

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S7E11

Hunger and Thirst For Righteousness - Matthew 5:6

Description – Continuing to look at the Beatitudes, we examine hunger and thirsting for righteousness, from Matthew 5:6

Last week we talked about humility/meekness, and this week we'll pick up with the next Beatitude in v. 6

The three keys to humility / meekness are: Trust, Wait, Be Still. Which can be so hard.

Matthew 5:6

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

So how are you filled or satisfied in the Kingdom of Heaven? This hunger and thirst for righteousness connects to a filling.

Jesus is using examples that everyone can understand. We've all been hungry, we've all been thirsty. We know that when we get to this state that our physical need has to be fulfilled. (with food and drink).

But Jesus uses this idea and says that when we hunger and thirst for righteousness we can find filling from it.

There are two key passages in the Sermon On The Mount

Matthew 5:20

²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 6:33

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

Imbedded in the sermon on the mount is this challenge to seek God, to seek His Kingdom.

So the question is: How do you define righteousness? What is it, what does it mean?

In today's terms, this would be like saying, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of Billy Graham (for Baptists) or The Pope (for Catholics), you'll never enter the kingdom of God."

What is Righteousness here? In this context, it means someone's whole person behavior, that accords or lines up with God's nature, kingdom and will.

Righteousness is twofold:

1. It's a gift from God
2. It's a lifestyle that we live

For the first: it's a gift from God. At the moment of salvation, the moment you accept Christ and are Justified by Faith in Christ you are declared righteous.

God not only has to do what is right to be a Just God, he also has to uphold the law and the punishment.

When you go before the righteous Judge and have an advocate, who will stand in your place and defend you. When the Judge asks, Have you sinned? Your response is, "of course... Guilty as charged." But then the great exchange happens when the Lord Jesus steps in and says, "Father, this one is mine. You can apply their sin debt to my cross."

Jesus takes on our sin supernaturally in the past when we cry out in the present the need for forgiveness.

Justification - a legal standard - we are declared righteous because of Christ's finished work on the Cross. His death, burial and resurrection are applied to us, to our lives.

Romans 3:21-26

²¹ But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the Law and the Prophets. ²² The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. ²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as the mercy seat by his blood, through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. ²⁶ God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.

Philippians 3:9

⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith.

So the moment you were saved you were positionally declared righteous in Christ. But the way you live will determine if you are practically living a righteous life.

The first aspect of righteousness is theological. The second aspect is practical.

Matthew 6:1

Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven.

So what does “Practice your righteousness” look like? This is not something that God does, it’s something that we do.

Jesus is assuming that we will go about our lives and practice righteous acts. BUT remember, we’re not doing these things to be noticed / applauded by others.

The big 3 ways you’ll live out your righteousness: (Matthew 6)

1. The way you pray
2. The way you fast
3. The way you give money

When you do these things, you have to watch your heart! It’s about the heart behind doing these things.

It’s not just saying you believe, it’s how you live that out. It’s a connection between orthodoxy (right thinking) and orthopraxy. (right practice)

Jesus is concerned with the way we live and the way we display that through our lives.

Matthew 5:20

²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

So, what were the Scribes and Pharisees doing that was wrong? The Pharisees were the ones that were the closest to Jesus in theology and practice.

They were doing all the right things, but they were doing it for show. They didn’t have the right heart behind their actions & motives. And because of this, it was displeasing to God.

Matthew 5:45

⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous

And to tie it all together, Matthew 5:10

Matthew 5:10

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

You're not persecuted for what you believe, you're persecuted for how you display that belief or how you practice that righteousness.

Faith in God's righteousness leads to righteous behavior. Paul and James are not in opposition to one another. They both work together.

"Filled" - to be bloated, overflowing.

Luke 6:21, 25

²¹ Blessed are you who are hungry now, because you will be filled.

²⁵ Woe to you who are now full, for you will be hungry.

Anytime you have a hunger for God, He will fill it. He wants us to long for more of Him, more of His presence, more of His power in our lives.