

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Taught by Bruce Bickel

Session: June 15, 2012

Gracious Lord, it was in the garden that you walked with our first parents. Father, we pray that you would create a garden atmosphere today, that you will walk with us, and you will permit us the joy of walking with you. Father, we thank you for your blessings of grace, we thank you for the fact you do not treat us as our sins deserve, and that you offer us an East/West forgiveness that has no end. May our minds be reflective upon who you are, not our needs, and we just trust, Lord, that the Holy Spirit will fulfill his job description this day as we walk in the garden of your grace, that he will lead us into all truth for Jesus' sake. Amen.

I want to recognize Bob Mabry, a close friend of ours, and of mine, over the many years. He used to be here as a regular attender about ten years ago. He's now living in St. Louis. Bob, it's good to have you back.

Audience Members: [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE].

He did mention one concern that I'm not sure we can do much about it. If you remember a couple of years ago, there was a young student over at Trinity named Samuel, who was a brother from Africa. Well he went back to his homeland. In his homeland, there's been a great deal of political disruption and violence, and no one has heard from him for several weeks. We really don't know where he is or what is happening there. Bob has not been able to be in touch with him and there has been no response one way or the other. Bob, do you want to give us any more info on that, and we can just pray for Samuel?

Bob: Yes. Samuel was one of the lost boys of Sudan. He came to Trinity [UNCLEAR] went back to Sudan and then he got married in Uganda. He was in [UNCLEAR] sending emails every couple of weeks. He was in [UNCLEAR] about eight weeks ago, and that was when they had the bombings, and we haven't heard [UNCLEAR]. We know [UNCLEAR]...

Just remember Samuel. Sig, if you could put that on our prayer chain. Bob will give you some information. Let's remember Samuel.

Open your bibles please to Matthew 5, continuing our examination of the Sermon on the Mount, the portion we call the Beatitudes, which was Jesus' first staff meeting where he gets his disciples together and tells them this is what it's like to be a kingdom citizen, this is how one does enter into the kingdom of God, and these are the characteristics of a citizen who has surrendered his own worldly citizenship for a heavenly citizenship. Now we take on the perspective of being a kingdom citizen, a member of the kingdom of God. So we see this in the Beatitudes. This will be your lesson 6 as we're looking at the fourth of our eight Beatitudes.

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:3-6).

Today, we want to look at Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Essentially this is one of the things that I teach in my series on Ethical Decision Making when in try to package this in a different venue so that I can do this in the public domain and in corporate America. This is where you become your own reward system. In other words, we've got to learn to become our own reward system and not have the system of the world be our reward. That means we need to develop a certain sense of thoroughness, and that's visualizing that each of my actions will be reviewed.

As we look at this Beatitude, it's very critical, as we see the sequence of how it falls together. In the first of these Beatitudes, the first three, we're called upon to witness the experience of a person whose heart has been really awakened by the Spirit of God. We begin to see that in the first Beatitude. In the first Beatitude, "blessed are the poor in spirit," there's a sense of our need, a tremendous sense of our realization of our worthlessness, our emptiness and our total inability to do anything to have a merit that will be pleasing the God. It's the fact that we realize that we're spiritually bankrupt. That's the very first indication of a person who's had an awakening by the Holy Spirit, is they realize their absolute futility to have anything they can do to please God, and they realize that in spiritual things, they're a spiritual beggar. That's comes first.

The second Beatitude is a judging of ourselves, "blessed are those who mourn." That's a conscientiousness of our own guilt. You see, you never understand your guilt until you understand your emptiness, your worthlessness, the fact that you're a spiritual pauper, that you're a spiritual beggar. The second thing is you begin to realize, and you're offended by yourself and your own guilt because of your sin. So you begin to judge yourself and you mourn over your sinful condition. It's a sorrowing over the fact of your own sinful condition.

Thirdly, "blessed are the meek," there's this secession of trying to please God your own strength and your own power and your own merit. You realize that there's nothing I can do to achieve God's favor, because he's the only one who can do that for me in the person and work of Christ. So we have a secession of seeking to justify ourselves before God by saying, "Oh my conduct is this. Look what I do. This is what I do. Aren't I a good guy," type of a mentality. It's the abandonment of our pretenses of personal worth and merit. It's the idea that...it's a desire to do living according to the power of God. If you remember last week on meekness? Meekness is not weakness; it's living according to power under control.

