



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

*Special Study:*

## **PASSION FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

### **Matthew 5:6**

Jesus Christ, the all-knowing Lord and Master, knew that the greatest desire in the heart of His listeners was to be happy. Surveys have been conducted over and over again to ascertain what people need most out of life; the findings of such surveys have confirmed that the bottom-line of man's need is happiness. This is true all over the world. People commit suicide because they are unhappy. Nobody gets into psychiatry case because he is so happy. People are in depression because happiness is missing. Jesus knowing what they lacked told them, "**Blessed [happy] are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**"

Man was created in the image of God, with the nature of holiness and righteousness (Psalm 17:15). Any departure from the original creation will make him incomplete, unfulfilled and unhappy. It is like removing fish or other creatures from their natural habitat; they cannot survive there. Jesus knew that His audience was not happy because they had been removed from the original habitat of righteousness where they had been created. For you to be happy, you have to thirst and hunger after the righteousness of God and then the blessedness of being filled with God's righteousness will be yours.

### **PASSION FOR TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Matthew 5:6; Philippians 3:7-10; Romans 10:3,8-10; Isaiah 64:6; Matthew 5:20; Luke 16:15; 18:9; Matthew 23:25,28; Romans 3:24; 5:17-21.

People work from dawn to dusk because they want to draw salary to satisfy their hunger and thirst. The life of a human being, in whatever occupation, profession or place, is to be able to satisfy hunger and thirst. Our relationship and fellowship with God are to satisfy spiritual hunger and thirst. Once we lose this focus, there is no point wasting time. We attend retreats, church activities, study the Bible, pray and do other things so that we may learn spiritual things to satisfy the spiritual hunger in our lives and that of other people.

Just as people sell what they have to satisfy their hunger, so Paul, wanting to satisfy his spiritual hunger, disposed off things that were gainful to him in order to gain "**the righteousness which is of God by faith.**" There was hunger and thirst in his inner man. However, unlike Paul, many people do not dispose off the things that compete with the essential things in their lives. They did not dispose off their self-righteousness so as to get the righteousness of God. This was why Paul pitied them. Like the Jews, there are many people today who, though are hungry for God, have been feeding on the wrong kind of food which do not give the righteousness of God. These people think that righteousness must be worked out by their human power. Isaiah had told them many years earlier that in the presence of God, that such "**righteousnesses are as filthy rags**" because it is not based on the blood of Jesus nor did they trust on the atonement of the blood. Such filthy rags or mere outward righteousness that does not have inward cleansing usually attracts the displeasure of God but the one that attracts God's blessing is the one of the heart that happens when we believe on the Lord and passionately desire it.

This hunger and thirst in the soul after the image of God is the strongest of all spiritual appetites. It swallows up all the other desires in our lives. Such hunger and thirst become more craving, more importunate until they are satisfied and there cannot be any substitute that will satisfy the soul that truly seeks after righteousness. It will find no comfort or satisfaction in anything else, only in the righteousness that comes from the heart of God to the heart of man.

### **PRAYING FOR TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Matthew 5:6; Jeremiah 29:13,12; Zephaniah 2:3; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 6:6-11; Matthew 6:33; 7:7,8; Luke 11:5-10; Psalm 51:6-10; Hosea 10:12.

"**Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness...**" Hunger and thirst implies asking and praying for righteousness. Hunger makes us to ask for food in the natural. So also, spiritual hunger makes a

believer to pray so as to be filled and satisfied with righteousness. Spiritual hunger will always make you to ask and seek the Lord.

Spiritual thirst and hunger drives a true believer to make necessary preparations so as to be filled and satisfied. He goes into his closet to purge himself from stains as a requirement for receiving the righteousness of God. He first flees and separates himself from things that defile. Then, he follows after righteousness. ***“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”*** (2 Timothy 2:21,22). Seeking righteousness is by importunate prayer of faith. Following after righteousness also requires commitment and consecration from the believer. These virtues will make the Christian obey God’s instruction to ***“...flee these things*** [destructive and defiling things]; ***and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”*** (1 Timothy 6:11). Believers must pray for righteousness with focus, fervency and faith because it is the most indispensable virtue in the life of a child of God.

## **POSSESSORS OF TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Matthew 5:6; Ezekiel 14:14,20; Daniel 6:1-6,10-23; Psalm 106:28-31; Luke 1:5,6,67-75; Mark 6:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-10; Romans 6:17,18; 1 John 3:5-10.

There have been people who have possessed righteousness. If you meet an expert and he tells with facts that you cannot find anybody that has got what you are seeking, you are likely to get discouraged and stop seeking. But if on the other hand, you find those that have lesser privileges and exposure than you who have got it, you will keep seeking. That is why it is important to know about those that have received the righteousness of God. Some saints who have gone before us have had the experience. This knowledge will stir up faith in us to seek God for it. Besides, Jesus never tells any man to seek what he will never get. He knows you will get it. He says, ***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”*** (Matthew 5:6).

Many years after their death, Noah, Daniel and Job were confirmed possessors of true righteousness of God. Like these people had it, you will have it and live it out everywhere you are. Not only your friends, relations, spouse or members of your church will recognise your righteousness; even your enemies, will also be able to confirm it. You can be filled with righteousness now if you pray to God for it.

If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we' d like to hear from you.  
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