

They who will not come into Christ while there is room, must soon take their room in the pit of destruction, Rev. xxi. 8.

*Use 2.* Make room then for Christ with you. Room in your hearts, room in your houses. I would call unto all, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight." Christ is coming once more among us in a solemn and awful manner, in the holy ordinance of the supper. O Christians, communicants, make room for his triumphant entry. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in. Make room for him and all his salvation; *As made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Be persuaded of your own utter emptiness, your need of all things, that you may take him for your all.

Again, Make room for him, in all his offices, as a prophet, priest, and king. Search out the rebels, lay all your sins before him, that he may remove the guilt of them by his blood, and break the power of them by his Spirit; and thus redeem you from all iniquity, and purify you unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Finally, Make room for him and his cross. Consider what you do, lay your account with all the hardships you may meet with in following him whithersoever he goes. Amen.

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Ettrick, August 12, 1722.

[Sabbath before the Sacrament.]

#### HUNGERING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

#### SERMON XXI.

MATTHEW v. 6.

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.*

WE are called to a solemn spiritual feast for the nourishment of our souls. But it is often seen, that many go to it, who yet come away empty. The fault is not in the feast itself, as if the provision were scanty; but in the guests, who often sit down without an appetite. Our text, which is a part of our Lord's sermon on the mount, discovering who are the truly blessed or happy, points out to us the worthy communicants, who shall be entertained at the Lord's table. And in it there are two things.

1. The hungry and thirsty after righteousness, declared blessed, by him who knows exactly, who are blessed and who not, as being the purchaser and bestower of the blessing. The world accounts those the happy ones who are full; Christ accounts them happy who hunger and thirst. But it is not every sort of hunger and thirst, but hunger and thirst after righteousness; those who are longing and earnestly desiring righteousness, as ever a hungry man desired bread, or a thirsty man drink.

2. There is the ground on which they are declared blessed; *For they shall be filled.* The appetite of their souls shall be satisfied. There is many a gaping mouth in the world, some are gaping for one thing, some for another, and all to satisfy their lusts: they shall never be satisfied, but they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. The Lord himself shall fill them as the sheep of his pasture.

*Doctrine.* They who hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be filled.

In speaking to this, I shall consider,

I. The righteousness for which these happy persons hunger and thirst.

II. Show what this happy hunger and thirst after this righteousness is.

III. Their blessedness, or the fill secured to them. We are then,

I. To consider the righteousness for which these happy persons hunger and thirst.

1. It is an imputed righteousness, in which they may stand before God, obtain remission of sin, and the favour of God. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." The soul sensible of the damning nature of sin, and the naughtiness of all men's own righteousness, and the severity of God's justice, will be pained and scorched, through the apprehension of the want of a righteousness to cover it before the Lord, as ever one was with hunger and thirst. Their great question will be, *Wherewithal shall I appear before the Lord? How shall I be in case to stand before the awful tribunal?*

2. It is an implanted righteousness, by which they may walk before the Lord in the land of the living and please him. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Deeply sensible of this depravity of nature, they cry with David, each for himself, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." They seek the renewal of their nature, being changed into the image of God, and to be made par-

takers of the divine nature. This constitutes a righteousness or holiness of heart and life, that one may speak and act in a holy and righteous manner. "Oh! says David, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes." This they who shall be filled, hunger and thirst after. In a word, it is a righteousness without them, and within them, a righteousness, upon them and in them. It is righteousness and holiness. This is the object of the desires of the happy soul. We are,

II. To show what this happy hunger and thirst after this righteousness is. There is in it,

1. A sense of want of righteousness. The prodigal's return to his father commenced, when *he began to be in want*. The hungry soul is cured of the disease of the Laodiceans. Such persons no longer imagine themselves *rich and increased in goods, and having need of nothing, but feel themselves wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*. However they have slept long, their eyes are now opened, and they see their want of righteousness. They are guilty, and have nothing of their own to cover them before God. They see that they are defiled, corrupted, and all over unclean in heart and life. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind, have taken us away." Whatever they have thought, they dare no more say to any, *I am holier than thou*. But with the leper cry out, *unclean, unclean*.