You have to understand how those three things fit together. There's the awakening of the soul, of your need, because of your emptiness. That's poor in spirit. Then there's mourning over your sinful condition. You just realize that your life is an offense to God because of your sinful condition. And then thirdly, you begin to realize that there's nothing I can do that is going to merit God's favor, and therefore, I try to quit living according to my own resources, and I live according to the power of God and power under control. Meekness is not weakness as we saw last week. It is really the power of God under control in a person's life who understands that if God is the source of all of their resources of strength and endurance.

Then we come to this next one. This fourth Beatitude, "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness," the eyes of the person who has been awakened, as we've seen in the first three Beatitudes, is taken away from themselves and they now look toward God. They do that for a very special reason. Because they now begin to develop a longing for a sense of righteousness that we realize that we urgently need, but we do not possess. It's the realization that I need something. I need this righteousness, but I don't possess it. I can't do it on my own strength.

The pursuit of righteousness is not popular among the church today. That's not a popular theme. Many people are prepared to seek other things. You want to go from conference to conference, from book to book, from CD to CD, from TV show to TV show, to men's conference to men's conference. They're looking for spirit's power, they're looking for the giftedness, they're looking for end time prophecies. They're looking for all sorts of things. It's really not popular in the church for them to seek righteousness.

Righteousness means right wisdom. It means doing the right thing. That's not popular in the church today because it doesn't draw crowds. What's going to draw crowds is something that's going to be

motivational. Something's going to be inspirational.

I can't think of anything more inspirational than seeking righteousness. But you understand that it's got to follow those first three Beatitudes. You realize your emptiness, you mourn over your sin, you realize you're powerless, and all of a sudden, you want the thing that you can't have, and that's righteousness, because you know you don't possess it, but yet you hunger for that. Notice the end result of that—you'll be satisfied. You see, the church is always looking to be satisfied by activities, programs and things, rather than being satisfied by the person and work of Christ and his righteousness.

Others go from preacher to preacher. They go from book to book, from conference to conference, looking for the greatest, latest blessing. Now I'm not suggesting some of those things cannot be helpful. All I'm saying is that that's where we look for our satisfaction. Our satisfaction is not found in things; our satisfaction is found in a person. It is found in *the* person and *the* work of Christ—in the sinless perfection and perfect obedience. The person who hungers for that demonstration in their life is the one who's going to be satisfied.

The world, even in the church today, hunger for spiritual experiences, but we really don't hunger for the righteousness of God. You see, we're always looking for the next experience. I realize experiences can be helpful. Understand what I'm not saying. All I'm saying is what's your desire? What's your motivation? What's your hunger? When you're thirsty, what do you want? You don't want pizza. When you're hungry, you're thirsty, you want water. You see, in our spiritual life, when your hunger for something, what is it you want? Do you want the next experience? What Jesus is saying is no. When you when you understand the sequence of these Beatitudes, you realize you're poor in spirit, you realize that you mourn, you realize that you're powerless, you need to be meek and live according to the power under control, the next thing that's going to happen is you have a different desire, a different hunger than you ever had before. That's when you're satisfied.

Let me take you to a cross reference. Go to Psalm 103. We're studying this in the downtown Bible study on Thursdays about what I'm calling the 50 great chapters of the Bible. All chapters are great. It's just that I picked 50 that all are very Christocentric. They deal with the centrality of the person and work of Christ. One of those is Psalm 103. It's really a wonderful Psalm of worship. There's a difference between worship and praise. In our churches, we say, we have praise teams, and what do they do? They sing. We created the idea that only those who are up front are praising, and the rest of us are just sitting on our haunches being entertained.

This whole Psalm 103 notice starts with this, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" Look how it ends, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." This is a song of praise. There's a difference between praise and thanksgiving. Praise has to do with who God is; thanksgiving is because of what God does. There's a difference. When we talk about praise, we are really thinking about it's something that we do. Praise is really about who God is; not what we do or what we offer. Read Psalm 103 and you'll see the difference.

