

THE HUNGER AND THIRST WHICH ARE BLESSED

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A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”
Matthew 5:6.

BECAUSE man had perfect righteousness before the Fall, he enjoyed perfect blessedness. If you and I shall, by divine grace, attain to blessedness hereafter, it will be because God has restored us to righteousness. As it was in the first paradise, so must it be in the second—righteousness is essential to the blessedness of man. We cannot be truly happy and live in sin. Holiness is the natural element of blessedness, and it can no more live out of that element than a fish could live in the fire. The happiness of man must come through his righteousness—his being right with God, with man, with himself—indeed, his being right all round. Since, then, the first blessedness of our unfallen state is gone and the blessedness of perfection hereafter is not yet come, how can we be blessed in the interval which lies between? The answer is, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Though they have not yet attained the righteousness they desire, yet even the *longing* for it makes them a blessed people. The massive blessedness of the past, and the priceless blessedness of the eternal future, are joined together by a bond of present blessedness. The bond is not as massive as those two things which it unites, but it is of the same metal, has been fashioned by the same hand and is as indestructible as the treasures which it binds together.

Of this hunger and thirst I am going to speak this morning. I feel so unfit for the effort that I must correct myself and say that I hunger and thirst to preach to you but, that is all the power I have. Oh, that I, too, may be filled for your sakes! May the Spirit of the Lord fulfill my intense desire to minister to you from this beatitude of our Lord Jesus, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

First, then, in our text we have mention of singular appetites—“hunger and thirst”—not for bread and water but, “after righteousness.” Secondly, we have a remarkable declaration about these hungering people—Jesus says that they are “blessed,” or happy. And beyond a doubt His judgment is true. Thirdly, in our text is mentioned a special satisfaction meeting their necessity and in its foresight making them blessed—our Savior says, “they shall be filled.”

I. To begin, then, we shall speak of SINGULAR APPETITES. In this case, one insatiable desire takes different forms. They hunger and they thirst; the two most urgent needs of the body are used to set forth the cravings of the soul for righteousness. Hunger and thirst are different but they are both the language of keen desire. He that has ever felt either of these two knows how sharp the pangs they bring are. And if the two are combined in one craving, they make up a restless, terrible, unconquerable passion. Who shall resist a man hungering and thirsting? His whole being fights to satisfy his awful needs. Blessed are they that have a longing for righteousness, which no one word can fully describe, and no one craving can set forth; hunger must be joined with thirst to set forth the strength and eagerness of the desire after righteousness.

This desire is like hunger and thirst in constancy; not that it is always equally raging, for the hungry man is not always equally in pain. But, still, he can never quite forget the gnawing within, the burning at the heart. Blessed is the man who always desires righteousness with an insatiable longing that nothing can turn aside. Hunger and thirst are irrepressible; until you feed the man, his wants will continue to devour him. You may give a hungry man the best music that was ever drawn from strings or breathed from pipes; but his cravings are not soothed; you do but mock him. You may set before him the fairest prospect, but unless in that prospect there stands conspicuous a loaf of bread and a cup of water, he has no

heart for flood or field, mountain or forest. They are blessed, says Christ, who, with regard to righteousness, are always seeking it and cannot be satisfied until they find it. The desire toward righteousness, which a man carries it wherever he, himself, goes, for it rules him with its imperative demands. As the horse-leech cries, "Give, give," so does the heart cry after purity, integrity and holiness when once it has learned to hunger and thirst after righteousness!

