

## Lesson 6: Being Filled with His Righteousness

We have reached a unique place in our study of Christian character. The lessons we have covered thus far have focused largely on the manner of our heart toward God. We have learned that the self-centered life, more specifically, the prideful heart, is contrary to the will of God and an abomination to Him. We then learned that we must recognize our spiritual poverty before God and our need for a change in heart appetite as well as to express a willingness to receive this change. The next step we learned was to submit our body and spirit to God, the one who alone is able to change the appetite of our heart. Now we will seek to realize the result of this progression.

### Turn to Matthew 5:6 and read aloud

The product of a soul submitted to God in meekness is a soul that hungers and thirsts for righteousness. This hunger and thirst in Koine Greek carries the idea of a continual hunger and thirst. We have been learning to find our entire dependence continually on God as those who are poor in spirit, broken over sin, and submitted to God. Hunger and thirst are the strongest natural desires for man. Just as we hunger and thirst after food and water, so spiritually we ought to hunger and thirst after righteousness. This is the appetite change we have been seeking and searching for in our study. But just what does this righteousness for which we are to hunger and thirst look like?

### Turn to Romans 10:1-10 and read aloud

Paul refers to two types of righteousness in this passage. The first was embodied by the Israel which rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Though they had a zeal for religion, this zeal was not according to truth. They chose to establish their own form of righteousness which is not from God and does not find its source in dependence upon God, but rather in the pride of the heart. They were not willing to submit to the righteousness of God, but chose rather to build their own kingdom apart from Him and His ways.

The religious practice of the Pharisees was the epitome of man-made righteousness. Some fasted twice a week and tithed off of all that they had, but their purpose in doing these things was to exalt themselves above other people, rather than humbling themselves before God and fellow man (**Luke 18:9-14**). Therefore Jesus said in **Matthew 5:20** that unless our righteousness is greater than the righteousness of the Pharisees, the crème de le crème of ritual and religion and observance of the law, we may by no means enter His kingdom.

Today we are just as susceptible to this spiritually fatal flaw. Seeking to establish our own righteousness is an effort that will surely fail. We find in **Isaiah 64:6** that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” to God. We are people tainted by sin, and therefore we are unholy, unrighteous, and unable to offer anything righteous before God. As we have learned, our pride leads us to depend on ourselves and our wisdom rather than God and His wisdom. Therefore, a self-produced form of righteousness is by nature unrighteous, because it undermines and neglects man’s proper position as dependent upon God for all things. The very root of righteousness is dependence upon God. Jesus taught that we ought to seek first God’s Kingdom and His righteousness and that all things needed would be added unto us (**Matt. 6:33**). Thankfully God does not merely show us the right way and then leave us to walk in it on our

own, but we must find our dependence upon Him indefinitely for His grace, which is the power to obey. We must recognize that we are spiritually void of any good thing, be broken over the sin of which we have instead partaken, and yield to God the right to access our hearts to change and empty them of sin. This will prepare the way for Him to give us a hunger and thirst for His righteousness and make room in our hearts to fill us with it abundantly.

### **Turn to Ephesians 5:18 and read aloud**

Christ is our righteousness and we know that the Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit (**I Cor. 1:30-31**). So truly to be filled with the righteousness of God is to be continually filled with His Holy Spirit, to be filled with God Himself. As the Spirit of God conforms us to the image of Christ by grace, “we become the righteousness of God” (**II Cor. 5:21**). The fruit of being filled with the Holy Spirit is holiness and righteousness from the heart outward (**Gal. 5:22-23**).

### **Turn to Jeremiah 2:13 and read aloud**

This passage speaks of two evils which God’s people had committed against Him. One was that they had forsaken Him as the source of living waters. They had ceased to make their dependence upon Him. The second evil was that they instead became dependent upon other things for their livelihood. These things were man-made, insufficient, and unprofitable (**Jere. 2:11-13**). Truly God is the only source of righteousness as He is the author and giver of all things that are truly good (**James 1:17**). The right life for man is a life of dependency upon God. Therefore, righteousness is only true when it is authored in man’s heart by God. God is glorified when a man’s life is filled with His righteousness.

In becoming hungry and thirsty for the righteousness of God, our relationship with God is restored and He takes pleasure in filling us with His Spirit (**Luke 11:13**). However, our relationship with mankind has yet to be addressed. The blessedness of this filling of our hearts with God’s Spirit is that God also wants to use us to pour His Spirit out upon others.

### **Turn to John 7:38-39 and read aloud**

The key to this dependency and subsequent filling with God’s Spirit is faith. We must simply believe God to be the great provider and He will fill our every need. He will give us more and more of Himself in our hearts as we let go of more and more of our own will and way. Through this faith, God fills us with His Spirit to have a blessed relationship with Him. Not only does He want to fill us, however, but He also wants to pour us out on others. This is what the rest of the beatitudes are about. The first four are about drawing near to God and the last four are about being a blessing to others. God wants to fill us up with His Spirit so that He can then pour us out on others and so carry the gospel throughout the world. He says that He will fill us until we overflow with living waters if we would only trust Him.

In summary, the human life is meant to depend upon God for all things. Therefore a truly righteous life is a life of utter dependence on God. Jesus taught that we must abide in Him, and He in us, because apart from Him we can do nothing (**John 15:5**). Righteousness only comes by the application of grace to our lives by the Holy Spirit. We must trust Him and He will make us all overflow with His living waters. God alone is able to satisfy and He alone can give us the desires that we ought to have in our hearts (**Psalms 107:9**). Trust solely in Him.