One of the things I want you to see is toward the end of Psalm 103, beginning at verse 17, "But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children." Now notice the idea...you notice that...you'll see the word three times, that phrase, "fear Him." ²⁰To those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. ¹⁹The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. ²⁰Bless the Lord, O you his angels." Now he's calling on all of creation to worship him. I want you to see something there. Three times you'll notice that when you read Psalm 103, that he says, "for those who fear Him." Do you really fear God? Do you understand what that means?

Several years ago, about 12 years ago, we did a series on fearing God. We may need to revisit that. Do

you really fear him? Do you understand what that means? I mean, do you have a sense of awe? Do you have a sense of reverence and dignity and respect for the personhood of God? Not for what he does. Not for the blessings that you get. Not for the experiences that you have. Because of his person. Of his work. Who he is. Do you have this sense of reverential respect and dignity and awe?

Bob and I were talking the other day as we were having some fellowship. We were just talking about, I happened to be in Turkey at the time, and we were watching, he was back in the States, but we were watching the Silver Centennial of Queen Elizabeth in England. She's been there, what, 65 years as the Queen? Bob pointed out something very interesting, and I went back and looked at some of it. The night that she was there, in her physical presence, did you notice how dressed up people were? They were in dresses, coats and ties. What did they want? All they wanted was to see this. They wanted the Queen to wave. They wanted to be in her presence. Now is that the feeling you have when you go to church? That you just want to be in the presence of God and see him go...just like that? You see, they had this sense of understanding of what a Monarch is. They understand what a Queen is. They understand what a King is. We don't understand that. In a democracy, we think that we're the item of worship. Really, when you're a kingdom citizen, all we ought to be wanting is just to see the hand of God just wave his hand over us and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." How do we treat him? Do you understand what it means to fear God? That you're in his presence with a sense of dignity and respect and awe? I was just overwhelmed at how dressed they were because they wanted to be in the presence of royalty.

Now I'm not saying that your spirituality is based upon how you dress. I'm not saying that. But I will say this. The first stage of self-respect is your appearance, because that's the only thing you ever have with you all the time. That's the only that you have with you everywhere you go is your appearance. We have the audacity to go to church dressed the way we do, because we have relegated God to be what? The great Steeler in the sky. The great pirate in the sky. The master coach. The friend. Yes, he is a friend. I'm not belittling that. But he's also the King! He's reality! He's the creator of the universe! Do you understand that?

Notice three times you're going to see in Psalm 103, this beautiful Psalm of praise, he says, "for those who fear him." This idea of fearing God means you hold him in reverence and dignity and respect and awe.

***Don:** I think that a lot of us, many people have lost that concept of fear, because after all, we have boldness in coming to Christ, and we do, and it's precious, but the book of Hebrews says that God is a consuming fire and that we're to worship him with Godly fear.*

Absolutely.

***Don:** That concept is all through the New Testament as well. I think we have to pay attention to it.*

Absolutely. Thank you, Don.

***Tom:** We don't have to wait to go to church to get that. When your eyes open in the morning, he's there.*

Absolutely.

***Audience Member:** We like to talk about God's grace, God's [UNCLEAR], but if we understand the law, then we begin to respect and fear God.*

Yeah. One of the things we need to understand about Psalm 103 is God is not only the law giver, he's the law implementer. He not only creates the law, but he enforces it. That's where we develop this reverential fear and respect and dignity and awe for the person of who God is. He is the law giver. But

he's also the law implementer. There are consequences to our choices. How often is it that we relegate God... we bring him down to our level. Guys, we need to take him up to his level. The issue is not to make God or Jesus palatable to the human mind. It's to penetrate the depths of a heart that's been penetrated by the Holy Spirit and says, "I'm absolutely empty in resources without him. Introduce me to the person and to the work of Christ."

***Audience Member:** I was thinking about Don's comments about a consuming fire. I had the energy is [UNCLEAR] thought about that little 7-year old Vietnamese girl running from that napalm attack. You see, she saw what a consuming fire, napalm, thinking about [UNCLEAR].*

Yeah. You see, all I'm trying to say, guys, is that you understand when you hunger for righteousness, it's based upon the fact that you're pursuing royalty. You're developing a relationship with the King. That's what these Beatitudes do.

