

Morning Sermon February 2, 2020

“The Fourth Step to Happiness: Right Appetite”

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6 (NKJV)

In my previous messages on the Happiness / Blessedness I have said:

1. *The Blessedness / Happiness in view here is true and eternal happiness!*
2. *This happiness / blessedness comes with God’s favor!*
3. *This happiness / blessedness is different!*

Here again, I want to start with an emphasis on this difference! It is not different that the blessing or happiness comes with appetite, hunger or thirst! Many people are happy with good food! What is DIFFERENT is hungering and thirsting for righteousness?

- I. *Hungering and thirsting for righteousness, is evidence of this difference, evidence of the New Birth, it is evidence that we are children of God –*

1. *The ungodly do not hunger and thirst for righteousness, no they feed on and relish their sins –
Peter speaks of false teachers in the church who would twist Scripture, or distort teachings about God’s grace, in order to allow or even promote sin –*

¹⁸ For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. ¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. ²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: **“A dog returns to his own vomit,”** ... 2 Peter 2:18–22 (NKJV)

The last word here refers to a dog eating its own vomit! Doing this proves we have not TASTED or chosen something better –

⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Psalm 34:8 (NKJV)

2. *Being born again means we are a New Creation –
¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)*

3. *Being born again means new, different appetites and desires –
² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 1 Peter 2:2–3 (NKJV)*

*“The Christian is bred by the Word, and he must be fed by it.”
William Gurnall*

- A. *This is what was taught by Peter -
²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because **“All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away,** ²⁵ But the word of the LORD endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. 2 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 1 Peter 1:23–2:3 (NKJV)*

- B. *We are given birth by God’s Word, and Spiritual and Moral Girth by God’s Word –
² Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which* is not bread? And your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which* is good, And let your soul delight itself in fatness. Isaiah 55:2 (KJV 1900) NKJV – Abundance*

- C. *We are to mature by God’s Word –
¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is,**

those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Hebrews 5:12–14 (NKJV)

II. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness is because we know we LACK it –

1. *We lack that perfect moral righteousness required by God in order to stand before Him –*

A. *This lack is the state of everyone, except Christ -*

¹⁰ As it is written: **“There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”** Romans 3:10-12 (NKJV)

B. *This lack of righteousness is extreme, it is in our throats, our mouths -*

¹³ **“Their throat is an open tomb With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”; ¹⁴ “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”** Romans 3:13-14 (NKJV)

C. *This lack of righteousness, is connected to an active destructive sinfulness ...*

¹⁵ **“Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways; ¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known.” ¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”** Romans 3:15–18 (NKJV)

D. *This lack is again attributed to everyone, condemning everyone -*

¹⁹ **Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:19–20 (NKJV)**

2. *God provides that righteousness in Christ -*

²¹ **But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:21–23 (NKJV)**

3. *This legal righteousness we have in Christ is imputed to us –*

²⁴ **being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously**

committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Romans 3:24–28 (NKJV)

III. When we have even a taste of Christ’s righteousness, we will want more –

1. *We know our own righteousness is lacking –*

⁶ **But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV)**

2. *We will want Christ’s righteousness not only imputed to us, but infused in us –*

A. *External seeming righteousness is what the Pharisees had –*

²⁷ **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Matthew 23:27–28 (NKJV)**

B. *Our righteousness must be heart righteousness –*

⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Matthew 5:8 (NKJV)**

C. *Both Christ’s imputed righteousness and Spirit infused righteousness are superior to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees –*

²⁰ **For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20 (NKJV)**

• *The Pharisees win by their outward righteousness the smiles of men -*

⁶ **They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷ greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ Matthew 23:6–7 (NKJV)**

• *We seek the smile and blessing of God -*

⁴ **that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. Matthew 6:4 (NKJV) 6:1-4**

Arnold Breivick