These appetites are concentrated upon one object; the man hungers and thirsts after *righteousness* and nothing else. Theological works mostly say either that this is imputed righteousness, or implanted righteousness. No doubt these things are meant, but I do not care to insert an adjective where there is none; the text does not say either "imputed" or "implanted"; why need we mend it? It is *righteousness* which the man pants after—righteousness in all its meanings. First, he feels that he is not right with God and the discovery causes him great distress; the Spirit of God shows him that he is all wrong with God, for he has broken the laws which he ought to have kept and he has not paid the homage and love which were justly due. The same Spirit makes him long to get right with God. And, his conscience being aroused, he cannot rest till this is done; this, of course, includes the pardon of his offenses, and the giving to him of a righteousness which will make him acceptable to God; he eagerly cries to God for this gift. One of the bitterest pangs of his soul's hunger is the dread that this need can never be met. How can man be just with God? It is the peculiar glory of the gospel that it reveals the righteousness of God—the method by which sinners can be put right with God; and this comes with peculiar sweetness to one who is striving and praying, hungering and thirsting after righteousness; when he hears of righteousness by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he leaps at it and lays hold upon it, for it exactly meets his needs!

The hunger now takes another form; the pardoned and justified man now desires to be right in his conduct and language and thought; he pines to be righteous in his whole *life*. He would be marked by integrity, kindness, mercifulness, love, and everything else which goes to make up a right condition of things towards his fellow creatures; he ardently desires to be correct in his feelings and conduct towards God—he craves rightly to know, obey, pray, praise, and love his God. He cannot rest till he stands towards God and man as he ought to stand. His longing is not only to be treated as righteous by God, which comes through the atoning blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, but that he may be actually righteous before the heart-searching God. Nor will this suffice him; not only must his conduct be right, but he pants to be himself right. He finds within himself irregular desires, and he would have these utterly destroyed. He finds tendencies towards unrighteousness, and although he resists these, and overcomes them, yet the tendencies are abhorrent to him. He finds longings after pleasures that are forbidden; and though he rejects those pleasures with loathing, his trouble is that he should have any inclination towards them at all! He wants to be so renewed that sin shall have no power over him; he has learned that a lustful *look* is adultery, that a covetous *desire* is theft, and that wrongful *anger* is murder, and therefore he craves not only to be free from the look, and the desire, and the passion, but even from the *tendency* in that direction. He longs to have the fountain of his being cleansed; he hungers to, "put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." He thirsts to be "renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him." He cannot be content till he is himself like Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, the mirror of righteousness and peace.

But, mark you, if the man should even attain to this, his hunger and thirst would only take another direction; the godly man hungers and thirsts to see righteousness in others. At times, when he sees the conduct of those around him, he cries, "My soul is among lions; and I lie even among them that are set on fire." The more holy he becomes, the more sin vexes his righteous soul, and he cries, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" He often wishes that he had "wings like a dove," that he might "fly away and be at rest." Like Cowper, he cries—

*"Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more!"*

He hungers for godly company—he thirsts to see the unholy made holy; and therefore he cries in his daily prayer, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." With hunger and thirst

he cries, “Lord, end the reign of sin! Lord, cast down idols! Lord, chase error from the earth! Lord, turn men from lust and avarice, and cruelty and drunkenness.” He would live for righteousness and die for righteousness. The zeal of it consumes him!

Brothers and sisters, I hope you have been able to follow, by your own knowledge, the various movements of this absorbing passion for righteousness, which I have thus feebly sketched for you.

Note well that these concentrated appetites are very discriminating. The man does not long for twenty things but only for *one* thing, and for that one thing by itself. The hunger and the thirst are “after righteousness.” The man does not hunger for wealth; he would rather be poor and be righteous, than be rich through evil. He does not hunger after health; though he would wish to have that great blessing, yet he would rather be sick and have righteousness, than enjoy good health and be unrighteous. He does not even set before himself, as his great objective, the *rewards* of righteousness; these are very desirable; the respect of one’s fellows, peace of mind and communion with God, are by no means little things; but he does not make these the chief objects of his desire, for he knows that they will be added to him if in the first place he seeks after righteousness itself. If there were no heaven, the godly man would wish to be righteous; if there were no hell, he would dread unrighteousness. His hunger and thirst are after honesty, purity, rectitude, and holiness; he hungers and he thirsts to be what God would have him to be! Always distinguish between seeking heaven and seeking God, between shunning hell and shunning sin; for any hypocrite will desire heaven and dread hell; but only the sincere hunger after righteousness. The thief would shun the prison, but he would like to be once more at his theft; the murderer would escape the gallows, but he would readily enough have his hand on his dagger again. The desire to be happy, the wish to be at ease in conscience—these are poor things. The true and noble hunger of the soul is the desire to be right for righteousness’ sake! Oh, to be holy, whether that should mean joy or sorrow! Oh, to be pure in heart, whether that would bring me honor or contempt! This—this is the blessed thirst.