***Brian:** It's kind of funny [UNCLEAR] how many fathers there are in the room, and unfortunately, with most of us fathers, our children aren't learning this. It becomes our responsibility, our duty, to teach them this, because one thing that's really been going around the church is everybody's calling God, instead of Father with respect, they're calling him daddy or papa, almost so familial, which, you know, you want draw on that love, but if they don't know that [UNCLEAR] have that fear, they don't realize the grace of why they want to obey. It becomes [UNCLEAR] religion.*

Let's go to Romans 5:1 for a moment. You know, one thing I'm learning to really submit to and be gracious and be grateful for is the work of the Holy Spirit, because everything I plan on Friday never comes out. {LAUGHTER} I mean, I spend 30 hours a week preparing for something on Friday. Eh!! {LAUGHTER} But that's the work of the Holy Spirit who is guiding us into all truth. And we salute and celebrate that and worship God and say thank you.

Notice this. Now I mentioned before that in September, October, November and December I'm going to be teaching a course at Mt. Lebanon Presbyterian Church on Wednesday nights on Romans 5-8. Basically it is can you lose your salvation? That's the theme. The answer is if it's by grace, the answer is...no. You're saved by grace. Now notice verse 1 of Romans 5, "Therefore..." Now what's the therefore there for? It's to remind us of what he's talked about. He's been talking about justification. Justification means God declares you righteous. He gives you credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. That's justification. He views you differently. He now looks at you differently because this is a judicial sentencing upon your position. He now wraps you in the robes of Christ and he looks at you differently. So we are justified by faith.

Now notice the result of that. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) What's the opposite of peace? War. Do you realize that before you had peace with God, you were at war with him? When was the last time you ever heard somebody teach about the fact that God's at war with you?

Look at Romans 5:10, "For if while we were enemies..." What's the opposite of an enemy? An ally. A friend. "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." You see, one of the great paucities, or deficiencies of modern evangelism is we basically say this, "Do you have a need? Then come to Jesus. Are you lonely? Come to Jesus. Are you sick? Come to Jesus. You want salvation? Come to Jesus." We never get to the point of saying, "You need to have a reconciled relationship to get peace with God before you can have the peace of God."

You see, Philippians 4:7 says that we have the peace that passes all understanding. That's the peace of God. We violate and say, "Oh, if you're lonely, God will give you peace." No! You won't get peace of

God until you have peace with God. You've got to deal with the fact that you're an enemy and that he's at war with you because of your sinfulness. As a result of that, you need to be reconciled to the person and work of Christ through the redemptive work of Christ.

You see, we've made evangelism something that's based upon our need. It's based upon his glory. It's based upon a reconciled relationship. Brothers, there is no peace of God until you have the peace with God. That comes when you're justified by faith. That means that God declares you righteous. How does that begin? Poor in spirit. Mourning. Meekness. And hungering and thirsting after righteousness. You see, that's the sequence and the consequence of mourning over your sin and being meek and understanding and living according to the power of God. You have this desire now to have the righteousness which has been given to you through your justification. You now have a desire to have that manifested in your conduct. That's the hunger and thirst that you're looking for. This is not to earn something. It's the realization that I have been given, I've been justified by faith alone.

Notice, Romans 5:1 again, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access to God." There can be no access to God until there's reconciliation with God. Do you realize that? That's evangelism. That's the Gospel. It's to bring people into a reconciled relationship to a holy God because they're sinful. That's the Gospel. It's not about your need. It's about a reconciled relationship that was accomplished through Christ.

Now notice this, "also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand." Now notice—you and I are standing in grace, not moving in and out of it. Do you understand the difference? Because of your justification, you're standing in his grace. That means you're on solid ground. You're wrapped in his arms of righteousness, and you're in his grace, and you're standing in that. You're not moving in and out of it. You don't come in and out of your salvation. You don't lose it one day and gain it the next like the Mormons teach, because it's all based upon merit. It's based upon saying, "If you do this, then you will be. If you don't do that, you won't be." You see, we stand in grace. You're stuck there. The word "stand" means to be secure in your foundation. You see, we're standing in grace. You don't move in and out of it. And why is that? It's because you have peace with God; you're reconciled to him. Do you understand that? We don't understand the fact...that's a critical phrase there. He says, "You have peace with God." The opposite of that is war. In our sinful condition, God is at war with us.

