

# I Thirst

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## *Mt 5:6*

### INTRODUCTION

- A. In 2007, there were 923 million hungry people in the world, despite the fact that the world now produces annually enough food to feed twice the 6 billion people on the planet.
  - 1. One person dies every second from hunger.
  - 2. It is believed that between 2001 & 2004 that 58% of all deaths throughout the world were the result of hunger.
- B. Food & water are two of man's most basic needs.
  - 1. A man can only survive about 40 days without food & about a week without water.
  - 2. But, man not only needs physical food & water; he also needs the sustenance that only God can provide.
    - a. Scripture compares God's Word to food which sustains the soul.
      - 1) Mt 4:4.
      - 2) 1 Pt 2:2.
    - b. Jesus provides food which endures to everlasting life (Jn 6:27).
    - c. Jesus has promised true & lasting water.
      - 1) Jn 4:14.
      - 2) Jn 7:37.
- C. This fourth Beatitude speaks of needing this food & drink which only God can provide: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

### BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER & THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. We need to understand some things about hunger & thirst.
  - 1. Hunger & thirst are the signs of life; only living things hunger & thirst.
    - a. Those who are spiritually alive hunger & thirst after righteousness.
    - b. Those who are spiritually dead do not hunger & thirst after righteousness.
      - 1) Those who are dead spiritually want nothing to do with a righteous lifestyle.
      - 2) Indeed, they are content to continue living in sin.
  - 2. Hunger & thirst are the signs of a normal, healthy life.
    - a. The loss of appetite is generally a red flag that something is wrong with the body.
    - b. We need to have a normal, healthy yearning for God.
      - 1) Ps 42:1.
      - 2) Ps 63:1.
- B. The hunger & thirst of which Jesus speaks involves the sense of extreme urgency & immediacy regarding one's need of soul sustenance.
  - 1. The Greek terms Jesus uses demonstrate this.
    - a. The word for "hunger" means "to be hungry, to suffer hunger, to be famished, to crave after."
    - b. The word for "thirst" means "to thirst, thirst after, long earnestly."

2. Many of those in Palestine in Jesus' day were quite familiar with intense hunger & thirst.
    - a. The average worker only earned about 15 cents a day.
    - b. One could hardly feed his family well on this salary.
    - c. The man in Palestine was never far from actual starvation.
  3. Jesus does not pronounce a blessing on those who want righteousness; he pronounces a blessing on those who crave righteousness just as intently as a starving man desires food & water.
- C. Christians are intensely to desire righteousness, but what is mean by righteousness?
1. Righteousness refers to "integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness."
    - a. The Christian in this Beatitude longs for a life of holiness before God.
    - b. We must live lives of holiness before God.
      - 1) Jesus said that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven that our righteousness **must** exceed the righteousness of the scribes & Pharisees (Mt 5:20).
        - a) The scribes & Pharisees talked a great deal about righteousness; they had elaborate traditions they expected people to follow, & they believed that these traditions would make one righteous.
        - b) However, they often did not follow these traditions themselves, & thus they were hypocrites.
        - c) Our righteousness must be real, not fake.
      - 2) 1 Cor 15:34.
      - 3) 1 Tm 6:11.
  2. Are you living a life of righteousness, holiness before God?
- D. The hunger & thirst depicted here are for total righteousness.
1. This can only be understood by an examination of the Greek grammar.
    - a. Usually, verbs of hungering & thirsting are followed by the genitive case.
      - 1) The genitive is translated into English with the preposition "of;" "of the man" is in the genitive case.
      - 2) The genitive which follows verbs of hungering & thirsting in Greek is called the partitive genitive, i.e., the genitive of part.
        - a) The Greek-speaking man would say, "I hunger for of bread." He desired some bread, not the whole loaf.
        - b) The Greek-speaking man would say, "I thirst for of water." He desired a drink of water, not all the water in the tank.
    - b. However, in this verse, righteousness is in the accusative case.
      - 1) When verbs of hungering & thirsting take the accusative instead of the genitive, the meaning is that the hunger & thirst is for the whole thing.
        - a) To say "I hunger for bread" in the accusative means--"I want the whole loaf."
        - b) To say "I thirst for water" in the accusative means--"I want the whole pitcher."
      - 2) Jesus uses the accusative case here. The meaning is that a Christian should not hunger & thirst for just a part of righteousness but for the whole thing.
  2. Are you hungering & thirsting for **total** righteousness?
    - a. When we are faced with a moral dilemma, what do we choose? Do we choose to live righteously or do we give in to our flesh?
    - b. When we have an opportunity to learn what God requires as far as our righteousness, do we take that opportunity or do we find something else to do?