Now, where there is this hunger and thirst, these will work in their own way. Hunger and thirst are not the bed-makers of the house of manhood. No, they ring the alarm bells and even shake the foundations of the house. The starving man cannot bear himself. Ultimately, his terrible needs may reduce him to a passive condition by the way of faintness and insensibility. But while sense remains in the man, hunger and thirst are fierce forces, which nerve him to the most intense endeavors. When a prisoner was set at the prison gate to plead for the poor debtors, in the old time, he did plead; reduced to a skeleton, he rattled the box in the ears of persons passing by, and cried most piteously that they would give something to the poor debtors who were starving inside. How a hungry man looks at you! His very look is a piercing prayer. A man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, pleads with God with his whole soul. There is no sham prayer about him; the man that is hungry and thirsty after righteousness is the wrestling man; this also makes him the active man; for hunger will break through stone walls; he will do anything for food. The worst of it is that he often attempts foolish things—he tries to stay his hunger with that which is not bread, and spends his labor upon that which satisfies not. Still, this only proves how energetic are these appetites, and how they call out every power of manhood when they are set upon righteousness.

Beloved, these are by no means common. Multitudes of people in the world never hunger and thirst after righteousness. Some of you would like to be saved, but you can do very well if you are not. A man that is hungry and thirsty will never say, “I should like a meal, but I can do very well without it.” And you do not hunger and thirst if you can rest without the blessing you profess to value. If you hunger and thirst after righteousness, you want it at once; these cravings will not bear delay; they clamor for immediate supplies. The hungry man’s tense is the present. Oh, how many there are who, by their delay and by their carelessness, prove that they never hunger and thirst after righteousness! I see also others who are righteous already. They are as good as they want to be. Hear the man talk—“I do not make any profession of religion, but I am a great deal better than many that do.” Oh, yes, I know you, sir. And the Virgin Mary knew you, for she said in her song, “He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.” You will one day be emptied, but you will never be filled! Why should you be? You are so blown up with wind that there is no room for the heavenly substance within your heart.

Many refuse the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the bread of heaven. No man can be said to be hungry if he refuses wholesome food; when your child sits down at the table and says that he does not want any dinner, he is evidently not hungry. They that put Christ away, and will not have His atonement and His sanctification, are not hungry after righteousness. Many criticize the little things of the gospel, the insignificant matters about the minister's voice and tone and appearance. When a man sits down to dinner and begins to notice that one of the dishes is chipped, and one of the roses in the center has an insect on it, and the saltshaker is not in the right position to half an inch, and the parsley is not nicely arranged around the cold meat, that fellow is not hungry! Try a poor dockyard laborer, or, better still, his wife and children, and they will eat meat without mustard and bread without butter. The hungry man will eat fat as well as lean, I guarantee you. Preaching would not so often be submitted to silly remarks if men were really hungry after the truth of God. "Give me a knife and a chance," says the man who is hungry. "Give me the gospel," says the anxious inquirer, "and I care nothing for the eloquence." Beloved, I wish you may so hunger and thirst after righteousness, that trifles may be trifles to you, and the essential truth of God be your only care.

