with Him to be the most important thing.
5. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus put it this way: “*But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

CONC.:

1. It is a great blessing to have a healthy appetite for food; but it is an even greater blessing to have a healthy appetite for God.
2. What type of appetite do you have this AM?
3. If you are not a Christian, Jesus invites you to come to Him and partake of Him, to receive satisfaction.
  - a. In John 6:35 He said: “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty.*”
  - b. Jesus offers to fill that void for righteousness in your life if you will just come to Him.
  - c. If you will B – R – B.
4. And if you are already a Christian, ask Him to make you hungry and thirsty for the things that really matter.
  - a. Ask Him to satisfy you with His word.
  - b. Ask Him to satisfy you with His love.
  - c. And remember that He promised: “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*”