

**HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS “S-O-A-P”**  
**MEN’S MIDWEEK - 2/8/2017**

**Scripture**

Matt 5:6:

- NIV: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- ESV: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- The Message: You’re blessed when you’ve worked up a good appetite for God. He’s food and drink in the best meal you’ll ever eat.

Ted’s Paraphrase #1: Blessed are those who desperately desire right standing before God, for they will be filled.

Ted’s Paraphrase #2: Blessed are those who earnestly seek to fill themselves with the qualities that God is filled with because God will ensure they get enough.

**Observation**

- Righteousness in scripture over 500 times! 35x in gospels, including Mt 5:10, Mt 5:20; Matt 6:1; 6:33
- John 6:38: For I have come down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
- ***WHAT HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS:***
  - Striving to stand in the right place before God.
  - Submitting myself to God’s will.
  - Being more loyal to God’s will than my own...or anybody else’s will!
  - Imitating Jesus. When it doubt consider the righteousness of Jesus, who completely put his faith and hope in God and was loyal to God’s will at any cost.
  - ***Critical: I must focus first and foremost on Jesus’ righteousness, not mine! One must be a product of the other!***
- **WHAT HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT:**
  - It’s not moral snobbery leading to a ‘holier-than-thou’ attitude
  - It’s not vaguely desiring God
    - Compare & contrast compliance with internalization
  - It’s not motivated by guilt
    - Imagine your relationship with your spouse/future spouse being motivated by guilt or duty instead of intense love, respect, appreciation, passion, and a longing to be with you
  - It’s not about performance; it’s about humility, praise, respect, worship, awe, gratitude, surrender
  - It has nothing to do with winning the approval of any human!

**3 practical areas**

1. ***Personal righteousness:*** We *desperately desire* to do God’s will in all things and consistently be submissive and surrendered in our walk with him
2. ***Church righteousness.*** We *desperately desire* Christ-like fellowship with our brothers and sisters, God’s covenant people
3. ***Kingdom come righteousness:*** We *desperately desire* to prepare ourselves, our brothers and sisters, and anyone who will listen for the return of the King. Proper mindset: the things of this world pale in comparison to what’s coming!

**\*\*\*A great parable that exemplifies these 3 practical areas at work together, especially the ‘Kingdom Come’ mindset, is Matt 18:21-35**

## **Application – one example**

“The hardest thing is to move beyond the intellectual discussion and put it in action.” (Steve D. Brown, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 177)

### **1. Examine self.**

#### **a. How can I change my character to be more consistent Jesus’ character?**

- i. Fill myself daily with thoughts about Jesus (“do this in remembrance...” Lk22:19)
  1. His truthfulness in teaching
  2. His humility, submission and surrender
  3. His compassion and healing
  4. His “exact representation”
  5. His sacrifice (time, comfort, life)
  6. His prayer life, including prayers for me
  7. His friendship
  8. His trustworthiness
  9. His forgiveness
- ii. Vie for God’s attention and not the world’s attention
- iii. Daily prayer, Bible study is critical

#### **b. Do I have sin in this area; if so, how will I repent?**

- i. In the eyes of God, am I standing where I need to stand? Nope.
  1. Private Prayer life
  2. Purity (broader sense of the word)
  3. Desperately desire...
- ii. Motivation for righteousness is mixed.
  1. Do I desire righteousness in the eyes of God alone?
  2. Too concerned with what others think...
- iii. Let me do things for God alone; no one else (prayer, preaching, bible study, acts of kindness, sharing faith, etc.)

### **2. Record practical ways I can turn a lesson from the passage into a reality in my life.**

- a. See #1 above
- b. Keep my “acts of righteousness” between God and me. More concern for his view
- c. Overcome the state of being overwhelmed!
  - i. Pursue righteousness 5 minutes at a time, 1 hour at a time, 1 day at a time!
  - ii. Keep up “S.O.A.P.”
  - iii. Form good habits...without letting them become stale routines
- d. Share with others

## **Prayer – one example**

1. Thank you for being so worthy of praise, worship, and imitation!
2. You came to earth as a man so I could see what rightness with God looks like.
3. Thank you for the changes you’ve made in me over the past 22 years
4. Help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness as I did at first – even more so!
5. Help me to grow in self-denial; not to pursue selfish things and become comfortable/lazy
6. Forgive me:

- a. Inconsistent prayer life; becoming lax with scripture; situational faithlessness; failing to fix my eyes on you and pursue you
7. Thank you for waking me up, forgiving me and not taking your Holy Spirit from me!

**Thought questions. Time to examine yourself (2 Cor 13:5)**

1. In your daily living, who do you most desire to please and why?
  - Authority figures such as bosses, teachers, professors, coaches, chains of command, etc.? Your teachers, professors, or coaches? Family member such as spouses, parents, children, or siblings? Your friends? Your teammates? Your girlfriend/boyfriend? Your customers? Your self? God?
2. In your daily living, what are you most desperate for? (i.e. are you truly hungering and thirsting for righteousness, or has something else stepped in?)
3. If you don't have the kind of hunger and thirst to which Jesus referred to in the Sermon on the Mount, what can you do to develop that kind of need and desire?
  - a. What can you start partaking in to fuel your daily desire for righteousness?
  - b. What can you eliminate (repentance?) that is quenching your desire for righteousness?
4. What does your meditation on scripture, your prayer life, your giving to the needy, and your fasting say about how you "hunger and thirst for righteousness"?
5. We live in a private and personal society, yet Christianity was never meant to be private and personal. Do you have a commitment and loyalty to God's people (The Church) that is helping you to remain faithful to God? If not, how can you repent?
6. When you partake in "acts of righteousness" do you yearn for the approval and attention of God alone or for the approval and praise of humans? (Note: Jesus is very serious about ensuring we have the right motivation. While Jesus probably uses hyperbole to exaggerate and get our attention, He nevertheless provides some radical instruction to counter the natural deceitfulness of our heart. See Matt 6:1-18.

**NOTES**

**"HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS" CONVICTIONS AND COMMITMENTS**