But alas, there are some that we are sure do not hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they do not care even to *hear* about it. When your boy stays out in the road at dinnertime, you may be sure that he is not very hungry. The dinner bell is a very prevailing reasoner when it finds its arguments within the listener; as soon as there is notification that food is to be had, the hungry man hastens to the table. I would to God we had more spiritually hungry people to preach to. He would be a blessed preacher who preached to them, for he would be preaching to a blessed people. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

II. I have very feebly given you the description of the character, and now I come to notice the REMARKABLE DECLARATION of our Lord. He says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

This is a paradox. It does not seem possible that people should be hungry and thirsty. and yet blessed; hunger and thirst brings pain! I know you, my friend, you are here this morning, and you are saying within yourself, "Oh, that I could be right! I am a great sinner; oh, that I were forgiven! Oh, that I could become righteous before God!" Another is saying, "I trust I am forgiven and saved; but I feel a dreadful fear lest I should fall into sin. O wretched man that I am, to have sinful tendencies! Oh, that I could be perfect and altogether delivered from this embodied death which surrounds me in the form of a sinful nature!" Or, perhaps, another friend sitting here is crying, "God has been very gracious to me. But my children, my husband, my brother—they are living in sin and these are my daily burdens. I have come here with a very heavy heart because they know not the Lord." Listen, dear friend, and be encouraged. Whatever form your hunger after righteousness may take, you are a blessed person; albeit that you endure that pain about yourself and others, you are blessed. Hunger and thirst often cause a sinking feeling, and that sinking feeling sometimes turns to a deadly faintness. It may be I am speaking to one who has reached that stage. To him I say, "You are blessed." I hear you sighing, "Oh, that I could be what I want to be! O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? These inward corruptions, these evil imaginations, they will kill me, I cannot bear them! God has taught me to love what is good, and now to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. Even my prayers are interrupted by wandering thoughts, and my tears of repentance have sin mixed with them." Beloved, I understand that faintness and sinking, that groaning and pining. But, nevertheless, you *are* blessed, for the text says it, and it is a very remarkable saying, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Why are they blessed? Well, first, because Jesus says they are; and if He says it, we do not need any further proof. If, looking round on the crowd, our Lord passes by those who are self-satisfied, and if His eyes light on the men that sigh, and cry, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and if, with smiling face, He says, "These are the blessed ones," then depend upon it—they are so; for I know that those whom He declares to be blessed must be blessed, indeed! I would rather be one whom Christ counted blessed, than one who was so esteemed by all the world; for the Lord Jesus knows better than men do.

The man hungering after righteousness ought to consider himself a happy man, because he has been made to know the right value of things. Before, he set a high value upon worthless pleasure, and he reckoned the dross of the praise of men to be as pure gold; but now he values righteousness, and is not as the child who prizes glass beads more than pearls. He has already obtained some measure of righteousness, for his judgment reckons rightly. He ought to be thankful for being so far enlightened. Once he put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—darkness for light and light for darkness. But now the Lord has brought him to know what is good, and what it is that the Lord does require of him; in gaining this right judgment he is a blessed man, and on the way to still greater blessedness!

Observe, further, that not only does he estimate things correctly, but he has a heart towards that which is good and desirable. Once he only cared for earthly comforts; now he hungers and thirsts after righteousness. “Give me a bit of meat in the pot,” cries the worldling, “and I will leave your precious righteousness to those who want it.” But this man prizes the spiritual above the natural—righteousness is happiness to him; his one cry is, “Give me righteousness.” His whole heart is set on it, and this is no mean privilege. He that is filled with the desire of that which God approves, is himself approved; to such a man is given a magnanimity which is of more than royal nature, and for it, he should be grateful to God.

He is blessed because, in the presence of this hunger, many meaner hungers die out. One master passion, like Aaron’s rod, swallows up all the rest! He hungers and thirsts after righteousness; and therefore he has done with the craving of lust, the greed of avarice, the passion of hate, and the pining of ambition. We have known sickly men to be overtaken by a disease which has driven out their old complaints—a fresh fire has put out the former ones. So men, under the influence of a craving for righteousness, have found hunger for land, and hunger for gold, and thirst for pride and lust, by God’s divine grace, come to an end. The new affections have expelled the old. Even as the Israelites drove the Canaanites into the mountains, or slew them, God alone can give this hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and it is one of its grand qualities that it drives out the groveling and sinful lusting which otherwise would consume our hearts.

