

TRUTH

“... Your word is truth” (John 17:17)

April 2025

“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS”

Have you ever had a day where you were so busy working that you forgot to eat? And by late afternoon or evening, your stomach reminds you that you are hungry...sometimes in a painful way! All of a sudden, that desire to eat takes over and you would do just about anything to find some food! Or, maybe you remember a hot summer day when you had to work outside. And as you realize just how tired and sweaty you are, the need for a drink of water to quench your thirst consumes your every thought. A drink of cool water never tasted so good!

Isn't it interesting how God can take two basic human desires that every one of us have felt at some point, and help us learn a spiritual truth? Towards the beginning of the great sermon that He preached on a mountainside, Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled*” (Matthew 5:6). Let's examine the three main parts of this verse that will help a faithful child of God be happy or blessed.

To be **hungry** or **thirsty** for something is to have a strong desire for whatever that thing might be. It could be food or water, but it could also be a sports championship or to rise to a higher position at work. One thing is for sure, to be hungry does not mean that it does not matter to you whether you achieve the goal. It means you want to do whatever it takes to obtain what you need. This is exactly the way that we should feel about having a relationship with the God of heaven.

David speaks of that desire in Psalm 63: “*O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You . . .*” (Psalm 63:1). Also, we find an illustration helping us to understand this desire in Psalm 42: “*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God*” (Psalm 42:1). Our desire to follow God should not be a mild interest or a passing fad. It should be something we consider everyday as we strive to serve Him.

When we next think about what exactly it is that we should desire, our every desire should be for **righteousness**. This righteousness is connected with obedience. A person who is righteous is a person who is accepted by God because he or she has obeyed

God's commands. We see this attitude in the real-life example of John the Baptizer's parents. Zacharias and Elizabeth are described as, “. . . *righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*” (Luke 1:6). Just as much as you might yearn for food when you are very hungry, so too, we are to have a strong desire to walk in the ways of God and to seek to do His will in all things.

Finally, we want to notice the promise of God, that when we long for and desire the righteousness of God, we shall be **filled**. Do you remember the feeling of being hungry but then also the happiness of satisfaction when you had eaten and were full? This is the promise that God makes to those who will consistently seek Him.

Consider also that the desire for righteousness is the only desire that can ever be truly fulfilled; because all the things of this earth are temporary and passing. The addiction to drugs and alcohol are never fully realized and gone forever. The desire for sexual satisfaction from many different sources is never complete. Even when we fulfill our hunger and thirst, those come back again, too. The desire for happiness among money, pleasure, or other worldly endeavors may provide temporary relief. But only God can provide complete satisfaction.

And that only comes when we seek His righteousness and pursue it with every fiber of our being. In fact, might I suggest that the more we fill ourselves with a desire to seek to do God's will, the less we will desire to seek after the world's poor substitutes. Jesus said, “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*” (John 6:35).

Our desire to obtain righteousness should be as strong as our desire for food and water when we are hungry and thirsty. And thanks be to God that He always provides. Just a little while later in that same sermon, Jesus would give a similar reminder when He said, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*” (Matthew 6:33). May that always be our greatest desire.

-- Joel Danley

TAKEAWAYS FROM 2 SAMUEL 7-8

The first matter about which we read in this section of the Bible is David's desire to build a house for God so the ark of God could dwell in it (7:1-3). David himself lived in a nice house of cedar, and he thought it was appropriate for the ark of God to dwell in a permanent place rather than inside a tent.

David's life was blessed by at least three prophets of God: Samuel, Gad, and Nathan (1 Chronicles 29:29). In this instance, Nathan's personal view (*not* a "thus says the Lord") was that David should do what his heart wanted to do, which was to build a house for God (7:3). However, God's response was that it was not His will for David to build such a house (7:4-7). The Lord reminded David that He had promoted him from shepherd to king and had blessed him in giving him victories over his enemies (7:8,9), and in the process, He had never once appealed to Israel to build a house for Him.

Instead of David building a house for God, the Lord would make David a house! (7:11-17). In the overall message of the Old Testament, this passage is of great importance. In fact, we would suggest that no passage in 1 and 2 Samuel is of greater significance. What promises did God make to David at this time?

(1) "*When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom*" (7:12). When David was dead, Jehovah would set up David's seed — someone from David's seed/bowels would be king. (2) "*He (David's seed, rdc) shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*" (7:13). Note the "forever" nature of the kingdom which would be established. (3) "*I will be his Father, and he shall be My son . . .*" (7:14).

These predictions speak about a seed, a king, and a son. To whom do they apply? A number of New Testament passages make it plain that the references are to the Christ and His Kingdom! For the Father-Son relationship, God the Father confessed Jesus as His Son, and the writer of the book of Hebrews applies the 2 Samuel 7:14 prophecy to Jesus (Hebrews 1:5).

What about the matter of David's seed being on David's throne? Jesus was "*of the seed of David*" (2 Timothy 2:8), and on the Day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed to an audience of Jewish people who were well-acquainted with the prophecy of 2 Samuel 7, that the one who was sitting on David's throne was none other than the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:29-32).

