

Happy Are the Hungry & Thirsty

Sitting at the Feet of Yeshua

In my last post, we began looking at how happy are the meek. In this post, we will look at how happy are the those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

"How blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness! for they will be filled." ~ Matthew 5:6

Verse 6 teaches us about the bliss of a starving spirit and the continual recognition of the importance of our being right with God. Again, Yeshua quotes from King David's: *"O God, you are my God; I will seek you eagerly. My heart thirsts for you, my body longs for you in a land parched and exhausted, where no water can be found."* ~ Psalm 63:1

The word "righteousness" is used 646 times in the Bible. There are two insights about "righteousness" that we must clearly understand. There is positional righteousness and practical righteousness. Let me explain.

POSITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Rabbi Sha'ul teaches about positional righteousness in his letter to the Romans. *"For in His sight no one alive will be considered righteous on the ground of legalistic observance of Torah commands, because what Torah really does is show people how sinful they are. But now, quite apart from Torah, God's way of making people righteous in his sight has been made clear — although the Torah and the Prophets give their witness to it as well — and it is a righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah, to all who continue trusting. For it makes no difference whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, since all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise. By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua. God put Yeshua forward as the kapparah for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death. This vindicated God's righteousness; because, in his forbearance, he had passed over [with neither punishment nor remission] the sins people had committed in the past; and it vindicates his righteousness in the present age by showing that he is righteous himself and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness. So what room is left for boasting? None at all! What kind of Torah excludes it? One that has to do with legalistic observance of rules? No, rather, a Torah that has to do with trusting. Therefore, we hold the view that a person comes to be considered righteous by God on the ground of trusting, which has nothing to do with legalistic observance of Torah commands."* ~ Romans 3:20-28.

Sha'ul goes on to say in Chapter 10, *"Brothers, my heart's deepest desire and my prayer to God for Isra'el is for their salvation; for I can testify to their zeal for God. But it is not based on correct understanding; for, since they are unaware of God's way of making people righteous and instead seek to set up their own, they have not submitted themselves to God's way of making people righteous. For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts...that if you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be delivered. For with the heart one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgement and thus continues toward deliverance."* (Romans 10:1-4; 9-10)

Positionally, we are made righteous by putting our trust – our faith – in Yeshua's atoning work on the Execution Stake.

PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

James and John teach us about practical righteousness. James declares, *"You see that a person is declared righteous because of actions and not because of faith alone. Indeed, just as the body without a spirit is dead, so too faith without actions is dead"* ~ James 2:24, 26. In his first epistle, John states, *"Children, don't let anyone deceive you – it is the person that keeps on doing what is right who is righteous, just*

as God is righteous...Here is how one can distinguish clearly between God's children and those of the Adversary: everyone who does not continue doing what is right is not from God" ~ 1 John 3:7, 10.

Those that ***"hunger and thirst after righteousness"*** reveals that a true believer is known by his desire for and his pursuit of being right with God. That hunger and thirst is evidence that we are Believers and the promise of God is that we will be "filled."

The fact is that very few of us know what it is to be truly hungry or truly thirsty. So then, the hunger, which this beatitude describes, is no genteel hunger which could be satisfied with an "In-'N-Out" burger; the thirst of which it speaks is no thirst which could be quenched with a Starbuck's or an iced tea. It is the hunger of the man who is starving for food, and the thirst of the man who will die unless he drinks.

Consequently, this beatitude is in reality both a question and a challenge. In effect it demands how much do you want righteousness? Do you want it as much as a starving man wants food, and as much as a man dying of thirst wants water?" How intense is our desire for righteousness?

Most people have an instinctive desire for righteousness – they want to do right, but that desire is pensive and nebulous rather than sharp and intense. When the moment of decision comes they are not prepared to make the effort and the sacrifice which real righteousness demands. Most people suffer from what Robert Louis Stevenson called *"the malady of not wanting."* It would make a world of difference, if we desired righteousness more than anything else.

The true wonder of man is not that he is a sinner, but that even in his sin he is haunted by righteousness; that even in the mud he can never wholly forget the stars. David had always wanted to build the Temple of God; yet, he never achieved that ambition; it was denied and forbidden him. But God said to him, ***"You did well that it was in your heart"*** (1Kings 8:18). In his mercy, God judges us not only by our achievements, but also by our dreams. Even if a man never attains righteousness, if at the end of the day he is still hungering and thirsting for it, he is not shut out from blessedness.

Again, we really need to know something about the original languages to get the full meaning. Without getting into a grammar lesson here, suffice it to say that the verb forms of hungering and thirsting in Greek mean that the hunger and the thirst is for the whole thing. To say I hunger for bread in this tense means, I want the whole loaf. To say I thirst for water in this tense means, I want the whole pitcher. Therefore, the correct translation is: ***"How blessed are those who hunger and thirst for the whole of righteousness, for complete righteousness."***

This beatitude says, it is not enough to be satisfied with a partial righteousness. We have to develop a passion to really want to pursue God's righteousness. Blessed is the man who hungers and thirsts for the righteousness which is total.

So, then, the translation of the fourth beatitude could run:

"O how blessed is the man who longs for total righteousness as a starving man longs for food, and a man perishing of thirst longs for water, for that man will be truly satisfied!"

Blessed are the poor, the mournful, the meek, the hungry and the thirsty. Blessed indeed are those who passionately pursue the things of God!

In my next post, we will look at how happy are those who show mercy.