**Sermon on the Mount, Session 4**

 **“**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” (Matthew 5, 6)

**1) What does it look like to be filled with God?**

1a) To be filled by God is the most amazing human experience.

1b) However being filled by God is much more than an emotional experience. Jesus said’ “You shall receive power when the Holy spirit comes upon you!.

1c) Being filled with God gives you power to live a fruitful life and to do great things for God as we can see from the following scriptures.

Peter was so filled with God that when he walked down the street, people were healed by his shadow touching them. (Acts 5, 15)

David as a 16 year old was so filled with God that when he saw Goliath challenging Israel’s armies, he would call out; “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Sam 17, 26 & 32).

Elijah was so filled with God that he dared to challenge the 850 priests of Baal and Asherah to a contest on Mt. Carmel. “The God who answers by fire, He is the true God”. Then he poured 4 large jars of water all over his offering before calling down fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice.

Stephen was so filled with God that he could preach with boldness to the Jewish leaders as they were about to pick up stones to throw at him.

1d) Being filled with God enabled people in the Bible to be successful in whatever sphere they were called to. To some God gave strength. To others, wisdom, courage, beauty, tenacity, faith, , the ability to perform miracles, write books, see visions, create works of art or write and sing songs.

1e) What would your life look like if you were filled with God? Your family life? Your marriage? Your health?

1f) We need to learn how to be filled with God and keep on getting filled so that we overflow, like a teapot held under a running tap!

**2) How can I be filled with God?**

2a) Jesus gives the answer. By Hungering and Thirsting after righteousness - hungering and thirsting for God Himself. Q. How desperate are you for God?

2b) Ps. 63; “You are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water….On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.” (Psalm 63, 1 & 6)

2c) You can have as much of God in your life as you choose

2d) Hungry – for Bread.Jesus said; “I am the bread of life” (John 6, 35). He also said; “Man cannot live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4, 4).

2e) Thirsty – for Living Water. “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this he meant the (Holy) Spirit” (John 7, 37-39).

We need to spend time in encountering God through worship, soaking, silence, meditating on the scriptures, listening and receiving in prayer.

2f) A sick person isn’t hungry.

Much of the church is sick and has lost their spiritual hunger, with little desperation for God and no burning desire to see a change in the world.

2g) We need to pray that God would give us the gift of Spiritual hunger.

The more you seek God, the more hungry you get!

**3) How to Grow in the Lord**

3a) People and animals’ growth can be stunted if they don’t eat, exercise or if they live in a restricted environment. For example a little terrapin in a tiny tank.

3b) To reach the full potential of whom God has created you to be, you need to eat, drink, use your spiritual muscles, and live and work in the environment that God has ordained for you to be in.

**4) Principles for Change**

4a) If you want something you’ve never had, you’ve got to do something you’ve never done.

If you want more of God in your life, you need to adjust your life-style and daily routine.

4b) There is nothing as effective as fasting for increasing your spiritual hunger. John Wesley wouldn’t ordain anyone in the ministry unless they fasted 2 days a week.

We need to develop a life-style of prayer and fasting.

4c) You will never change that which you can live with. God will only give you what you can’t live without.

4d) Change is not just for our personal lives. We need to Hunger and thirst for righteousness in the world around us.

4e)We need to Believe in order to receive

“The one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.” (James 1, 6 & 7)

“I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11, 24)

5) **Our Hunger is a pale reflection of God’s burning desire for you**

5a) God is hungry and thirsty for a relationship with us. There are a lot of Bible passages that talk about the strength and depth of God’s desire for you.

Think of the father in the prodigal son who’s looking earnestly down the road all the time, and as soon as he sees his son returning, he girds up his robes and runs down the road as fast as he can (Luke 15, 11ff).

See also Isaiah 49, 15; Isaiah 54, 4-7; Isaiah 62, 1-5; Psalm 103, 11; Psalm 139, 17-19; Song of Songs 2, 13 & 14 & Chp 7, 10; Hosea 2, 19-20; Eph. 5, 25)

5b) God’s passion for us is likened to fire. “I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.” (Zech. 8, 2).

5c) Those prophets in the Bible who saw God, all saw that his being looked as if it was burning like fire.

Moses said; “Our God is a consuming fire” (Exod 24, 17; Heb. 12. 29).

Ezekiel saw him as a figure like a man full of fire. (Ezk 1, 26-27).

The apostle John saw the same when he encountered Jesus in the book of Revelation. He wrote; “ his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, (Rev. 1, 14-15).

5d) Fire is the most hungry thing in all of creation. Every hungry creature can eat and become full, however you can never fill fire. It burns and consumes whatever is put in front of it. It grows to the size of what it is currently devouring.

5e) “Love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like the very flame of the Lord” (Song of Songs 8, 6). Love is always hungry. It always wants to give and receive more .

5f) From the heart of God, love is constantly pouring out towards you and those around you.

Daniel saw this in a vision “His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. **A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him**.”(Dan 7, 9-10).

5g) On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came on the believers, and they saw little tongues of fire above their head – that was a bit of the river of fire that flows from God’s throne came into their lives. From that day on, they were desperate for God, hungry for the lost, like God, burning with passion and fire.

As the fire in our heart burns together in agreement with that in God’s heart, God is able to release His answer and His kingdom onto the earth.