

## HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jesus said, "**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**" (Matthew 5:6 ESV) Jesus' statement implies that those who **do not** "hunger and thirst for righteousness" will NOT be satisfied. And that is the way it is, don't you think? A person who lives for sin is never satisfied! Their desires lead them around by the nose! The old prophet Isaiah quotes God as saying, "There is no peace for the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22 ESV)

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ.

Nine chapters later Isaiah had to say it again, "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 57:21 ESV) Friends, what does this mean? Are you a sinner and have not yet learned this truth that there is no peace for the wicked?

Your **desire for sin** will be the death of you! That's right! The person who is truly satisfied is the person who desires righteousness. What is righteousness? Righteousness is behavior that can be justified! It is behavior that speaks for itself! It speaks of goodness, kindness, mercy, forgiveness, and justice. And everyone recognizes these qualities as good behavior! Jesus' apostle Paul once listed some emotions and behaviors and then said, "Against such there is no law." Everybody in the world agrees those behaviors produce wonderful results! And what things were in that list? "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Friends, those righteous qualities will be missing from the life of the wicked! The wicked will always be responsible for "Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these." Jesus' apostle Paul calls these things the "works of the flesh." And then the Apostle said this: "I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV) The "kingdom of God" is now present in the world and is also an inheritance that is located in eternity. There will be NO wicked person who receives inheritance in the "kingdom of God."

What about your desires? Are you a sinner and loving it? The only way you can receive a heavenly inheritance is for you to change your desires! That's right! You must repent of the way you now feel about wicked things. If you love sexual immorality then you must change that affection if you wish to life eternally with God. If you love to steal then you must change what you love; you must repent and turn away from that evil. You must "hunger and thirst after righteousness." **You must desire to do the right thing!**

Although hunger and thirst are both natural appetites, hunger and thirst for righteousness is a cultivated desire. That's right! The desire for righteousness will not come to you miraculously! But this desire may come to you providentially! Because of your circumstances, you may "come to yourself." Like the young son in Jesus' story, you may look around at the way you are living and decide you want something better. You may grow very tired of sin because the "peace" that continually escapes you can only be found in righteousness! God spoke to the young man Cain about Cain's unacceptable sacrifice and said, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do **not** do well, sin is crouching at the door. [Sin's] desire is for you, but you must rule over it." ([Genesis 4:7 ESV](#)) Friend, when Satan is tempting you with the attraction of sin, **you** are the only person who can and who **must** rule over it! It is up to you!

Moses was a typical man with desires. But the prophet said of him, "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin." ([Hebrews 11:24-25 ESV](#)) What was it that gave Moses the strength to reject the pleasures of sin? It was faith! That's right! He had faith in something he had not yet seen. He believed the "people of God" would eventually leave their slavery and enter the inheritance promised by God. He believed God! Do you believe God?

But you are acting like you do not believe there is a heavenly inheritance! You act as if there is no hell! You lie. You cheat. You are sexually immoral. You are an adulterer. You steal. You are a violent man or woman! You do not care if you are hurting someone else, breaking their limbs or their hearts! You do not care that you are abusing the innocent! Your language is filthy! You treat people like they are beneath you! You are a drunk or drugged! You are hooked! You are also lascivious! You make crude jokes! You imply wicked things; but you laugh! You

are arrogant! You are proud of your sins, in fact, you are proud of anything you do and you are jealous when someone else does something better than you! You hunger and thirst for sin! "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." However, God also says, "I love you." "You are my creation; yes, you are a child of disobedience, but I have so loved the world that I have given my only begotten Son so that I can forgive you when you decide to rule over your desires."

Jesus came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17). "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6).

If you have discovered this chaos in your soul, if you have become sick of sin, if you are missing the peace that surpasses understanding, then you have taken the first step in turning your sinful desires on their heads! You are ready for a revolution. You are ready for a change. You are ready to listen to Jesus Christ! Will you hunger and thirst for righteousness? If you do, then you will be satisfied.

Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23 ESV) The first step in following Jesus Christ and ruling over sin is to deny oneself; you must overthrow your own desires. You must place Christ's desires ahead of your own. Jesus requires dedication; Jesus requires obedience. Are you ready to make Jesus your Master? Are you ready to become HIS slave? Yes, it is a slavery. Jesus put it this way, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:29-30 ESV) Did you hear that? There is a "yoke". There is a "burden". But Jesus' yoke is "easy", His burden "light". You will find "rest", not chaos, but peace for your soul! But you must deny yourself in order to wear Christ's "yoke." Will you hunger and thirst for the "rest" that Jesus gives?

An old song of Israel went this way, "Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works! Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!" (Psalms 105:1-4 ESV) What do you seek? What do you desire? If you seek the Lord and His strength then you must cast away your sinful desires! That's right! Are you willing to do that?

If you are NOT willing to cast away your evil desires then you **cannot** be the servant of Jesus Christ. If you are willing to discard your evil desires then you **can** become the servant of Jesus Christ. You can receive sweet forgiveness of your sins! You see, Jesus Himself paid the penalty for your sins. The old prophet Isaiah foresaw this substitution by God's inspiration. Isaiah wrote that "the Arm of the Lord" ... "Was despised and rejected by men; [God's mighty Arm was] a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces [God's mighty arm] was despised, and [Isaiah says] we esteemed him not. [But] Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; [but] the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he [God's mighty arm] opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; [the LORD] has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I [the LORD] will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors." ([Isaiah 53:3-12 ESV](#))

Friends, you are among those for whom Christ died! Did He die for you in vain? Jesus kept silence and opened not His mouth, when He could have called twelve legions of angels to save him from physical harm (Matthew 26:53). But Jesus kept silent for you and for the world of lost human beings!

Just as surely as Jesus died for the sins of the world, He also will return as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Jesus' apostle Paul wrote, "For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." ([Romans 14:7-12 ESV](#))

Friends, will you give up your own sovereignty and become a servant of Jesus Christ? Will you hunger and thirst for righteousness? Peace and Rest for your soul awaits your decision to follow Christ. Visit a church of Christ near you so you can begin to be satisfied and find peace by following Jesus Christ.