

Small groups – Week beginning Monday 7th September 2020

Introduction/icebreaker

- How was your week? What went well? What were the challenges?
- What's your favourite memory from school?

Recap from Sunday's teaching [Blessed life – Matt 5:1-12 esp v6]

- We all hunger for something – what do you want more than anything?
- Righteousness [different translations use righteousness/justice] – These are the things we should hunger for:
 - **Legal righteousness** – When we are justified/made right with God at the moment of salvation.
 - **Moral righteousness** – righteous character and conduct which pleases God. Purity of heart, mind and motive, a desire to do what is right and honour God with our lives and actions.
 - **Social righteousness** – Justice in our wider world. Treating people fairly etc. Justice is a major theme in the Bible – the way we treat people is an act of worship and a mark of our walk with God.
- If you're hungry, do something about it. Hungry and thirsty = greater urgency. Matt 6:1-7:12 Jesus refers to some examples of righteous action – ways we can do something about injustice: Give (6:2), pray & fast (6:5,16), show grace (6:14), have faith (6:25), don't judge (7:1), pray some more (7:7), do good to others (7:12).

Discussion questions

1. Did anything stick out or resonate with you from Sunday's teaching?

Digging deeper

- In Matthew 5:20 Jesus warned his followers to have a righteousness greater than that of the Pharisees (the religious leaders of the day). Read the following passages – what do they teach us about the righteousness we are to hunger for? Philippians 3:1-12. Romans 3:10, 23-24. Romans 10:1-4.
- Psalm 42:1 – What does a stream do for a deer? Cleanse, refresh, sustain. Look to God alone for those things & depend on Him.
- Read Amos 5:21-24. God sick of the empty noise of songs from his people. A brief look through the preceding chapters give a glimpse into the problem:
 - Mistreating people (1:3,6,9, 5:7)
 - Unrelenting anger (1:11)
 - Rejected instruction of God (2:4)
 - Profits before people (2:6-7)
 - Immorality (2:7, 3:10)
 - Greed (4:1)
 - Idolatry (4:4)
 - Dishonesty (5:10)

All this coming from God's people, who would then go through the motions of worship. → God hates the hypocrisy (v21), won't accept the worship (v22). Our songs and gatherings are pointless if our lives don't match up. The way we treat people (and allow people to be treated) is an act of worship as much as our songs.

Discuss – thoughts, takeaways, tangents...

Prayer

Take time to share prayer requests and pray for each other.