What about the "forever" nature of the kingdom of David's seed? God's angel, Gabriel, made it clear that this pointed to the Messiah's kingdom, as he told

Mary what God would do for her son, Jesus: "*. . . will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*" (Luke 1:32,33).

God never intended for the Christ's kingdom to be an earthly, materialistic one. Jesus said that His kingdom "*is not of this world*" (John 18:36). When the Holy Spirit through Paul sent a message to the saints in Colosse in the first century (A.D. 61-63), He reminded them that the Father had conveyed them "*into the kingdom of the Son of His love*" (Colossians 1:13). Since those Christians were in Jesus' kingdom, that means His kingdom already existed. What is that kingdom? It is Jesus' church (Matthew 16:18,19).

How did David respond when Jehovah through Nathan proclaimed that He would establish the kingdom of David's seed forever? He prayed a prayer of praise and thanksgiving (7:18-29). David felt unworthy of God's blessings and kindness, saying, "*Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?*" (7:18).

For all that the Lord had done for David and for all that He would do in the future on behalf of His people, David gave all the credit and glory to God. Hear his heart-felt words: "*For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, you have done all these great things . . . Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears*" (7:21,22). We, too, need to maintain a spirit that thanks, credits, and glorifies the God of heaven!

In 2 Samuel 8, we read about God helping David defeat and subdue the nations surrounding Israel. Those whom Israel conquered during this time period included the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites, Amalekites, and Edomites (8:1-14). One important historical point is that "*all the Edomites became David's servants*" (8:14). This was a fulfillment of predictions that Esau would serve his younger brother, Jacob (Genesis 25:23; 27:40). That occurred, not during the lifetime of those twin brothers, but when Esau's descendants (the Edomites) served Jacob's descendants (the Israelites).

As a result of David's success in subduing Israel's neighboring countries, when his son, Solomon, came to the throne, there was peace in the land. Solomon did not need to fight anyone; he could put all of his efforts into building the temple and ruling Israel. In the same way, we are blessed by the efforts that others made in the past. That is especially true in the Lord's work.

-- Roger D. Campbell

Practical Suggestions for Using Social Media

A phrase that often evokes strong emotion is “social media.” Some love social media and think it is wonderful, while others are the polar opposite, viewing it as a blight upon the world. But, whether we love it or hate it, social media is not going away anytime soon. Realizing this, what are some practical suggestions for Christians using social media?

- **Do not be constantly negative.** There is too much negativity in this world (especially on social media). Of all people, Christians ought to be ambassadors of positivity when it comes to social media. Avoid critical posts/remarks about others and using social media to “whine” about things or people. Perhaps most importantly, do not criticize the Lord’s church. *“A merry heart does good”* (Proverbs 17:22), so rise above the negativity!

- **Do not post inappropriate things.** Off-color innuendos, immodesty, immorality, and such like have no business being posted, period, but least of all by Christians. Furthermore, be diligent to avoid using social media to gossip.

- **Do not become addicted.** Studies continue to show the addictive potential in social media, and it is wise to exercise caution in this regard. Related to this, beware of social media becoming so consuming that it ultimately is a substitute for reality. Remember 1 Corinthians 6:12: *“I will not be brought under the power of any.”*

- **Do use social media for good.** Use it as a platform to speak about God, the Bible, and Jesus’ church. Use social media to point others to Christ. Of equal importance, be sure there is unity in social media and life (see Romans 2:21-24).

- **Do think before posting.** Consider whether what is to be posted is good/bad, helpful/hurtful, etc. Be selective as to what is given a “like,” being careful not to approve of evil (see Romans 1:32). Think about posts/shares/likes in terms of Jesus’ admonition for Christians to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16).

God sees all we do, including our social media (Hebrews 4:13). Our words (and thoughts) matter, as Jesus teaches in Matthew 12:35-37. Perhaps the best filter for all a Christian does on social media is found in the words of Philippians 4:8 – *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*

-- Chad Dollahite

Why did Jehovah bring down the Edomites?

In the Old Testament, we read several prophecies in which God’s messengers declared that a certain nation/people would be brought down by the Lord. Such language was used of the fall of Ammon, Moab, Babylon, Edom, and others. In our study, we will focus on the Edomites’ destruction, but the principles would apply to other nations/powers as well.

The Edomites were the offspring of a man by the name of Edom, which was another name for Esau, who was Jacob’s brother. *“So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom”* (Genesis 36:8). After the death of Edom, when we read in the Old Testament writings about “Seir” or “Mount Seir,” that language points to the Edomites or the territory in which they lived.

Where can we read prophecies of the destruction of the Edomites? Jehovah’s judgment on Edom is foretold in Jeremiah 49:7-22, Ezekiel 25:12-14, Amos 1:11-14, and Obadiah 1:1-16. In fact, the main theme of Obadiah’s message was the fall of Edom.

