

Sunday, February 20, 2022
"Meet Your King"
Summary of Filled with Righteousness and Mercy
Matthew 5:6-7
Wayne Shelton

In our series on the Sermon on the Mount, we are learning that the beatitudes reveal a spiritual progression of relentless logic. Each step leads to the next and presupposes the one that has gone before. To begin with, we are to be 'poor in spirit', acknowledging our complete and utter spiritual bankruptcy before God. Next, we are to 'mourn' over the cause of it, our sins, yes, and our sin too – the corruption of our fallen nature, and the reign of sin and death in the world. Thirdly, we are to be 'meek', humble and gentle towards others, allowing our spiritual poverty (admitted and bewailed) to condition our behavior to them as well as to God. Which brings us to the fourth beatitude: we are to '*hunger and thirst for righteousness*'. For what is the use of confessing and lamenting our sin, of acknowledging the truth about ourselves to both God and men, if we leave it there? Confession of sin must lead to hunger for righteousness. It is not that we want to be a little bit better, still less that we think of righteousness as an optional luxury to add to our other graces; rather, we *hunger* and *thirst* for it. We cannot get along without righteousness; it is as important to us as food and drink.

We also considered the fifth beatitude: '*Blessed are the merciful.*' which leads us into what many consider as the second half of the beatitudes (the last four). Generally speaking, in the second half of the beatitudes, we seem to turn even more from our attitude to God to our attitude to our fellow human beings. The first of the 'active' beatitudes concerns the 'merciful.' But what is mercy? The best illustration of the meaning of mercy is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). At the end of the parable Jesus asks which of the three passers-by (a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan) proved to be a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers. An expert in the law replied, '*The one who had mercy on him*' (Lk. 10:37). The Samaritan illustrated the meaning of mercy.