

# **GRACE EMPOWERED LIVING: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

— GARY WIENS

## **SESSION 5: HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Son of God is a man with a heart of burning passion for His Bride, His people who were created to be a suitable counterpart for Him. Those who will come into the fullness of their destiny in Christ are those who are fully conformed to His image. Jesus intends to share His authority with a Bride who has been qualified to stand with Him as His counterpart in ruling all things.

The Holy Spirit is calling the Bride to embrace the character and lifestyle of Jesus as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount, and particularly in the Beatitudes. Today we want to focus on the Beatitude that is of central importance to us as we move toward what He has for us in the days to come.

### **I. THE CALL TO RIGHTEOUSNESS**

- A. Coming into alignment with God's character

*Leviticus 20:26 And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.*

*1 Peter 1:15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct . . .*

- B. Cannot come into full blessing until righteousness is realized

*Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:*

*Jonah 2:8 Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the Grace that could be theirs. (NIV)*

- C. Righteousness is the natural and inevitable result of receiving mercy and grace

- D. Self-righteousness (attempting to be righteous apart from intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit) is an abomination to God

*Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;*

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## II. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE WAY THINGS REALLY ARE

- A. Righteousness – most desirable state of being; coming into alignment with what God had in His heart when He created us

*From the beginning . . . when, in temporal terms, we did not exist at all, God's gaze fell upon us and knew us . . . His gaze is creative, generative, originative, by His utterly free decree. 'This is what, in my eyes, you are; this is what you mean; no other truth can have any validity but this, for me, for you, or for anyone else'. (Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Prayer" p.40)*

- B. This is exemplified in the life of Jesus

***Psalms 45:6-7 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. (7) You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.***

1. Loves righteousness – Jesus loves to consider all things as the Father saw them and intends them to be

***John 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).***

***Mark 3:14 Then He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles), that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,***

2. Jesus saw righteousness as normal, and the absence of righteousness as broken and perverse.

***Luke 13:11-16 And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. (12) But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." (13) And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. . . .(16) So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"***

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3. When Jesus touched people for healing and salvation, He was working justice – bringing that person into a standing of righteousness
  4. Hates wickedness – the perversion of our identity in the pursuit of lesser things
- C. Righteousness is the normal lifestyle of God’s people
1. We are given the gift of righteousness by the power of the Holy Spirit

***Romans 4:6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:***

***2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

***Philippians 3:9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;***

2. We are called to cooperate with the righteousness that we’ve been given

***1 Corinthians 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God.***

***1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.***

- D. Word concerning God’s heart and the compromise of believers

1. God’s crushed heart

An important part of gaining God’s perspective on righteousness is to understand the pain in His heart over the unrighteousness among His people.

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*Ezekiel 6:9 Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations.*

2. God's exposure of secret sin – Ezekiel 8

*Ezekiel 8:6 Furthermore He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary?"*

### III. THE DESIRE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO BE OUR MOST BASIC LONGING

God is calling us to come to reality of righteousness at every arena of life. So how does this happen?

- A. Gazing upon the beauty of the Lord – the glory of the Lord revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. We do this by meditating:
  1. On the attributes of God as revealed in His names and in the stories of His interactions with His people
  2. On the encounters with people that Jesus had in the Gospels
- B. Coming to see what He has in mind concerning you – touching His affections, His vision of your life. **Jeremiah 32-33** – fear of the Lord for the good He intends to do for you!

***Jeremiah 32:39-41 I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. (41) Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.'***

1. Leads to poverty of spirit – I cannot do what I was created to do without the immediate presence of the Holy Spirit!

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2. Leads to mourning over our sin – facing the reality of our own unrighteousness – Isaiah 6 encounter

***Isaiah 6:5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."***

3. Leads to further revelation of God's desire and purpose – the meek order their lives under God's Word, and begin to believe the promise and to seek after it

### C. Hunger and thirst begins to emerge

1. The jealousy of God begins to stir our hearts

***James 4:4-5 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (5) Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?***

***Isaiah 55:1-3 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. (2) Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. (3) Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you – The sure mercies of David."***

2. Satan's lie – "you can live in both worlds; do your 'passion for Jesus' thing and then in the down time, come play in my world!"

***1 Corinthians 10:20b-22 . . . I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. (21) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. (22) Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?***

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- D. Conformity to God's reality becomes our driving passion

*Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. (13) Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, (14) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

## **IV. THOSE WHO GIVE THEMSELVES TO THIS PURSUIT WILL BE FULLY SATISFIED**

Result? Satisfaction guaranteed! Term means "completely filled, sated."

- A. *Psalm 17:15 As for me, I shall see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.*
- B. *1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*
- C. If this is your hope, then the will of God for you today is to cooperate with the process of embracing righteousness.