2. A painful sense of the need of righteousness. *I perish*, said the prodigal, *with hunger*. They do not merely see a want of it, and as many self-condemned sinners do; but as the hungry man is pained, and uneasy for want of bread, and the thirsty for lack of drink; so are they for want of righteousness. The hunger for righteousness seizes them, and they find a pressing need of it. The day has been that they have reigned as kings without righteousness, imputed or implanted. But now they can do so no more, they find they must be righteous and holy, or else perish.

3. A sense of utter inability to help themselves. See the case the poor hungry soul is brought to, "When the poor and needy, says Isaiah, seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst." There has been a famine of righteousness in the world ever since Adam's fall; were there as little bread as there is righteousness among us, most of us would be starved to death, and all of us would look with pale faces. There is some righteousness indeed, but it is not the produce of our country, it is all imported from the King's country, and they who have got of it have none to spare. The wise virgins could afford none of their oil to the foolish virgins. So

the poor soul looking abroad among his fellows, sees there is no help for him in them ; looking within himself, sees nothing but emptiness there ; and is like Hagar, laying down the child for dead, for lack of water in the wilderness.

4. An esteem and value of righteousness above all things else. *Unto them who believe Christ is precious.* Those who are sore pressed with hunger, value meat above other things, and therefore they will part with any thing for food. So will the soul hungering after righteousness. *The man who found the pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.* An imputed righteousness to cover the soul before the Lord, and an implanted righteousness to restore the soul to the image of God, is the chief thing which the hungering soul values, and will be content to let all other things go, so as the soul may gain these. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

5. An earnest longing desire after righteousness. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." The hungry soul hath its appetite sharpened, and goes out in desire after Christ and his grace. Hear the breathings of the hungry soul, "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. Oh that I knew where I might find him ! that I might come even to his seat ! O God thou art my God ; early will I seek thee ; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." They see a beauty and glory in righteousness, for which it is to be desired, it is the thing that is most suitable to their case. Hence they desire it above all things, and the strength of their affections is bestowed upon it, as the one thing needful. This they earnestly desire of the Lord, and will seek after.

Lastly. An unsatisfiedness with all things, while the soul's desire after righteousness is not satisfied. Fill a hungry man's pocket with gold, clothe him in scarlet, cover a table to him with the most precious vessels, what can all these do for his relief ? So whatever the hungry soul may have, under the want of Christ and his righteousness and grace, it cannot be satisfied ; there is still a restlessness in the heart, till it be set on the breast of the divine consolations. We proceed, -

III. To consider their blessedness, or the fill secured to the hungry and thirsty soul. *They shall be filled.* We may take up this in these four things.

1. God will set meat before them. He himself will entertain them. It is not they shall fill themselves, but they shall be filled, to show the efficacious working of divine grace, in hungry souls. "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst. I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." To them will the Spirit of the Lord say, *Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* God is well pleased with that temper of mind wrought by his own Spirit in them, and he will be their shepherd, and see that they do not want. He will furnish their table to them.

2. They shall eat and feed on the provision set before them. "The meek shall eat and shall be satisfied, they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever." Their hungering shall make way for feeding, for believing, use-making and applying Christ and his righteousness to their own souls. There is no filling without eating and drinking, so the promise of filling, implies the promise of believing, which is the spiritual eating and drinking. Though meat be set before a hungry man, if he put not forth his hand, and take and eat, he may starve for all the meat before him; so the hungry soul must be a believing soul, that it may be filled.

