

# Hungering

by A.W. Pink

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which is made possible through faith in Christ and is an ongoing experience for the renewed heart.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 42:1, Isaiah 45:8, Jeremiah 23:6, Matthew 5:6, Romans 1:16-17, Romans 3:22-24, Romans 5:19, Romans 10:4, Philippians 3:8, Revelation 7:16

**Topics:** "Spiritual Hunger", "Righteousness in Christ"

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## Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the profound spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness that arises from a deep awareness of one's own sinfulness and need for salvation. He explains that this longing is not only a characteristic of the unconverted but also a continual experience for believers who desire to grow closer to God and be conformed to Christ's image. Pink highlights that true righteousness is found in Christ alone, who fulfills the law and provides the perfect righteousness needed for salvation. He reassures that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled, both in this life and in the life to come, where they will experience complete satisfaction in God's holiness. The sermon calls believers to reflect on their spiritual state and to seek a deeper relationship with God.

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## Transcript

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after

righteousness; for they shall be filled" (MATTHEW 5:6).

In the first three Beatitudes we are called upon to witness the heart exercises of one who has been awakened by the Spirit of God. First, there is a sense of need, a realization of my nothingness and emptiness. Second, there is a judging of self, a consciousness of my guilt and sorrowing over my lost condition. Third, there is an end of seeking to justify myself before God, an abandonment of all pretences to personal merit, a taking of my place in the dust before God. Here, in the fourth, the eye of the soul is turned away from self to Another: there is a longing after that which I know I have not got and which I am conscious I urgently need.

There has been much needless quibbling as to the precise import of the word "righteousness" in our present text. The best way to ascertain its significance is to go back to the Old Testament scriptures where this term is used, and then turn on these the fuller light furnished by the New Testament Epistles.

"Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord have created it" (Isa. 45:8). The first half of this verse refers, in figurative language, to the advent of Christ to this earth; the second half to His resurrection, when He was "raised again for our justification." Harken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory" (Isa. 46:12-14). "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arms shall they trust" (Isa. 51:5). "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed" (Isa. 56:1). "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10). These passages make it clear that God's "righteousness" is synonymous with God's "salvation."

The above scriptures are unfolded in the Epistle to the Romans where the "Gospel" receives its fullest exposition, see 1:1. In 1:16, 17, we are told "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." In 3:22, 24 we read, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." In 5:19 the blessed declaration is made, "for as by one man's disobedience many were made (legally constituted) sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made (legally constituted) righteous." While in 10:4 we learn, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

The sinner is destitute of righteousness, for "there is none righteous, no not one." God has therefore provided in Christ a perfect righteousness for each and all of His people. This righteousness, this satisfying of all the demands of God's holy law against us, was wrought out by our Substitute and Surety. This righteousness is now imputed-legally placed to the account of the believing sinner. Just as the sins of God's people were all transferred to Christ, so His righteousness is placed upon them, see 2 Cor. 5:21. Such is a brief summary of the teaching of Scripture on this vital and blessed subject of "Righteousness."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." Hungering and thirsting express vehement desire, of which the soul is acutely conscious. First, the Holy Spirit brings before the heart the holy requirements of God. He reveals to us His perfect standard, which He can never lower. He reminds us that "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." Second, the trembling soul, conscious of its own abject poverty, realizing his utter inability to measure up to God's requirements, sees no help in self. This is a painful discovery, which causes him to mourn and groan. Have you done so?

Third, the Holy Spirit now creates in the heart a deep "hunger and thirst," which causes the convicted sinner to look for relief and seek a supply outside of himself. The eye is now directed to Christ, "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:6).

Like the previous ones, this attitude begins in the unconverted, but is perpetuated in the saved sinner. There is a repeated exercise of this grace, felt at varying intervals. The one who longed to be saved by Christ now yearns to be made like Him. Looked at in its widest aspect, this hungering and thirsting refers to that panting of the renewed heart after God (Psa. 42:1), that yearning for a closer walk with Him, that

longing for more perfect conformity to the image of His Son. It tells of those Inspirations of the new nature for Divine blessing which alone can strengthen, sustain and satisfy.

Our text presents such a paradox that it is evident no carnal mind ever invented it. Can one who has been brought into vital union with Him who is the Bread of Life, and in whom all fullness dwells, be found still hungering and thirsting? Yes, such is the experience of the renewed heart. Mark carefully the tense of the verb: it is not "Blessed are they which have," but "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst." Do you, dear reader? Or are you content with your attainments and satisfied with your condition? Hungering and thirsting after righteousness has ever been the experience of God's saints: see Psalm 82:4; Phil. 3:8, 14, etc.

"They shall be filled." Like the first part of our text, this also has a double fulfillment—an initial and a continuous. When God creates a hunger and a thirst in the soul it is that He may satisfy them. When the poor sinner is made to feel his need of Christ, it is that he may be drawn to and led to embrace Him. Like the prodigal, who came to the Father as a penitent, the believing sinner now feeds on the One figured by the "fatted calf." He is made to exclaim "surely in the Lord have I righteousness."

"They shall be filled." Not with wine wherein is excess, but "filled with the Spirit." "Filled" with "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." "Filled" with Divine blessing to which no sorrow is added. "Filled" with praise and thanksgiving unto Him who has wrought all our works in us. "Filled" with that which this poor world can neither give nor take away. "Filled" by the goodness and mercy of God, till their cup runneth over. And yet, all that is enjoyed now is but a little foretaste of what God has prepared for them that love Him. In the Day to come we shall be "filled" with Divine holiness, for we shall be "like him" (I John 3:2). Then shall we be done with sin forever; then shall we "hunger no more, neither thirst anymore" (Rev. 7:16).

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