

May 10, 2021

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
Matthew 5:6 NIV*

What is righteousness?

Growing up, I confused the word righteousness with perfection. I believed that this was something I should seek for **myself**, that I should hunger and thirst for righteousness within **me**, just as I would fill up with food when hungry, or have a drink of water when thirsty.

But perfection is an elusive thing—and a powerful weapon in the hands of my true enemy, the devil. I could never find perfection in myself. The harder I tried to be good, the more I failed. The more I failed, the more discouraged I became. This is not surprising, because the Bible says “*no one is righteous; no, not one. (Romans 3:10)*, and ‘*all our righteous acts are as filthy rags*’ (Isaiah 64:6). Seeking righteousness within me was the wrong way to go about pursuing righteousness. It’s tempting, because human beings like to control things, and who better can one control than oneself? Well, as my experience demonstrated, not even that! *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Jeremiah 17:9.*

Psalms 145:17 reads: ‘*The Lord is righteous in all His ways.*’ Psalms 48:10, in speaking of the Lord, states that ‘*Your right hand is full of righteousness.*’ Psalms 50:6: *And the heavens declare His righteousness.* Paul, in 1 Timothy 4:8 calls the Lord ‘*the righteous judge.*’ The Bible is filled with verses that speak to the righteousness of God, so there should be no confusion about where righteousness can be found.

Had I understood this, I would not have looked inward for this trait. ***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for God, for they should be filled.*** To believe, for even a moment, that my righteousness comes out of myself is a misconception that can have far reaching consequences. In fact, measuring the righteousness in ourselves will only lead us down one of two paths. On the one hand, discouragement in my lack of righteousness will rob me of all Jesus came to give! My joy, my peace, and the abundant life He promised! On the other hand, believing myself capable of righteousness leads to inflated opinions, conceit, and self-idolatry that hurts not only myself, but others also.

But believing myself **loved** by the righteous God of the Universe, leads me to a place of humble gratitude. The focus is now off me, and on God! If God is my focus, and if I am hungering and thirsting after God, then self is receding, making room for Him, and His love, allowing for Him to be lifted up, and draw all men onto him.

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people unto myself. John 12:32