These men are blessed by being delivered from many foolish delusions. The delusion is most common that man can get everything that he needs in religion out of himself. Most men are deluded in this way—they think they have a springing well of power within from which they can cleanse and revive and satisfy themselves. Try a hungry man, or a thirsty man with this doctrine, “My dear fellow, you need not be hungry; you can satisfy yourself from yourself.” What is his answer? “I have tied a hunger belt around myself to keep down the hunger; but even that I did not find within myself. I am hungry and must have food from outside, or I shall die.” He cannot eat his own heart, nor feed upon his own liver—it is not possible for him to satisfy his hunger from himself. The common spiritual delusion of men is of same kind; they imagine that they can, by an effort of their own, satisfy conscience, make themselves pure, and produce righteousness of character; still do they dream of bringing a clean thing out of an unclean. Let *spiritual* hunger and thirst come upon them, and they escape from this snare. The man cries, “Self-trust is a refuge of lies, I must be helped from above; I must be saved by divine grace, or I shall remain unrighteous to the end.” Spiritual hunger and thirst are wonderful teachers of the doctrines of grace and very speedy dispellers of the illusions of pride.

Once again; these men are blessed because they are already worked upon by the Holy Spirit. Hunger and thirst after righteousness are always the production of the Holy Spirit; it is not natural for man to love the good and the holy. He loves that which is wrong and evil; he loves the trespass or the omission, but strict rectitude before God he does not seek after. When a man is hungry to be true, hungry to be sober, hungry to be pure, hungry to be holy—his hunger is a gift from heaven, and a pledge of the heaven from which it came!

Once more; this man is blessed, for in his hunger and thirst he is in accord with the Lord Jesus Christ. When our Lord was here, He hungered after righteousness, longing to do and suffer His Father’s will. His disciples on one occasion went away to the city to buy meat; and He, being left alone, thirsted to bless the poor sinful woman of Samaria, who came to the well to draw water. To her He said, “Give me to drink,” not only to commence the conversation, but because He thirsted to make that woman

righteous. He thirsted to convince her of her sin, and lead her to saving faith. And when He had done so, His desire was gratified. When His disciples came back, though He had not touched a morsel of bread, or a drop of water, He said, "I have meat to eat that you know not of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Our Lord, on the cross, said, "I thirst," and that thirst of His lips and of His mouth was but the index of the deeper thirst of His heart and soul that righteousness might reign by His death. He died that the righteousness of God might be vindicated; He lives that the righteousness of God may be proclaimed; He pleads that the righteousness of God may be brought home to sinners; He reigns that this righteousness may chase out of this world the iniquity which now destroys it. When you hunger and thirst after righteousness in any of the shapes I have described, you are in a measure partakers with Christ, and have fellowship with Him in His heart's desire. As He is blessed, so are you, for "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

I think I must have astonished some who have been mourning and crying, "Oh, that the Lord would give me to live upon His righteousness, and I would thank Him forever and ever!" Why, *you* are one of the blessed! "Alas," cries one, "I am pining to be delivered from sin; I do not mean from the punishment of it, sir, but from the taint of it; I want to be perfectly pure and holy." Do you? My dear friend, you are numbered among the blessed at this very moment! A great professor at your side in the pew is saying, "Blessed be God, I am perfect already" Well, I am not sure about *that* party's blessedness; that fine bird is not mentioned in my text! But I am sure about yonder soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, for the Word of God is clear and plain—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

III. And now I close with the best of all, SPECIAL SATISFACTION. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." This is a singular statement. They are to be blessed while they hunger and thirst. If they become filled, will they still be blessed? Yes, and what is more, they will still hunger and thirst! You say that is strange. Yes, it is. But everything is wonderful in the kingdom of God. Paradoxes, in spiritual things, are as plentiful as blackberries. In fact, if you cannot believe a paradox, you cannot believe in Christ Himself, for he is God and man in one person—and that is a paradoxical mystery. How can one person be infinite and yet finite? How can He be immortal and yet die? Ours is a gospel wherein lies many an orthodox paradox. He that is filled by Christ hungers more than he did before, only the hunger is of another kind, and has no bitterness in it. He that hungers most is the man who is full in the highest sense—

