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Come Hungry

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“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matthew 5:6).”

Righteousness is a verdict of approval or an acceptable condition. All reasonable people desire righteousness; but it is the one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness who will be blessed with satisfaction.

We would like to live in a *righteous environment*, yet we live in a fallen world. We would like to have *righteous leadership*, yet frailties invade even the best of human administrations. We would like to be *righteous souls*, yet our fleshly lusts and pride betray us. It should not come as a surprise that man hungers for a good society, good leaders, and a good self. After all, we were created to be inhabitants of Eden, companions of our Creator, upright souls formed in His image. Now look at us – it is no wonder both our Maker and we find our current condition unacceptable, unsatisfactory, unrighteous. Still, Jesus promises blessedness in the eager pursuit of righteousness and a satisfying conclusion to our search.

Do you hunger for a righteous world? God promises “a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2Peter 3:13).” In this new, righteous world, “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, for the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water (Revelation 7:16-17).”

Do you hunger for righteous leaders? God has enthroned a righteous King, one both wise and powerful, who is called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness (Isaiah 55:6-7).”

Do you hunger to be righteous? God has established a way for us to be counted by God as righteous, despite the guilt of our sin. This righteousness is not “a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith (Philippians 3:9).” It was bought and paid for by God (2Cor 5:21), revealed to man by God (Romans 1:16-17), and is sustained by God’s faithful justice and merciful forgiveness (1John 1:9).”

A feast of righteousness which will satisfy our hunger is set. A hungry person comes to the table; he eats what is set before him; he delights in the meal. God cries out, “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David (Isaiah 55:1-3).”

Come and hear; come hungry! I will never forget the May 28, 2017 assembly. It was a very special occasion for me. That Sunday morning, as I sat beside my brother, Aaron, his kind, smiling “Good morning” somehow seemed more pleasant and welcoming than ever. As Jason led us in prayer, I listened carefully; when he interceded on behalf of those suffering, tears welled in my eyes. I had just spoken to two sisters whose physical infirmities were weighing more heavily on my heart than before. Ryan led us in a medley of songs which ended with *How Deep The Father’s Love*. For some reason, the songs were somehow more encouraging, sweeter than the other times I had sung them. Conrad had me spellbound as he read about and commented on the centurion at Calvary. The Supper seemed more poignant and

personal. Rickie spoke to us about excelling in our knowledge of God's Word. His exhortations seemed more applicable to my needs than ever. What was happening here? Were the prayers and songs and communion and sermon somehow different on this day?

I had entered this assembly under a personal cloud. I had been told by my employer that I would have to work seven days a week for at least the next two months. I was stressed about the challenges of the job, but much more distressing was the prospect of not being able to assemble with my brethren for many Sundays and Wednesdays to come. Why hadn't I listened as intently prior to this Sunday? What hadn't I sung with more joy and passion before? Why hadn't I wept about my Lord's suffering or my brethren's struggles the previous Sundays?

Before that Sunday, my attitude about the assembly had been that there would be another assembly next Sunday, and each Sunday after that. I knew where and when my next meal would be. Sundays were pleasant, but I just wasn't all that...hungry. It wasn't until I faced the likelihood that assemblies would be few and far between for a while that every aspect and activity in the assembly became delicious to me.

Had I become complacent, jaded, self-assured, and neglectful to the point of just going through the motions? I suppose I thought I had mastered worship. What a fool I was. I had forgotten that what I needed was for worship to master me.

Joni Mitchell sang, "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." I had paved paradise, made it all level and comfortable and easily navigated. But on May 28, 2017, I came to the Throne with a hunger for His righteousness. That Sunday, I brought only my brokenness for my Lord to heal. I came empty, needy, hungry and thirsty. And I remember that Sunday, because I left filled.

What if every Sunday was like that for you and me? It would change us individually. It would change us as a congregation. We know about other times and other places where assemblies have been restricted or forbidden. We have now experienced that even in America, assembling on Sunday is not to be taken for granted. The lesson from 2020: Come hungry to be filled!

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