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**“You’re blessed when you’ve
worked up a good appetite
for God. He’s food and
drink in the best meal
you’ll ever eat.”**
(Matthew 5:6 *The Message*)

A Hunger for Heaven

*Draw me to Thee, till far within Thy rest,
In stillness of Thy peace, Thy voice I hear—
For ever quieted upon Thy breast,
So loved, so near.*

*By mystery of Thy touch my spirit filled,
O Magnet all Divine;
The hunger of my soul for ever stilled,
For Thou art mine.*

*For me, O Lord, the world is all too small,
For I have seen Thy face,
Where Thine eternal love irradiates all
Within Thy secret place.
And therefore from all others, from all else,
Draw Thou my soul to Thee...
...Yea—Thou hast broken the enchanter’s spells,
And I am free.*

*Now in the haven of untroubled rest
I land at last,
The hunger, and the thirst, and weary quest
For ever past.
There, Lord, to lose, in bliss of Thine embrace
The recreant will;
There, in the radiance of Thy blessed face,
Be hushed and still;
There, speechless at Thy pierced feet
See none and nought beside,
And know but this—that Thou art sweet,
That I am satisfied.*

(Gerhard Tersteegen)

A Holy Yearning

Satisfaction comes only to those who understand that they need satisfying. Only those who admit their hunger can be truly filled.

**Deal bountifully with Your servant,
That I may live and keep Your word.
Open my eyes, that I may behold
Wonderful things from Your law. I am a
stranger in the earth;
Do not hide Your commandments
from me.
My soul is crushed with longing
After Your ordinances at all times.**
(Psalm 119:17-20)

If we feel like a stranger on this earth, the remedy for our discomfort will not be found in anything of this earth. Our solace, our peace, will be found in the things of God—those things which not only instruct and counsel, but envelop us in His love and protection.

God’s word reminds us of His ongoing commitment to us, of His justice, grace and mercy. His word describes the righteousness and holiness of our heavenly Father, bringing conviction as well as comfort. His word will answer the questions that nag at us from those who have no portion of His grace. His word will enlighten, encourage, and strengthen.

To be truly filled with His righteousness, we must hunger for it.

**As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.**
(Psalm 42:1-2a niv)

Blessed Living

Building Up the Weak

The Atrophied Grace

It is ill-advised to isolate the individual Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount—to remove any one from its companions. They, as a package, represent a cohesive description of someone who is Spirit-minded, following a logical sequence in which if one is true, they all are.

Someone who is humble will also be merciful; someone who is meek or gentle will surely be merciful with others; and someone who has hungered after righteousness, and has been satisfied by his quest, will be quick to extend mercy to another.

Mercy—the demonstration of heartfelt compassion—is in short supply these days, both within the church and without. One of the easiest ways for those without to condemn the workings and beliefs of those within, is for them to point out Christians' lack of mercy for each other—and, especially, for those without.

Organized religion was in a similar state during the time of Jesus.

Jewish piety had a deliberately merciless approach to those who did not know the law. To keep the law was of greater moment than sensitivity towards the weakness of those who failed to keep its demands.
(Donald Guthrie)

Tough Love

Compounding this paradox, when members of the body of Christ do get around to displaying mercy, it can very often be misguided.

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.
(1 Corinthians 5:1-2)

Mercy is not winking at sin, and Paul demonstrated that it often includes what we today would refer to as “tough love.”

For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

(1 Corinthians 5:3-5)

Out of all the players in this story, it was the apostle Paul who demonstrated the purest form of mercy, for he was the only one concerned about the sinner's eternal soul.

Were there no guilt in the world, no pain and no tears, God would yet be infinitely merciful; but His mercy might well remain hidden in His heart, unknown to the created universe. No voice would be raised to celebrate the mercy of which none felt the need. It is human misery and sin that call forth the divine mercy.
(A.W. Tozer)

“You're blessed when

you care. At the moment of being 'carefull,' you find yourselves cared for.”

(5:7 The Message)

*New every morning is the love
Our waking and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life and power and thought.*

*New mercies each returning day
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.*

*If, on our daily course, our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.*

*Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love,
Fit us for perfect rest above,
And help us this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.*
(John Keble)