3. They shall partake of righteousness from heaven. They shall get what they desire. Righteousness they long for and righteousness shall be given them. *They shall receive righteousness from the God of their salvation.* They shall get the white garments, which will cover their spiritual nakedness; and so obtain remission of sins, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, and a right to glory. They shall get grace to sanctify them, to subdue their corruptions, to strengthen them for duty, and against temptations, and to conform them more and more to the image of God. They shall get Christ himself, and all things in him and with him. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

4. Their souls shall be satisfied in this participation of righteousness. It is not only said, they shall eat, but also *they shall be satisfied.* They shall have a rest to their conscience, by his atoning blood, and a rest to their hearts, by his sanctifying Spirit. They had a sense of want, that created them an appetite, and sharp desire; their sense of enjoyment, shall create them delight. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn, and their wine increased." There is enough in Christ's imputed righteousness which he implants in the soul, to satisfy the soul. It is suitable to the desires of the immortal soul, and therefore satisfying, as being perfecting to its nature.

This filling of the soul, as in the case of the body, is carried on by degrees. And,

The beginning of it is in the hungry soul's application to Christ by faith, closing with him, and fixing on the breasts of his consolations. "I am, said Jesus, the bread of life: he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." The first taste the soul gets of Christ in believing, it hath enough, not indeed to stay its pursuit after more of Christ, but after the world, and the lusts thereof. It finds so much in Christ that it is resolved and convinced it needs not to go to seek satisfaction any where else. "But whosoever, saith Jesus, drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life." This makes the soul say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee." In him it takes up its everlasting rest. *For we which have believed do enter into rest.* Thus they are set down to a full table.

The progress of this filling, is in the soul's abiding in Christ, and continuing with him, making use of him daily, for the supply of all its wants. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, says Jesus, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Though the communion table is but seldom covered, yet the Lord has still a covered table, for his children to feed at, which is never drawn. "For my flesh, says he, is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." And they may still be filling their souls with righteousness, by faith making use of Christ for all; though alas! there are many times long interruptions in their spiritual feeding.

Finally, The consummation of this, is in the believers' being ever with the Lord in glory. "Where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." There they shall be completely filled; there they shall be eternally filled without loathing, and have an eternal appetite, without any the least uneasiness. "For there grows the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree, are for the healing of the nations."

*Use 1.* Of information. Hence we may learn,

1. That those who are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness, are not meet guests for the Lord's table, and they will get no good of it, if they come to it. There can be no just complaint on our Lord's house, though some go from his table, and get not a meal.

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For such are found not to be pressed with spiritual hunger, why then should they be filled? They are not meet guests at a table covered for hungry souls, for they will loathe the food that is set before them there, and as they are not meet for it, so they are not welcome to it; *they have not the wedding garment*, and they will be sent away empty from the full table. For while "God filleth the hungry with good things, the rich he sends empty away. And such are,

All sleeping Christians, who, though they have grace in the root, yet have it not in exercise, Song v. 1,—3. They have lost the sense of their souls' need, and their desires after spiritual things are sunk, and a woful listlessness and indisposition for the food of their souls is fallen to them; this is the case of many at this day.

All unregenerate persons, who having nothing of the new nature in them, are incapable of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the proper nourishment of it. They are not capable of relishing spiritual things, because themselves are wholly carnal, and therefore can savour nothing but the world and their lusts. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

All presumptuous, insensible, unhumbled sinners, who are content with their own condition in spiritual matters, and are no way desirous to get it made better. They think they stand in need of nothing. They are not in pain for want of righteousness, but can hold on in their present case, blessing themselves in their hearts, that they are not so bad as others, or have attained to a form of godliness.

All such whose hearts are so hungering and thirsting after other things, that they have no desires for Christ, and his grace. There are many in whom there is such a ferment of hellish desires after the profits, pleasures and vanities of the world, who are so thirsting after this and the other good thing of the world to themselves; thirsting after revenge on their neighbours, and for satisfaction to this and the other lust, that no true desires after Christ and his grace, can get sprung up in their souls, James iv. 2, 3. 1 Pet. ii. 1—3.