What charges did God’s prophets bring against the Edomites? Edom was guilty of fierceness and pride (Jeremiah 49:16). Those who are proud trust in themselves, deceive themselves, and rebel against the Lord. That is exactly what the Edomites did. What was God’s response to their haughtiness? God told them, *“Though you make your nest as high as the eagle, I will bring you down from there”* (Jeremiah 49:16). Jehovah accused the Edomites of being violent toward Israel. They stood and gazed as the Jews were taken into captivity and rejoiced at the fall of Judah (Obadiah 1:10-12). For such transgressions, Edom faced the Lord’s vengeance (Ezekiel 25:14).

From the fall of Edom and other nations, we learn:

- (1) The Lord sees and knows *everything* that *every* person does in *every* location (Proverbs 15:3).

- (2) Gentiles were accountable to God during the Old Testament era. Where there is no law, there is no transgression (Romans 4:15). Jehovah accused Edom of transgressions (Amos 1:11), which proves they had violated His law. Yes, they were under God’s law.

- (3) Jehovah raises up kings and kingdoms, and He brings them down (Daniel 2:21; 4:17). The Creator does so according to His wisdom, will, and might.

- (4) The Lord is the God of infinite justice. When He evaluates nations and responds to their conduct, He does so perfectly. *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne”* (Psalm 89:14).

- (5) Neither the Edomites nor any other nation can escape the unchanging truths of Proverbs 14:34, where it is written, *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”* Are we listening?

-- Roger D. Campbell

JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH A SAMARITAN WOMAN (John 4:5-26)

The Bible does not tell us her name. She is simply identified as “*a woman of Samaria*” who came to draw water from a well by which Jesus was sitting (John 4:7). Jesus initiated communication with her by asking her to give Him a drink (4:7). A fascinating conversation ensued between them, and from that day onward her life would never be the same again!

This Samaritan woman learned that Jesus' approach was different from the thinking and practice of many other Jews. First, as He journeyed from Judea (in the southern portion of Palestine) to Galilee (in the north), He purposely traveled through the central section of Palestine known as Samaria (4:2,3). Many Jews of Jesus' day despised the Samaritans, so when they traveled from Judea to Galilee, or vice versa, they would cross the Jordan River and travel on the land east of it in order to avoid passing through Samaria and getting its unclean dirt on their sandals. Jesus did not take that approach.

Another difference? In general, the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans (4:9). But Jesus did. He openly spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well and afterwards stayed two more days to teach others (4:40,41). Do you know what else was different about His approach? He spoke to this woman about spiritual matters on the first occasion they met one another.

Let us now focus on a few of the declarations which Jesus made to the Samaritan woman. He told her, “*If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water . . . But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst*” (4:10,14). Thirst is one of our natural cravings. The Christ informed this woman that when one receives His “living water,” that person will never thirst. Obviously, He was talking about non-material water and non-physical thirsting. The Master later said that one who comes to and believes in Him will neither hunger nor thirst (6:35). The takeaway: in Jesus, we find an abundant, fulfilling life in which all of our spiritual needs are met (10:10). In Him, we find complete satisfaction and never feel an urge to turn to anyone or anything else in search of a better life. In Him, we have the best!

As Jesus' conversation with the woman proceeded, He told her, “*You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband*” (4:17,18). How startled this woman must have been when she learned that Jesus knew everything about her, including her relationships with other people! The takeaway: There is no way to hide our activities from the Lord's all-

seeing eye. And, “being with” someone does not make them your legitimate spouse in the sight of the Lord.

When the woman shifted the topic of discussion to worship and made reference to the Jews' practice, Jesus told her, “. . . *the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father*” (4:21). The takeaway: Under the Christ's new covenant, it is *acceptable* to worship on a mountain (as the Samaritans did) or in Jerusalem (as the Jews did), but such is *not required*. Under the new covenant, the acceptableness of one's worship is not tied to any geographic location.

As Jesus and the woman talked about worship, He proclaimed that “*salvation is of the Jews*” (4:22). In this statement, “of” is from a Greek word (“ἐκ/ek”) which means out of or from. In what sense is salvation out of/from the Jews? The promised Seed was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Galatians 3:16). The Savior of the world, the promised Messiah, was a Jew (4:9) “*according to the flesh*” (Romans 9:5). By God's wisdom, the Jewish nation was the vessel by which the Savior came into the world.

Back to the topic of worship, our Lord said, “. . . *true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him*” (4:23). Per these words, there are true worshippers. True worshippers worship. True worshippers worship the Father. True worshippers worship the Father in spirit and truth. True worshippers are those who offer worship which is pleasing to God. The “in spirit” aspect points to such worship coming from the heart, with the right attitude, in sincerity, and focused. When worship is offered “in truth,” it is done in harmony with God's word, which is His truth (17:17).

When the Samaritan woman told Jesus, “*I know that Messiah is coming . . . When He comes, He will tell us all things*” (4:25), how did He respond? He said to her, “*I who speak to you am He*” (4:26). Thus, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah. It is not often that we read in the Bible that Jesus made that direct claim, but His allegiance to that truth ultimately cost Him His life (see Mark 14:61-64).

We do not know much about the Samaritan woman at the well, but how blessed we are to have a record of her conversation with our Savior. He spoke to her about water, everlasting life, her husbands, worship, salvation, and the Messiah. How memorable!

-- Roger D. Campbell

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