

**Lutheran Vespers, Sometime during 1947-1948**  
**Recording #8**  
**KVNU, 610, Logan, Utah**  
**Rev. Harold Brauer, speaker**

Gracious Lord Jesus Christ, in thy love and mercy Thou hast extended the Gospel invitation: Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. We pray Thee, make us realize our need for the help and salvation which is to be found alone in Thee and then satisfy our need with Thy grace and forgiveness. In this way enable us to find rest for our souls in Thee, our only Redeemer. Amen.

Dear friends of Lutheran Vespers. In this blessed land of ours, no one should suffer from either hunger or thirst. Not only does our land under the blessing of God produce enough food to supply the needs of our own people, but there is much that we can export to other lands to help them keep body and soul together. Most of us also have clean and fresh water close at hand, so that without much effort, we can quench our thirst at any time. This is a much greater blessing than we often realize.

However, food and drink for our souls is just as close at hand, and those who hunger for the bread of life and thirst for the water of life usually have these things at their disposal in God's precious Word. Yet many people seem to feel no need for this spiritual food. Their souls do not experience any hunger or thirst for what God has to offer. But such hunger and thirst is important, for Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount said: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."

In order to understand and to appreciate what the blessedness of such hunger and thirst is, we must of course know and understand what this hunger and thirst of what Jesus speaks really is. Jesus says it is a hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is a fervent desire for forgiveness and a heartfelt longing to lead a truly God-pleasing life in accordance with His holy will. This hunger and thirst is not in us by nature.

By nature we crave for temporal wealth. We have an appetite for the glitter of gold and silver. Just stop to think how popular are such things as punch boards and other games of chance in which there is the possibility of obtaining more than what we pay for. Doesn't the popularity of these things reveal to us how by nature we crave for more than we can ordinarily obtain with our money? Perhaps you to have often given way to this natural hunger and thirst for more and more of this world's goods.

By nature we also crave honor among men. Not one of us has a desire to be shunned and despised by the world. By nature we hunger and thirst for the praise and honor of the world and often to such an extent, that we will transgress the laws of God to obtain it.

By nature we all want to be known as good people and therefore hesitate to admit that we are sinners. For we know that if we make such an admission before the unbelieving world, many a one will begin to wonder of what grievous sin we are guilty about which he does not know.

This hunger and thirst for riches, for the honor and praise of men, even at the expense of Christian principles, lives in us all more or less by nature, but it is not the proper and blessed appetite. If we are to have the proper appetite, the proper hunger and thirst created in us, then we must first of all come to see the sinfulness and the folly of those cravings and those longings which live in our hearts by nature.

It was because Satan succeeded in instilling such hunger and thirst into the heart of Eve that she desired to eat of the forbidden fruit and thought that it was a fruit to be desired to make one wise. It is because of this sin that the curse has come upon us as long as this hunger and thirst rules us and drives us, so long the curse will rest upon us. We can never be blessed through these desires, nor through satisfying the desires.

Christ has come, not only to show us another hunger and thirst, but to created it within us, namely the hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And of that he spoke later in this Sermon on the Mount when he said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." But how is this hunger and thirst after righteousness created in us? In the same way as much of the hunger and thirst is created, namely by looking at that which we desire. Look away therefore from the forbidden fruit to that which the devil is pointing. Look away from the glittering temporal rewards, after which the world is running and look at true righteousness. God has shown it to you in all its beauty, purity and glory, when he sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. In Jesus all the world was to behold righteousness, holiness, purity personified. Even Pontius Pilate, the Roman judge, was forced to explain, "I find no fault in Him."

Look at Jesus as He fulfilled all righteousness. Look at His holy spotless life and then compare your own sinful, selfish, impure and loveless life with His. Do you not see the difference? Do you not see the black filthy life that is yours and the pure life that is His? Do you not see your imperfections when you look at His perfection. That is to arouse in you the hunger and thirst after righteousness. That is to cause you to groan, how far I am from being what I ought to be. Looking at Jesus and comparing His perfect life with yours, do you not see your need for forgiveness?