I've told you my own personal testimony and how grateful I am for my father. In fact, I'm going to go...I just have been moved to do this. I don't know why I'm doing it at my age, but I'm just going to go back to my dad's home town in Replete, West Virginia. From what I understand, there are 23 families there, and they're all Bickel's. {LAUGHTER} Now that could be dangerous.

***Audience Member:** Do they know you're coming?*

They don't even know who I am. {LAUGHTER} I'm not sure I want them to know. It's referred to as Bickel Thicket. That's where my dad grew up. I just want to go back and walk through the valley. I'm not sure why I'm doing it, but it's just something that I just think it's something I need to do. The reason I'm doing that is because I've been studying Romans in preparation for this series this fall. I remembered a conversation I had with my dad when I was in 9th grade. I was reading Romans 5:10.

I wanted to go to the Naval Academy, so I was very, very military oriented. I knew the difference between an enemy and an ally, even in my own young mind as a 9th grader. I went to my dad after reading Romans 5:10, which said, "If while we were enemies, God reconciled us to himself." I went to my dad and I said, "Dad, am I God's enemy?" I'm very, very grateful my dad had the courage and the meekness to say, "Yes, you are. In your unregenerate, unsaved, spiritual condition, God's at war with you." I said, "Dad, I don't want to be an enemy." He said, "Then let's read the rest of the verse," and I read the rest of the verse, that if he died to reconcile me, how much more am I going to live because of

his life. I said, "Dad, I don't want to be at war with God anymore." He said, "Son, let's read the rest of the verse. God's provided a way for that." I will always be grateful for my father's courage to say, "Oh, you're such good boy. Look, I'm chairman of the Fisher Board and your mother is the choir director. You're okay." Okay. But he didn't say that. He was very gracious. He put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Yes, you are." I said, "Dad, "I don't want to be." You see, that's poor in spirit. That's mourning over your sin. It's meekness. It's the flickering stage of beginning to hunger for righteousness. My life radically changed when my dad was bold enough and courageous enough and meek enough to tell me the truth. It was the truth that set me free.

Don: Bruce, did you [UNCLEAR], but could you expound a little bit on what it means to hunger and thirst.

Yeah, we're going to get into that.

Don: Because, you know, I think that in America, we don't know [UNCLEAR].

That's correct. The quickest analogy would be if you're really dying of thirst, what is the one thing that you want more than anything else? You want water. In our spiritual life, when you come through the sequence of those first three Beatitudes, poor in spirit, mourning and meekness, a consequence of that is you want something that you know that you've never had before and you do not have the resources of in your own life, and that is righteousness. The righteousness of God. This is not the righteousness that says, that is imputed to me because of my justification. You already see that. This is the righteousness that says I want to demonstrate that righteousness in my own life by my own conduct.

Let me walk you through some of the things that will help us come to that conclusion. We're talking about now how to do I manifest the righteousness that I have in Christ. This is not earning it. You already know because of mourning, you already know because of meekness, you already know because of being bankrupt, you know that this is not something that you can do on your own. You're not looking to earn righteousness; you're looking to express it. You want to have it be a manifestation of your newborn kingdom citizenship. You hunger for this desire to have the righteousness of Christ which has been imputed to you because of your justification. God now declares you righteous. You now have a desire to manifest that and live that out by making right decisions. Right wisdom. It's doing the right thing. That's where meekness comes in because you realize that you have to live according to the power of God because you can't do this on your own.

Let's take a look at this. Look at your notes please, number 6. A person who has the first three Beatitudes will be characterized as hungering and thirsting for this demonstration of righteousness. He doesn't think of righteousness as an optional luxury to add to other graces. A person who has the first three Beatitudes, his hunger and thirst for it, he cannot get along without the righteousness. It's as important to him as food and water.

So what is this righteousness that he pursues, that he's hungering after? Well as sinners, we are destitute of righteousness. We start with that fact. That's poor in spirit. We're destitute of all righteousness. The Scripture says in Romans 3:10, "There is none righteousness, no not one." We start with that premise. God has therefore provided in Christ what we call a perfect righteousness for each and all of his people. He has created a perfect righteousness for us. This righteousness, this satisfying of all the demands of God's holy law against us, was accomplished by the person and by the work of Christ. This righteousness is now imputed to us, that is, legally credited to your account. That's justification. God declares you righteous.