## THEY SHALL BE FILLED

- A. Those who long for righteousness shall be filled with righteousness.

1. The Greek word for "filled" originally was used to describe the gorging & fattening of animals with fodder.
    - a. In regard to men, it describes the filling of a person to the point of complete & full satisfaction.
    - b. Those who long for righteousness shall be completely satisfied.
  2. The righteousness the Christian receives does not remove his hunger & thirst.
    - a. Rather, the righteousness the Christian receives actually heightens his desire for more righteousness.
    - b. The more righteousness he receives, the more he wants.
- B. We will never be fully filled with righteousness in this life.
1. Now matter how hard we try, we shall sin; sin is unrighteousness (1 Jn 5:17).
  2. In heaven, however, we shall be completely filled with righteousness.
    - a. Rv 7:16.
    - b. Righteousness dwells in the new heavens & the new earth (2 Pt 3:13).
- C. But, even in this life, is it not the case that God fills those who hunger & thirst for righteousness? How does he do so?
1. He does so through Scripture.
    - a. Ps 119:9-11.
    - b. To the disciples, Jesus says, Jn 15:3--that word now resides in Scripture.
    - c. If I desire to know how to be righteous before a holy God, I absolutely must go to his Word to learn how to be righteous.
  2. The blood of Jesus makes me righteous.
    - a. 2 Cor 5:21.
      - 1) Notice that the text says that "**in him** we might become the righteousness of God."
      - 2) Only "in him" can I become the righteousness of God, for I am not righteous.
        - a) Rm 3:10.
        - b) There is absolutely nothing that I can do through my own merit to become righteous.
    - b. Phil 3:9.
    - c. 1 Pt 2:24.
  3. There is only one way that I can be in Christ to contact his blood & have the righteousness that comes through faith in him.
    - a. Only in Christ is there redemption through his blood: "**In him** we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph 1:7).
    - b. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27).
    - c. Is it the case this morning that you need to be baptized into Christ in order to have contact with his blood?

## CONCLUSION

- A. We are far from righteous.
1. Rm 3:10.
  2. There is no one who by his own merits is perfect before God.
- B. Man's only hope is that somehow God will count him as righteous.
1. Abraham found righteousness apart from the Law.
    - a. Rm 4:9b-12.
      - 1) The big issue in the Roman church at the time Paul wrote was the relationship between Jewish & Gentile Christians.

- a) The Emperor Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome, so only the Gentiles were left to carry on the Lord's work.
- b) When Claudius died, Jews were permitted to return to Rome & ethnic and cultural conflicts were inevitable.
- 2) Paul stresses, therefore, that Abraham's righteousness came without circumcision; God considered him righteous without that act, just as God would consider the Gentile believers righteous without circumcision.
- 3) There are some, of course, who say that these text teaches that man needs to do nothing but believe there is a God in order to have salvation.
  - a) That is a **gross** misuse of this passage.
  - b) Notice carefully what Paul writes at v 12: Abraham's righteousness apart from circumcision was "to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised ."
- b. Therefore, in order to be made righteous, I must have the faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.
  - 1) What kind of faith did Abraham have before he was circumcised?
  - 2) Rm 4:20-22.
    - a) Abraham did not simply believe that God was & he had righteousness based upon faith.
    - b) Rather, Abraham trusted God with his whole heart.
  - 3) When you trust someone, you'll act on what he or she says.
    - a) If you trust your doctor, you'll follow whatever course of treatment he or she thinks best.
    - b) If I'm driving by your house late at night & notice huge flames shooting out of it, and I come up & start pounding on the door saying, "You're house is on fire," if you trust me, you'll get out.
  - 4) Because Abraham trusted God, he did what God instructed.
    - a) Heb 11:8.
    - b) Heb 11:17-19.
  - 5) The faith of Abraham is far more than simply saying, "There is a God."
    - a) The faith of Abraham through which he received righteousness is a faith that says, "There is a God whom I trust with my whole heart; therefore, I will do whatever he asks."
    - b) Do you really have the faith of Abraham?
      - i. Do you trust God with your whole heart?
      - ii. Have you obeyed God out of that trust?
      - iii. Have you received righteousness because your trust has led you to obedience?