

O C T O B E R 3 0 & 3 1 , 2 0 0 4

## The Real Deal

*Becoming and Being a True Follower of Christ*

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### Part 5: What Are You Hungry For?

#### Matthew 5:6

The genuine article. The real deal. What's involved in becoming and being a true follower of Jesus Christ? That is a question we want to begin to answer in this series.

Floating around our culture are many definitions and opinions of what a true Christian is and the resulting adjectives are often less than flattering: Obnoxious. Fanatical. Pious. Intellectually shallow. Religious. Closed-minded. Crutch-holder. Right winged. Simplistic. No fun. Legalistic. Boring. Intolerant. Judgmental. Naïve. Out of touch with the real world.

Then you come into religious circles and the definitions might not be as negative but they are often just as confusing: Church attender. Rule-keeper. Bible-owner. Person who prays. Somebody with conviction. Good morals. Nice family person. Somebody who filled out a form at an evangelistic meeting. Or raised a hand. Or walked down an aisle.

So what is a Christian? For the answer, we thought it would be a good idea to turn to Christ Himself. We are looking at His definition of a follower of His by taking a closer look at what has become known as the "Beatitudes" (Matt. 5:3-10).

In our introduction, we looked at the overall context of Christ's teaching in Matthew 5-7, which is known as the "Sermon on the Mount." In these chapters, Jesus is proclaiming the "good news of the Kingdom" (Matt. 4:23). He is explaining what an authentic relationship with God is all about. The Kingdom of God is referring to the "rule" or "reign" of God. To seek after an authentic walk with God is to submit to His rule—His leadership, His provision, His grace, His forgiveness, His power. Therefore you cannot separate becoming and being an authentic follower of Christ's from seeking His Kingdom. You can't have one without the other.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus gives us eight marks of someone who is "blessed," who is approved before God. Eight cumulative characteristics of a Kingdom-seeker. In the first beatitude, we heard Christ's call to acknowledge our desperation—our spiritual bankruptcy before God. In the second, He describes the appropriate response to the reality that's embedded in the first: When I own up to my true spiritual condition, my poverty of spirit, I will mourn it, turning to Him for intervention, for comfort. And when we receive it, we taste His joy! We then become meek, which doesn't mean "weak" but instead refers to a submission of our potential to His control.

Today, we come to the fourth beatitude, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.* This truth addresses the core issue of our longings and what we're doing to find satisfaction.

***As an authentic follower of Christ, I will acknowledge the longings of my soul and respond in at least three different ways. I will:***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **my Hunger and Thirst** \_\_\_\_\_ **God.**

*(Blessed are those who hunger and thirst...)*

2. \_\_\_\_\_ **my Hunger and Thirst** \_\_\_\_\_ **God.**

*(...for righteousness...)*

3. \_\_\_\_\_ **my Hunger and Thirst** \_\_\_\_\_ **God.**

*(...for they will be filled.)*