

The Beatitudes the Fourth Beatitude

by A.W. Pink

The fourth Beatitude describes the experience of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which is a deep and ongoing longing for a closer walk with God and for more perfect conformity to the image of His Son.

Scripture: Isaiah 45:8, Matthew 5:6, Romans 1:16

Topics: "Righteousness", "Spiritual Hunger"

Description

A.W. Pink expounds on the fourth Beatitude, emphasizing the deep spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness that arises from an awareness of one's own sinfulness and need for God's grace. He illustrates that this longing is both an initial experience for the sinner seeking salvation and a continual desire for holiness in the life of a believer. Pink connects the concept of righteousness to God's salvation, highlighting that true fulfillment comes from Christ, who is our righteousness. He encourages believers to maintain this hunger and thirst, assuring them that God will satisfy their spiritual needs both now and in eternity. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper relationship with God, marked by a yearning for His presence and righteousness.

Transcript

THE BEATITUDES

THE FOURTH BEATITUDE

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. for they shall be filled"

Matthew 5:6

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 a sorrowing over my lost condition. Third, there is a cessation of seeking to justify myself before God, an abandonment of all pretenses to personal merit, and a taking of my place in the dust before God.

Here, in the fourth Beatitude, the eye of the soul is turned away from self toward God for a very special reason: there is a longing after a righteousness that I urgently need but know that I do not possess. 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 to shine upon these the brighter 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" (Rom. 4:25). "Hearken 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, 13).

"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 arm 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. 61:10a).

These passages make it clear that God's righteousness is synonymous with God's salvation. The Scriptures cited above are unfolded in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where the Gospel receives its fullest exposition. In Romans 1:16, 17a, Paul says, "For 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 Romans 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 Romans 5:19, this 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." In Romans 10:4, we learn that "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" (Rom. 3:10). 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 worked out by our Substitute and Surety. This righteousness is now imputed to (that is, legally credited 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 (2 Cor. 5:21). These few words are but a brief summary of the teaching of Scripture on this vital and blessed subject of the perfect righteousness that God requires of us and that is ours by faith in the Lord Christ.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." Hungering and thirsting expresses 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 shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). Second, the trembling soul, conscious of his own abject poverty and realizing his utter inability to measure up to God's requirements, sees no help in himself.

This painful discovery causes him to mourn and groan. Have you done so? Third, the Holy Spirit then creates in the heart a deep "hunger and thirst" that causes the convicted sinner to look for relief and to seek a supply outside of himself. The believing eye is then directed to Christ, who is "THE LORD OUR

RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:6). Like the previous ones, this fourth Beatitude describes a twofold experience. It obviously refers to the initial hungering and thirsting that occurs before a sinner turns to Christ by faith.

But it also refers to the continual longing that is perpetuated in the heart of every saved sinner until his dying day. Repeated exercises of this grace are 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 a panting of the renewed heart after God (Ps. 42:1), a yearning for a closer walk with Him, and a longing for more perfect conformity to the image of His Son.

It tells of those aspirations of the new nature for Divine blessing that alone can strengthen, sustain, and satisfy. Our text presents such a paradox that it is evident that 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 hungered and thirsted," 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 always been the experience of God's true saints (Phil. 3:8-14). "They shall be filled." Like the first part of our text, this also has a double fulfillment, both initial and continuous. When God creates a hunger and a thirst in the soul, it is so that He may satisfy them. When the poor sinner is made to feel his need for Christ, it is to the end that he may be drawn to Christ and led to embrace Him as his only righteousness before a holy God.

He is delighted to confess Christ as his new-found righteousness and to glory in Him alone (1 Cor. 1:30, 31). Such a one, whom God now calls a "saint" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1), is to experience an ongoing filling: not with wine, wherein is excess, but with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). He is to be filled with the peace of God that passeth all understanding (Phil. 4:7). We who are trusting in the righteousness of Christ shall one day be filled with Divine blessing without any admixture of sorrow; we shall be filled with praise and thanksgiving to Him who wrought every work of love and obedience in us (Phil. 2:12, 13) as the visible fruit of His saving work in and for us.

In this world, "He hath filled the hungry with good things" (Luke 1:53) such as this world can neither give to nor withhold from those who "seek the Lord (Ps. 34:10). He bestows such goodness and mercy upon us, who are the sheep of His pasture, that our cups run over (Ps. 23:5, 6). Yet all that we presently enjoy is but a mere foretaste of all that our "God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). In the eternal state, we will be filled with perfect holiness, for "we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2). Then we shall be done with sin forever. Then we shall "hunger no more, neither thirst any more.

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