

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

A Longing for What is Right

Matthew 5:6

¹ Our scripture today can be summarized by the statement “A longing for what is right”. ²

Matthew, chapter 5, verse 6 reads, **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.** ³

How much do you really want goodness in your life? Let us examine this verse to find out. ⁴

I. What is Righteousness?

What is righteousness? ⁵

Righteousness ¹ in the original language means equity, justice; being right. ⁶ It originally meant whatever conforms to the revealed word of God. ⁷ Then, it later came to mean the result of obedience to God’s will.

In Matthew, chapter 3, the Bible describes John the Baptist’s ministry. He is teaching and baptizing Jewish people at the Jordan River. Lord Jesus approaches John to be baptized. John is very

¹ δικαιοσύνη.

reluctant to baptize the Lord because he knows Who Jesus is. ⁸ The Lord replies, **Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.** ² ⁹

Later, in chapter 6, Jesus defines righteousness further when He says, **Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.** ³ ¹⁰

What are these “acts of righteousness” the Lord is referring to? ¹¹ **Doing what God wants done!**

So, this finally came to mean, “doing it right”; “doing right things” based on your conduct and attitudes! ¹²

So, the next logical question is, **what degree of righteousness is acceptable to God?** ¹³

When you measure a relationship with God on the basis of living a good life, what’s the standard?

² Matthew 3:15.

³ Matthew 6:1.

In the military, regulations describe the standard for any official tasking. Military personnel are to accomplish the task “to standard”. They are to do it the right way according to regulation. ¹⁴

What’s the standard for salvation and entrance into heaven? When asked about salvation, many believe God operates on the Merit/Demerit System. As long as you are not a crook, God will accept you. ¹⁵

But God’s word says, **For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.** ⁴

To the average guy in ancient Jewish culture, that meant perfection! Pharisees made a point of teaching that righteousness meant dressing the right way, doing the right things, using the right language, etc. Everything you said and did had to be perfect according to the Pharisees’ standards. So, the common guy just kind of gave up on all that! ¹⁶

⁴ Matthew 5:20.

According to Lord Jesus, the standard also appeared to be perfect obedience! He said, **I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**⁵ ¹⁷

So, does the Bible exclude everybody from being saved? ¹⁸

Well, **YES**, if you try it on your own efforts! ¹⁹ **But, NO**: if you rely on the cross! ²⁰

Lord Jesus made the difference between your imperfections and God's perfect standards when He died on the cross! Second Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 20, **God made him who had no sin to be sin for**

⁵ Matthew 5:18-19.

us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. ²¹

When you surrender your life to Jesus and identify with Him, His righteousness becomes your righteousness. Presto! You are righteous! ²²

God now wants to begin changing you by building His righteousness into you. ²³

God wants to begin **molding you into His image! **For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**** ⁶ ²⁴

The question, then, is how badly do you want to be molded? ²⁵

The next step to help us understand this verse is . . .

⁶ Ephesians 2:10.

II. What Does It Mean to Hunger and Thirst?

What does it mean to hunger and thirst? ²⁶

Let us look at hunger.

Lord Jesus fasted for forty days. He was really hungry when the devil tempted Him! ⁷

The average person can go without food for nine or ten weeks as long as they have water. You may have hunger pains occasionally but a person living in Bangladesh may be hungry all the time!

I have a health drink, a meal replacement drink, for breakfast. So, if lunch is late, I am really craving food.

²⁷

Do you crave living a pleasing life before God that much? ²⁸

Let us look at thirst.

On April 4, 1943, the “Lady Be Good”, a B-24 Liberator bomber, departed from its base at Soluch Field near

⁷ Matthew 4:1-11.

Benghazi, Libya, to participate in bombing the bay at Naples, Italy. Returning, they lost communication with and overshot their base in Libya. Running out of fuel, eight of the nine crew members successfully parachuted out of the airplane 440 miles into the Sahara Desert.

On November 9, 1958, a British oil exploration team found the wreckage. Eventually seven bodies were discovered northwest of the crash site. One crew member was found over 200 miles from the aircraft. Only one canteen was found! ⁸ You can only imagine what those men must have suffered. The average person can only survive three days without water! ²⁹

God wants you to crave His righteous life like you thirst for water! ³⁰

Hungering and thirsting for a righteous life is not all God wants from you. **God wants you to be “the salt of the earth” to others! In Matthew, chapter 5, verse 13,**

⁸ “Lady Be Good (aircraft)”,
Wikipedia at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Be_Good_\(aircraft\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Be_Good_(aircraft))

the Lord says, **You are the salt of the earth**. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ³¹ What does this say about what the righteousness in your life can mean to others? ³²

So, the final question to answer concerning this verse is . . .

III. What Does It Mean to Be Filled?

What does it mean to be filled? ³³

The simple answer to that question is when you live the life God created you to live, you become fulfilled!

³⁴

You fulfill one of the main purposes God has for your life. Romans, chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, **Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship**. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. 35

You get meaning, purpose and peace. These are all the elements in life God designed for you to have! 36

What is your attitude concerning righteousness? Is it “What can I get away with in my life and still squeak into heaven?” Are you trying to play games with God? Come on - get real! 37

Hunger and thirst for a righteous life pleasing to Lord Jesus!

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