2. We learn that those whose souls are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, may come forward to the Lord's table, with confident expectations that they shall be filled. They have the Lord's promise for it in the text, which is an excellent token for the communion. And we might promise ourselves a good time of it, if there were a strong cry of hunger and thirst among the children. For God promises "to pour water upon him that is thirsty, and

floods upon the dry ground." Were we gaping for righteousness like the parched ground, he would come and rain righteousness upon us. And that you may know this token, and whether you have it, take these signs.

True hunger and thirst after righteousness, after the Lord, *whose name is the Lord our righteousness*. A thirst after righteousness separated from Christ himself, is a vitious appetite of legal and self-righteous persons, by which they would build up themselves on another foundation than that which God has laid in Zion. Therefore the saints still hunger and thirst for the Lord himself, *in whom they have righteousness and strength*.

It is a hunger and thirst after all righteousness. Many profane and careless souls, will desire to partake of Christ's imputed righteousness to save their souls from hell, but they are not anxious to get holiness of heart and life. Others are at great pains to conform themselves to the law, in their life, but they lay so much weight upon that, that they are not solicitous for the imputed righteousness of Christ. But the sincere soul hungers for both, Christ for justification and sanctification.

It is a hunger and thirst after all the parts and degrees of righteousness. The hungry soul has use for all of Christ's righteousness, the righteousness of his birth, life, death, and must be covered all over with it, without mixing their own with it in any part. And it is set for all the parts of inherent righteousness, of nature, heart and life, in every point, even in that where their weak side lies. And they will not sit down on any measure or degree of it, but still be aspiring to perfection. "For every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure. And forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, they press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

It puts the soul on resolute endeavours after righteousness. The hungry will use every mean and make every exertion to be filled. Discouragements will not break off its pursuit. Necessity has no law. And hunger will break through stone walls. So if your hunger quicken you to seek after Christ resolutely, it is a good sign.

The true hunger of the soul cannot be otherwise satisfied than by the enjoyment of Christ. Many have some hunger after Christ, but not finding their souls satisfied in him, they go away to the creature and seek that in them, which they could not find in him.

*Use 2.* Of exhortation. Labour to get this hunger and thirst raised in your souls. Sharpen your appetite after your spiritual food. Consider the Lord is covering a table for us. It is a pity we



should want an appetite for it. The paschal lamb was to be wholly eaten, so appetite was necessary, and so it is also with us.

Again, who knows how far we may have to go upon this meal. But if we hunger not, we will not eat.

Consider also that it will readily fare with you according to your appetite. If you have an appetite, you shall be filled, for it is a sign of the new nature, which God will see to support. The appetite is of God's giving and he will satisfy it. His faithfulness is engaged in the cause. Amen.

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*Yarrow Communion, Sept. 9, 1722.*

[Sabbath afternoon.]

CHRISTIANS STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

SERMON XXII.

2 TIMOTHY ii. 1.

*Thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

In his banqueting house, Christ displays his banner of love over his people. For those who are fed at his table must arise and fight their way to Immanuel's land, to which they have professed themselves to be travelling. And our text is an exhortation to animate them in their journey. "Thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

These words are a practical inference drawn from the doctrine of the preceding chapter, namely, that God had already bestowed on Timothy, and the rest of the saints, great things, verses 7,—9. That the gospel was such a noble cause that none need to be ashamed of suffering on the account of it, ver. 10, 11, 12. That God is able to see to his people in all circumstances and make a good account of them at last, ver. 12. That there was a great falling away from the good ways of the Lord, ver. 15. From all which he exhorts Timothy to be strong. In the text we have,

1. The compellation *my son*. Paul was an aged man, Timothy was young. Elder Christians should excite and animate the younger sort to the vigorous pursuit of religion. In this case surely days should speak. It is a chief part of our generation work, to be concerned for a right turn to the rising generation. And the slackness