And learning from God's Word that Jesus can supply that need, you are to seek it from Him. That is, you are to ask for that pardon and cleansing from sin which He alone can give. You are to pray with longing hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The knowledge of your sinfulness should make you hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ. To Him you are a pray, wash me from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

But you are not only to seek the righteousness of Christ to cover all your sins, you are also to hunger and thirst for the power to lead such a life as you have learned to admire in the Lord Jesus. You are therefore also to pray: "Oh, Lord, strengthened thy weak servant. Help me to overcome all temptations to evil. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me." In short, you are to pray: 'Oh Lord, help me to lead a truly Christian life.'

If this hunger and thirst actually lives in your heart, you will go frequently to the fountain

where righteousness is given you, namely to the Word of God. You will hear and read it often. If this hunger and thirst after righteousness lives in you, you will not only love to sing, "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." But you will also sing, "I long to be like Jesus, meek, loving, lowly, mild." That is the hunger and thirst which is created in us by looking at Jesus, our perfect Savior and example. And when that hunger and thirst has been created in us, it will more and more displace and drive out the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. It will more and more dispel the hunger and thirst after worldly things,

My friends, does this hunger and thirst live in you? What is it that drives you on every day? What are the chief questions of your life? Are they, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? Are you hungering and thirsting after the wealth and honor of the world, or has this hunger and thirst after righteousness, this longing for the forgiveness of sins and the power to lead a God-pleasing life begun at least to live in your hearts? If it has, then the blessedness which Jesus promises shall be yours.

But what blessedness are you and all those who hunger and thirst after righteousness assured of? Jesus says in this Beatitude, they shall be filled. Yes, you shall be filled with righteousness. If you come to God with the earnest plea for forgiveness, you will be given the righteousness of Christ. Your sin and iniquity shall be washed away, washed away by the blood of your Redeemer. You will then belong to that great company who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. You will never go to God's Word in vain, because it is the Word of reconciliation, because it assures you that Jesus, the Lamb of God, takes away the sins of the world.

If you earnestly seek forgiveness and pardon, God's own absolution shall be granted you for all your transgressions. For God has promised: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And no matter whether you have been as sinful as Mary Magdalene, even though seven devils lived within you, even though your transgressions be as great as those of David, even though you be the chief of sinners as Paul was, the mercy of God in Christ Jesus shall remove every block from you and make you pure and holy in the sight of God. Yes, hungering and thirsting for forgiveness you shall be filled.

But not only will you be made holy by pardon and forgiveness. But the Holy Spirit will, at the same time begin to work in your heart, changing you from a child of sin and Satan to a child of God. As you are filled with a desire to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, as you hunger and thirst for more power to lead a life that is in keeping with God's will, your desire shall be satisfied. The Holy Spirit will give you power. It is true, this life of yours will not become perfect here in this world, your sinful nature will still cause you to make many missteps and sidesteps and yet every day you will pray for new power and strength to walk and live as you should, confident that God will surely give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

And as you earnestly long for these best gifts, God will bestow them upon you through

his Word. He will grant you strength to stand against the wiles of the devil. He will strengthen your faith, increase your hopes and move you to words and deed that are well pleasing in his sight. You shall be filled with righteousness.

And even though our sinful flesh will hinder us from reaching perfection here in this life, the day will come when in heaven, your hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be completely satisfied. For then that image of God in which man was originally created will be fully restored. Oh, how blessed you are in looking forward to the time when the struggle against sin will be over and perfect righteousness, innocence and blessedness will again be yours. Let that longing and that desire ever dwell in your heart until you reach that blessed place where all hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled for ever more.

May God work in you, my listening friend, a sincere hunger and thirst after righteousness and grant you it's rich blessing in this life and in heaven.

Let us pray. Gracious heavenly Father, we pray Thee, make us truly conscious of our need for righteousness and then satisfy our desire for it by cleansing our souls from all sin in the scheme which Thy Son has supplied by his sacrifice on the cross and give us the power of Thy Holy Spirit to enable us to walk and live in closer harmony with Thy holy will. Fill us with the true righteousness that avails before Thee, for Jesus sake. Amen.