Remember in our pilgrimage? Justification, sanctification, glorification. Justification is freedom from the penalty of the law. Sanctification is freedom from the power of the law. Glorification is freedom

from the presence of the law. We go from justification to glorification in the process of our maturity and our maturation process in Christ.

Just as the sins of God's people were all transferred to Christ, so all his righteousness is placed upon us. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21. In other words, do you realize this brothers? That God has imputed, given to you credit, the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ, and you hunger for the demonstration of that your own life. That's what it means. You hunger for that demonstration. How do I take what's been given to me and how do I live that out? That's my great desire. It's my hunger. I have a hunger and thirst for that because that's where I'm going to be satisfied. I'm going to be satisfied when I'm living according to the law of God because he is not only the law giver, but the law enforcer. It's the demonstration of the righteousness that's been imputed to you in Christ.

Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." We might become the righteousness of God. The key word there, for me, is the little word *huper* in the Greek—on behalf of. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." In other words, when Christ died for your sins and he was on the cross and you were on his mind, by faith, you were justified when you accepted the sacrificial work of Christ and were reconciled back to God, and now you have peace with God because of a reconciled relationship because of the accomplishments of the person and work of Christ. You see that? You've not got peace with God because you're no longer an enemy.

Who made that happen? Christ did. Notice your faith doesn't save you. Who saves you? Christ saves you. Faith never saved anybody. Christ is the one who saved us. It's our faith that takes that and accepts that and that's mine now. It's my gift of grace that God gives me.

Now we begin to realize this—that on behalf of, he became sin on behalf of me so that we might become the righteousness of God. In other words, it was because of his sacrifice that you're justified by faith and you're no longer an enemy with God; you're at peace with God. As a result of that, you have this hunger to demonstrate the fact that you've been wrapped in the robes of Christ's righteousness. He has given you a perfect righteousness. Now it does not mean that you and I will live a perfect, righteous life. But do you have a hunger to do it? You want to do it. But you know you can't. But you want to do it.

You know, this is not the little red choo-choo who says, "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can." It's realizing I can't, but I know you can. I can't but I know you can. That's meekness. It's living according to the power of God.

What becomes your motivation is you have this very, very deep-set soul motivation to want to live out a righteous life because you recognize you have the full righteousness of Christ because you've been justified by faith alone and you now have peace with God.

Tom: I think it's interesting that Paul doesn't say we receive the righteousness of Christ, we become.

Become.

Tom: [UNCLEAR] stop and really....

That's the hunger. I want to become all that he says I am. See the real battleground for us as men is this. Who do I believe? Do I believe what the world says about me? The one thing the world is going to say about you is this. Your enough is never enough. But the one thing the Scripture is going to say is this—my enough is always enough. Now who do you believe? The hunger is I want to choose to believe this side of the coin, not the other side of the coin. That's why Romans 12 is so important, "Do not be

conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Let me show you how this works by taking the other side of the coin. Our churches in America—I can’t speak for the rest of the world, so I just have to use my own nation, my own country, my own observations—we’re missing an awful lot, and here’s how it starts. You miss the Word. Sufficiency of Scripture. When you miss the Word, the sufficiency of Scripture, as our standard, not to be relegated by interpretation according to political norms, or cultural standards, but when you accept the Word for what it is, God’s authoritative law, when you miss that, the next thing you miss is you miss the Son. You begin to create a Jesus of your own imagination.

You see, when in remove the Word and I miss the Word as the standard, let’s relegate to Jesus, let’s bring him down to our level. Let’s lower the standard because that’s what everybody’s going to gravitate to. You see, when we lower the standard, people are going to flock to it because it’s easy. We need to elevate the standard because God is the law giver. When you miss the Word, you miss the Son. You create a Jesus of your own imagination. Walk down the streets of Pittsburgh and say, “Who is Jesus?” You’ll get as many descriptions of that as people you ask because they’ve missed the Word. This is the means by which God reveals himself. That’s why you’ve heard me say for 17 years, the one thing we’re trying to do on Friday, in our weakness and our meager efforts, is to teach the biblical view of Jesus. It’s the God of biblical revelation, not the god of human imagination.

