

Joy in the Lord Part 5: Joy for the Hungry

March 19, 2023

Matthew 5:6

Joy is found in hungering and thirsting for righteousness and being satisfied.

4 Ways Joy Comes to Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness:

1) **Joy Comes in Honest Evaluation:** First question is, **What is righteousness?** Does it refer to justification, the imputed righteousness of God as used in Rom. 3:21-22, 2 Cor. 5:21? This form of righteousness is a possession that you have received at a one-time event. An unbeliever can't hunger and thirst for righteousness. Does it refer to sanctification? This form would be progressive sanctification that all believers go through in being made like Christ. This is our deeds and works being righteous. Joseph was a righteous man (Matt. 6:33), those doing righteous acts (Matt. 13:17, 25:37). **It is sanctification.**

What did the audience hear? To hunger and thirst is an intense longing and a normal part of life in that time of history, 2 Kings 6:25, Jer. 19:9.

What does hunger and thirsting for righteousness mean?

From a negative standpoint: 1) Desire to be rid of sinful habits (James 1:21-27). 2) Desire to be rid of anything that hinders worship, (1 Cor. 11:27-34, Matt. 5:23-24). 3) Desire to be rid of sinful manifestations of selfishness, not self-seeking, loners, or those avoid others, Pro. 18:1, Rom. 12:20. 4) Desire to be rid of the lie of helplessness against sin. We are dead to sin and slaves of righteousness, not helpless against sin (Rom. 6). We overcome by the work of the Spirit of God in our lives (Rom. 8). To overcome sin: we rely on God's word by learning it and doing it, by prayer in supplication and confession, in giving generously, singing, encouraging others, gathering to worship, having accountability to brothers and sisters in the body, and serving others. All these habits replace sinful habits in our lives. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3) to overcome sin and live for Christ.

From a positive standpoint, 3 things the passage means: 1) It is a longing for holiness, being unaffected by the world and obeying what Scripture teaches. 2) It is a longing to demonstrate spiritual fruit, Gal. 5:22-23, manifesting love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. 3) It is a longing to pursue humility, being able to receive correction humbly.

>>It is satisfying to be filled by doing God's work and doing things God's way. Joy comes from a confidence in salvation, 1 Pet. 1:6-7, proof of the genuineness of faith.

2) **Joy Comes in Humble Dependence:** V6, "shall be satisfied." It is a passive verb that can't be done on our own. God alone can fill us. How do I aim to be perfect in Christ and fully dependent on His ability to transform me? Is it to live off what I experienced years ago, or to wake up each day and follow after Christ?

3) **Joy Comes in Hungry Satisfaction:** a continual yearning, growing from glory to glory in Christlikeness, 2 Cor. 3:18. It is being filled and satisfied at the same time, thirsting for God and pleasing Him and hungering to do it all the more. Phil. 3:12-14, pressing on, laboring to be perfect as God perfects those who are being made more like Christ (Phil. 3:15-16).

4. **Joy Comes in Hopeful Expectation:** Matthew is focused on the kingdom of Heaven coming to earth. In Matthew 5:4-10, the verses show that the promises “shall” be inherited by those who are poor in spirit, mourn, are meek, and hunger and thirst for righteousness, etc. This is a promise of perfect sanctification at the end of life. We enjoy the imputed righteousness of God now, but at that time we will have perfect righteousness, 1 John 3:2.

Further Discussion and Application

Examine your life in Christ, your passion, desire to serve, and your current spiritual life in from these four groups of people below:

- 1) Those who have walked with Christ for decades: Do we demonstrate humility, correctability with easy, love for others, generosity, a life lived in the church for the benefit of other believers?
- 2) Those who have walked with Christ 5, 10, or 15 years: Do we have new growth and excitement in the Lord and His work? Do we rest on the growth and passion of years ago?
- 3) Those who have walked with Christ for a couple of years: Is our gaze fixed intently on Christ? Do we have a difficult time understanding why others are too busy or find it difficult to: attend church, support God’s work, love other believers, submit to leadership in the church, give generously to God’s work, love other brothers and sisters, and be hungry for God’s word?
- 4) Those who are fooled into believing they are saved: unbelievers can’t seek righteousness, they must repent and come to the cross. Outside of coming to Christ, they can do nothing good. They must cry out to God for mercy and mourn over their sin and have seen their poverty without Christ.

How do we see our spiritual growth and hunger for God and His Word? How do we consider our passion to serve and worship our God and Savior?

What is the admonition from 1 Cor. 15:58 from a believer who will one day have victory over death and who one day will be transformed leaving this decrepit body and life on a fallen earth for a glorious heavenly body in eternal joy?

What can we start doing to increase our sanctification and begin to build the body of Christ? Who could we mentor? Where can we serve? Who can we reach out to and show love? What can we do to multiply the preached word of God?