

HUNGER AND THIRST PART II

Romans 3:23 *"For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness recognize that God is the ultimate source of real righteousness, so they long for His righteous character to be evident in people's lives on earth. They shall be satisfied by responding to His invitation to be in relationship with Him.

"Those who mourn" and who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" have experienced the disaster that disobedience to God has brought to the world. Because they understand their true position of weakness before God, the "meek" (v. 5) have a humility that translates into treating others with kindness. The "merciful" are those who understand their own need for God's mercy (v. 7).

When we move from relations between men to those between God and men (though this distinction wasn't really part of the Jewish consciousness because the thought of God was probably never completely absent whenever the Hebrew thought of "righteousness") righteousness implies a correct relationship to the will of God which was particularly expressed and interpreted by Israel's covenant with God. Righteous action is action which flows out of God's gracious election of Israel and accords with the law of the covenant. God himself is righteous (2 Ch. 12:6; Ps. 7:9), and he can be relied upon to act in accordance with the terms of His relationship with Israel.

This emerges into the entire idea of righteousness and salvation; God is 'a righteous God and (therefore) a Savior.' God is Creator and therefore He is the grounds and guarantor of the moral order. His righteousness is intimately related to His holiness. God is also the Redeemer, and his righteousness is interpreted by his redemptive activity. The messiah (Jesus) is then seen as the special recipient and instrument of the divine righteousness.

Human attainment of righteousness is a positive thing, but in the end this attainment in all men falls far short of a true conformity to the divine standard. In contrast to our human unrighteousness stands the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:17) which involves God's active grace given to us. Righteousness is proclaimed by Jesus as a gift to those who are granted the kingdom of God.



By dealing with all the consequences of man's sin and unrighteousness (both Godward and manward) in the cross, Jesus maintains the moral order, laid out in the Old Testament, and gives us His righteousness so we can have fellowship with man *and* God because He has given grace to the needy.

Tim Keller says that this is the difference between a Christian and a moralist.

- A moralist lives a much better LOOKING life than most Christians.
- A Christian has a high view of truth, loves beauty, and will not excuse sin in himself or in you.

Moralists and Christians both repent for their sins, but a Christian also repents of his righteousness.

John Stott wrote, *"For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man."* You can never feel accepted until you know you're accepted at your worst. On the cross God tells us, "I have seen you at your worst, and I accept you. I receive you. Put your faith in me."

The beatitude is not: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after blessedness?" It is: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." All life dead ends at the cross, and that also is where life begins.



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Volunteer: saunders@ourelement.org

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