

Devotion **HUNGRY ? THIRSTY ?**

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” Matthew 5:6

The Beatitudes, which Jesus gave to His disciples found in the first section of His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, focus on how believers are to conduct their lives by seeing their continual need to: (#1) **be poor in spirit** -- humble, not self-serving and submitting to His authority and direction. (#2) **mourn** when they become aware of their sin, confess, repent and do their part in reestablishing the relationship with Him. (#3) **be meek**, not weak in character, but keeping their attitudes and actions in submission to the Holy Spirit's control and His will, not their will. Now we examine (#4) **hunger** and **thirst** for **righteousness**.

The words Jesus uses to describe the pursuit of righteousness also describe the two most basic and continuous physical needs everyone experiences --- **hunger** and **thirst**. Each and every day our bodies need food and drink to function properly. When our bodies are deprived of these two, we get hungry and thirsty. Even if we eat a nutritious breakfast, within four to eight hours we are hungry again. Liquids to quench our thirst are even more critical. In time, when these basic needs are not satisfied, our bodies will begin to shut down. I personally experienced this three weeks ago after completing a 50 mile bicycle ride on a 90+ degree day with high humidity. My body became dehydrated due to not receiving the proper amount of liquids and began to shut down. I got light-headed, dizzy and blacked out. When I regained consciousness, my blood pressure was 60/40. After receiving an IV, my vitals returned to the normal range.

A similar situation will occur in the spiritual realm. When the believer's soul does not receive spiritual nourishment, their spiritual lives become lethargic and unresponsive to the Lord's leading and their communication and close relationship with Him will begin to shut down.

Righteousness can be defined as having a pure heart before God, conformed to His holy character with a passion to live according to His will, not our will. The Pharisees believed that righteousness was achieved by obeying rules, much like the religious legalists of our day. When the rules were obeyed, they considered themselves righteous. However, that is self-righteousness, a righteousness that is achieved through one's own efforts. In the spiritual realm, righteousness is not measured by man-made standards, but by the divine character of God as revealed in Jesus Christ (*Philippians 3:9*). Righteousness can only be found in God Himself, *'and this is the*

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name by which he will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness' (Jeremiah 23:6), and His Son, Jesus Christ, "who became for us, our righteousness" (1Corinthians 1:30).

There are only a few things most people desire above all else and generally they will fall into the following eight categories: Money, Position, Power, Recognition, Love, Looks, Health and Pleasure. There is another category for the fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ--**Righteousness**, as evidenced by godly character. When our deep, all-consuming passion is to allow the Holy Spirit to mold our character into the likeness of Christ, righteousness will result, we will be blessed by God and our hunger and thirst will be satisfied (*Matthew 6:33*). David writes in *Psalms 63:1*, "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you and my body longs for you..."

What things do you hunger and thirst after? Do you plan to eat and drink tomorrow? Of course you do. In fact, you will probably eat and drink two or three times each and every day. I encourage you to add **righteousness** to your daily menu (*Romans 14:17*). **Feed on Christ!** He not only will supply the nourishment needed to get through each day, but also to live your life to the fullest modeling righteousness to everyone you encounter in the marketplace. Jesus tells us, "Do not labor for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life..." (*John 6:27*). **Drink in Christ!** He not only will supply the living water necessary to refresh and nourish your soul (*John 4:14*), but also will mold you into the winsome image of Jesus that will draw people to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (*Psalms 34:8*).

Prayer - O Lord, create in me an appetite for **righteousness**, so that You will be glorified and I will be satisfied.

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