*"I thirst but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share.
Your wounds, Immanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there."*

Lord, when I get what You give me of Your divine grace, then I feel a new craving which seeks after higher things! My soul enlarges by what it feeds upon, and then it cries, "Give me still more." When a man leaves off crying for more, he may doubt whether he has ever received anything at all. Divine grace fills and then enlarges; increase of grace is increase of capacity for grace. Cry still, "Lord, increase my faith, my love, my hope, my every grace! Enlarge my soul, that I may take in more and more of You!"

Now I am going to show you how it is that we can be filled, even now, although still hungry and thirsty. For first, although we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we are more than filled with the righteousness of God. I do believe my God to be perfectly righteous, not only in His nature and essence, in His law and judgment, but also in all His decrees, acts, words, and teachings. I sit down and anxiously peer into the dreadful truth of the eternal perdition of the wicked. But my heart is full of rest when I remember that God is righteous—the Judge of all the earth must do right! I cannot untie the knots of difficulty over which some men stand perplexed, but I know that God is righteous, and there I leave my bewilderments. God will see to it that the right thing is done in every case and forevermore. Moreover, as I see how iniquity abounds in the world, I am right glad that there is no iniquity in the Lord, my God. As I see error in the church, I rest in the fact that no error finds countenance with Him. Wrongdoing seems to be everywhere—certain men would rend away every man's property from him, and the opposite order would grind down the poor in their wages. But this is our anchor—there is a power which makes for

righteousness, and that power is God. I am filled with joy as I see righteousness enthroned in God. Do you not know this gladness?

Next, we are also filled with the righteousness of Christ. What if I am sinful; what if I have no righteousness that I dare bring before God. Yet—

*“Jesus, Your blood and righteousness
Are my beauty; my glorious dress.”*

True, I have to cry with the leper, “Unclean, unclean”; and yet, as a believer in the Lord Jesus, I am justified in Him, accepted in Him—and in Him *complete!* God looks on me, not as *I* am, but as Christ is; He sees me through the perfect obedience of the Well-Beloved, and I stand before Him without condemnation, No, with full acceptance and favor! The more you think of the righteousness of Christ, the more it will fill you with grateful satisfaction—for His righteousness is far greater than your unrighteousness. Yet you will be crying all the same, “O Lord, perfect me in Your image, and give me righteousness!” A fullness of divine content, even to running over, will be yours, while you sing, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

You will be satisfied, first, with the righteous character of God, and next with the plan of divine righteousness revealed in Christ Jesus. Look at the sin of this world and groan over it; what a wicked world it is! Read of wars and oppressions, falsehoods and superstitions. Or, if you prefer, see with your own eyes the slums of East London, or the iniquity of our great folks in West London. And then you will hunger and thirst! But even concerning all this, you will be filled as you think of the atonement of Christ and remember that it is sweeter to God than all the sin of man is nauseous. The sweet savor of His sacrifice has removed from the thrice-holy God the reek of this dunghill world, and He no longer says that it repents Him that He has made man upon the earth. Because of Christ’s righteousness, the Lord God bears with guilty man and still waits, that He may be gracious to the earth, and make it anew in Christ Jesus.

Again, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness are filled with the righteousness which the Holy Spirit works in them; I do not say that they are satisfied to remain as they are, but they are very grateful for what they are. I am a sinner but yet I do not love sin—is not this delightful? Though I have to fight daily against corruption, yet I have received an inner life which will fight, and must fight, and will not be conquered. If I have not yet vanquished sin, it is something to be struggling against it. Even now, by faith we claim the victory. “Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Have you ever felt as if you were full to the brim, when you knew that you were, “Begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”? Have you not been filled with delight to know that you were no longer what you used to be, but that you were now made a partaker of the divine nature, and elevated into the spiritual sphere, wherein you have fellowship with just men made perfect? Never despise what the Holy Spirit has done for you! Never undervalue divine grace already received; but on the contrary, feel a divine delight, a filling-up of your heart, with what the Lord has already done. Within your soul, perfection lies in embryo—all that you are yet to be is there in the seed. Heaven slumbers in repentance, like an oak within an acorn. Glory be to God for a new heart—glory be to God for life from the dead! Here we are filled with thankfulness; and yet we go on hungering and thirsting that the blessing which God has given may be more fully enjoyed in our experience and displayed in our life.

