

Hunger and thirst for righteousness--*Matthew 5:6*

The semantic area of the word 'righteousness' occurs hundreds of times in the Bible, in both Testaments. To begin with, we must distinguish 'righteousness' from 'holiness'. Holiness has to do with the absence of sin, and only the Triune God is perfectly holy in His essence. Righteousness (or 'wholeness of character') has to do with appropriate behavior within a certain standard of conduct. Now then, since a standard of conduct devised by men is often different from the standard of conduct promulgated by the Sovereign Creator, I have used 'moral rectitude'. Certainly Jesus was thinking of God's standard; He was referring to acting with moral rightness before God.

- But why did Jesus cite both hunger and thirst? Whoever is hungry will look for something to eat; those who are thirsty will look for something to drink. And what happens if someone is both hungry and thirsty? It seems to me that the person's situation becomes urgent; he will search with determination until he finds something. What is at stake is the relationship between the person and God. And since the Father seeks those who worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23), He will go to meet such people.

Consider 2 Chronicles 16:9—"The eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him". God is looking for whom He can bless. Consider also Jeremiah 29:13—"You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart". It is a promise; but it depends on us. It is the consequence of the 'great' commandment: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind" (Matthew 22:37, Deuteronomy 6:5).

Then, with all certainty, God will satisfy the person who dedicates himself to moral righteousness with determination.