

# They Shall Be Filled

Have you ever tried to feed a small child something they don't want? Nearly impossible! You'll be trying to dish it up with an encouraging expression, make an exciting "airplanesque" flourish spoon-in-hand gesture, saying, "Open wide" with an over-emphatic smile; just to have the tot snub their nose and twist their head ever so slightly out of arm's reach. They do *not* want what you're offering – no taste for creamed squash I suppose. Short of force-feeding them, you cannot make them eat what they aren't hungry for.

The same thing applies spiritually. Jesus said in Matthew 5:6\*, "Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." We've heard this a lot; it's one of those scriptures that even unbelievers may be able to quote, but I wonder sometimes if we don't take it for granted.

Righteousness is defined in Vine's Expository Dictionary<sup>1</sup> as "the character or quality of being right or just." It is the quality of God that demonstrates His holiness and gives way for His condemnation of sin. This same word, *Dikaiosune* – righteousness that God has, is used both by Jesus (Matthew 5) and by Paul throughout Romans and the New Testament as that which is bestowed upon us through faith.

Jesus said whoever hungers and thirsts for this "character of doing what's right" shall be filled. If you are hungry for something you want it specifically. For example, if my husband tells me he's hungry for Italian food, I know he'll be expecting spaghetti or lasagna, not burgers or meatloaf. He said he wanted Italian food; that he was hungry for it. So if Jesus said that if we are hungry for righteousness then we'll be filled then that means we've specifically got to want the righteousness of God.

I'm afraid that there may be people who do "right" things but for wrong reasons much like the Pharisees that Jesus talked about (i.e. praying in the open to be seen by men – Matt. 6:5). Whether it be for pride, for personal gain, or for the fear of man, some people have motives aside from hungering for or desiring righteousness. Others abstain from wrong doing, *not* out of a distaste for the wrong thing (much the opposite, they still desire them) but they don't partake because they fear the consequences. For example, a person who only quits smoking because of an illness put pines for the comforts of the old habit that their soul is still tied to. They hunger for it and yet they resist for fear of the damage it can do. They are yet very able to be tempted back into it. On the contrary, a person who has been without smoking for a time, or perhaps never did it to begin with, will appreciate fresh air and cleaner breath. They will develop a distaste for cigarettes and will not have a hunger for them. This is a major issue for people struggling with addictions (food, drugs, sexual sins, etc.). While abstaining from the vice is a good start, the heart motive to *why* you are abstaining is a telltale to where

you are spiritually. In order to be totally freed you must get to where you do not hunger for the thing of the flesh and you do hunger for the righteousness of God.

I've heard it said that if you starve something long enough, it will die and if you feed something well, it will flourish. In application, if you abstain from the wrong and "feed" on the right you will develop a taste for righteousness and will diminish your taste for the vice you are starving. That, in conjunction with "if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Matt. 18:9\*, et al), eliminate your tempters toward whatever causes you to sin. If fatty foods cause you to stumble avoid even looking at fast food places, etc. If the computer becomes a source of sexual stronghold, I suggest you revert to a life without that technology.

You must develop a true hunger for righteousness. Search your heart. If you truly desire the right things of the Lord over the wickedness of this world, He promises "you shall be filled." The Lord is known for filling to overflowing. He is the God that is more than enough (see John 10:10; Eph. 3:20). He won't just whet your appetite for His righteousness, He will satisfy your hunger, quench your thirst, and keep you that way. In that state you are equipped to abide in His presence, your heart stayed on Him, your feet on the path lit by the light of His Word; you will have hungered and thirsted after righteousness and you will have been filled and blessed and continuously so.

I challenge you to search yourselves out. Uncover the motives of your heart. Do you not do "bad" things because you don't want to get caught or because of what other's may think? Do you even abstain at all? Do you do "good" things to be noticed by your pastor or other church members or because you're trying to "buy" God's love? That kind of "right doing" is the righteousness of man. The kind that is "as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). God's righteousness can only be accepted through the gift of salvation. Then you will become "the righteousness of God." How? "In Christ." (2 Cor. 5:21)

Is your heart's motive in right-doing to partake of righteousness for righteousness sake? If so, rejoice and be filled to overflowing. If not, here's your chance to repent (turn completely around) toward God. He won't force-feed you.

*"Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).*

~ Amanda Paul  
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\* All scripture references taken from The Holy Bible King James Version

<sup>1</sup> W.E. Vine's M.A., Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words published in 1940 and without copyright.