Brethren, I can tell you when again we get filled with righteousness, and that is when we see righteousness increasing among our fellow men. The sight of one poor child converted has filled my heart for a week with joy unspeakable! I have talked frequently—I did last week—with poor people who have been great sinners, and the Lord has made them great saints, and I have been as filled with happiness as a man could be! A dozen conversions have set all the bells of my heart ringing marriage-peals and kept them at it by the month together! It is true that I might have remembered with sadness the multitudes of sinners who are still perishing, and this would have made me go on hungering and thirsting as I do. But still, a score or two of conversions have seemed so rich a blessing that I have been filled with joy even to overflowing! Then have I felt like good old Simeon, when he said, “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen Your salvation.” Do you not know what this means? Perhaps not, if you

are a big man, and must do everything on a big scale. But for a poor soul like I am, it has been heaven enough to save a single soul from death; I reckon it a great reward to save a little child; it is bliss to me to bring a humble working man to the Lord's feet, and see him learning the way of righteousness. Oh, try it, beloved! Try and see if hunger after the souls of men will not be followed by a fullness of delight which will again lead on to further hunger to bring back lost sheep to Christ's fold! You will never say, "I have had many conversions, and therefore I am satisfied to have no more." No, the more you succeed, the more you will hunger and thirst that Christ's kingdom may come in the hearts of the sons of Adam!

By-and-by we shall quit this mortal body, and we shall find ourselves in the disembodied state, "forever with the Lord." We shall have no ears and eyes, but our spirit will discern and understand without these dull organs; set free from this material substance, we shall know no sin! Soon will sound the resurrection trumpet, and the spirit will enter the refined and spiritualized body, and perfected manhood will be ours. Then the man will have his eyes but they will never cast a lustful glance; he will have his ears, but they will never long for unclean talk; he will have his lips but they will never lie; he will have a heart that will always beat truly and obediently—there will be nothing amiss within his perfect manhood. Oh, what a heaven that will be to us! I proclaim that I want no other heaven than to be with Christ, and to be like He is. Harps for music, and crowns for honor are little as compared with the "kingdom of God and His righteousness." Then shall we be filled with righteous society. You will not have to watch your tongue, for fear somebody should make you an offender for a word. You will not be plagued with idle chit-chat and silly gossip when you get to heaven. You will hear no lying there; you will hear nothing that derogates from the infinite majesty of the Most High. Everybody will be perfect! Oh, will you not delight yourself in the abundance of righteousness?

And then your Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, and the dead in Christ shall rise, and He shall reign with them upon the earth, King of kings and Lord of lords. Then will come a thousand years of perfect peace and rest, and joy and glory, and you will be there. What a swimming in a sea of righteousness will be yours! You will then be like Christ in all things, and all your surroundings will agree with His. Heaven and earth shall link hands in righteousness; eternity will follow with its unbroken blessedness; there shall be no impurity in the kingdom of the blessed God; no devil to tempt, no flesh to corrupt, no want to worry, nothing to disturb. But you will be—

*"Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in."*

Oh, this will be to be filled with righteousness!

My hearers, you will never be filled unless you hunger first; you must hunger and thirst here, that you may be filled hereafter. If you are hungering and thirsting, what should you do? Look to Jesus, for He alone can satisfy you! Believe on our Lord Jesus Christ! Believe on Him now, for He is made of God unto us righteousness, and if you want righteousness you will find it in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God. I am sure those dear friends who called out so loudly just now, will join with me in crying out from the heart, "AMEN! AMEN!" May everybody here begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness at once. Let us all say, "AMEN."

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