When you miss the Word as your standard, you miss the Son. There’s one thing more we miss. When you miss the Son, you miss the truth. That’s the problem with our churches today. We’re missing the truth because we’ve missed the Son, because we’ve missed the Word. It’s the sufficiency of Scripture and the sufficiency of Christ and the sufficiency of God’s truth. When you miss the Word, you miss the Son, and when you miss the Son, you miss the truth.

Brian: *You’re going to try to [UNCLEAR] this, so...*

Time for us to go. {LAUGHTER} Don’t ask me a how question.

Brian: *Okay, I’ll try to do this without asking [UNCLEAR]...I’ve gone to churches doing a lot of good things. I mean, they’re having impact. I would look at the Graham Crusades. Yeah, only 13% stay within the church, but at least its 13%, so good. Those same people are saying, “Hey, we’re doing godly things.” They are going to say, “We’re teaching the Word.”*

By your fruits you will know them. That’s it.

Brian: *They’ll say [UNCLEAR].*

Good. Then let them defend it. You can’t change them anyway. All you can do is what? Teach the truth. Preach the Word. Preach the Son. Preach the Truth. You cannot be somebody’s Holy Spirit, so quit asking the question how. Forget the words how or why. You can’t be somebody’s Holy Spirit. The thing you have to ask yourself is this. Am I hungering for that righteousness that God gave me when I was justified by faith alone? Is that the primary motivation of my life, that I desire to express who God says I am and he says that I am wrapped in his righteousness? Am I the one who is really motivated to do that in every decision I make in my life? That’s the hunger and thirst for righteousness. That’s how you’re going to be satisfied.

Satisfaction comes not in saying, “Oh, look at the fruit.” The satisfaction comes in realizing that I’m living out who God has called me to be because I’m hungering for his righteousness, and I’m expressing that in my own life. That’s your satisfaction. It has nothing to do with consequences. It has to do with your own response to your relationship to a reconciled God because you’re at peace with him. Does it

make any sense? You see, it's your motivation.

That's why, when I try to teach this in the secular world, rather than saying hungering and thirsting after righteousness, I use the phrase, "become your own reward system." What is your reward as a believer? It's hungering and thirsting for righteousness because therein you will be satisfied. It's not in your achievements. It's not in your receivements. It's in your hunger to be all that God calls you to be and to live out who he desires you to be because he's given you the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. That's who he says you are. We just need to live that out. That's what we're beginning to look at as we talk about hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It's your primary motivation in life.

You see, it's the difference between seeking experience or seeking a person. There's your difference. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is seeking a person. The church says, "Let's seek the experience." Now I'm not down-blasting experiences. I understand they can be valuable. But that's not what you seek. You don't seek the next blessing.

Bob: *You sent me to J. C. Ryles's book on Holiness. He's got a chapter in there called "Thirst Relieved." It kind addresses what you're saying in about 12 pages and he does a good job.*

He does it better than me, that's for sure.

Bob: *You can get that online, Holiness by J. C. Ryle, and it's free. There's another book at this time, "Thoughts for Young Men." He was the finest Anglican Bishop of the 19th Century, and he wrote this little book, "Thoughts for Young Men." You can get it for your children. It's free online. You don't even need to buy it.*

It really is how do you deeply imbed into your children a desire for righteousness. It's not a desire to earn righteousness because where does your righteousness come from? You receive it. That's justification. Now we're talking about hungering to express that which God says that we are. This is our introduction to this, and we'll pick it up next week. So bring this back, number 6, and we'll come back next week. Let's pray.

Father, we really desire to be satisfied. But you're going to have to change the way that we think, and you're going to have to change our desires, and so will you make our desires your desires. Would you change the desires of our heart to be the desires of your heart so that we will be satisfied, because when you give us the desires of your heart, they will be the desires of our heart? Father, that's impossible for us to do apart from your grace, so teach us how to think differently so that we can view you differently. Give us a sense of awe, a sense of reverence, a sense of dignity, respect and honor for who you are in your glorious kingdom. You are the Royal Reigner of the Universe. Father, give us an understanding of that so that we can submit to and give away our own presuppositions of who we think you should be. Father don't let us miss the Word because if we do, we'll miss the Son, and if we miss the Son, we're going to miss the Truth. We know this lord, that it is the Truth that sets us free, not my expectations. And may it be so that our desires become yours, and therein we will be satisfied, for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said...Amen!!!