

From Faith Unto Faith II The Beatitudes #2

Fred R. Coulter—April 27, 2013

The other night I was doing some channel surfing again, because there was nothing on. What do you have? *400 channels!* What's on? *Nothing!* I was channel surfing through, and I thought, I just asked myself: Don't turn it off, keep going through and see if you can find one program that is not based upon sin, and I couldn't do it.

I appreciate the comment in the opening prayer that God will see us through all the difficulties, because there are plenty of them there. Even though we find all these things transpiring, like it says in 2-Timothy 3. I was thinking of this when I was doing the channel surfing. I wonder what the Apostle Paul would have said if he had lived in the time when we have television and things like we have now. I bet some of his epistles would have really been scorched, indeed.

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come." Think of all the perils that we face every single day. Just today, those who were coming to Sabbath services were delayed because of some terrible accident on the highway.

Here's the cause of everything, v 2: "For men will be lovers of self..." You can take that and that adds up to an awful lot of sin and arrogance and wretchedness of other people.

"...lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents..." (v 2). I don't think Paul really had any grasp of how bad the disobedience to parents is. I've been reading a book and at Church at Home I'm doing a short series on *From Adolescence to Adulthood* {churchathome.org} from the book *The Death of the Grown-Up* by Diana West. She makes the case that when they started separating out teenagers and they had money without working, that's wrong with kids today. They can't even clean their own rooms.

I remember someone showing me a picture of a room all messed up, hung up on the door and it said, This is my mess, keep out. Then along came the extension telephone; now we've got cell phones. You're available anywhere, at any time.

"...unthankful, unholy" (v 2). That is sure true. You tie this in with what we covered before, we won't go there but just put it in your notes: Isa. 5, where we have all the woes. Woe to you when you set house-to-house and field-to-field, all live in the cities.

Verse 3: "Without natural affection, implacable, slanders, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good... [this is the kind of society that we have to live in] ...betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (vs 3-4). All you have to do is watch all the sports. I never saw so many sports as I was channel surfing. There was football training, all kinds of baseball because it's baseball season, soccer, boxing, wrestling, golf, auto racing, and basketball. Oh, what a wonderful thing, we get giants who are so good that they can stand up there and throw the ball through the round circle and get paid millions!

Verse 5: "Having an outward appearance of godliness, but denying the power of *true* Godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these." This is one of the things we have to do to keep our sanity.

In spite of all of this, there are people who are seeking after God. In spite of all this, there are those who are of the Church of God in the world today. The world doesn't know us, and it's hard to find us. You look at us on the street; we might seem not quite as modern as the ones walking around. But nevertheless, you couldn't tell us from other people.

It says right here, Revelation 14:12: "Here is *the* patience of the saints; here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God..." That's how you tell. Because we keep the Sabbath from Friday night sundown to Saturday night sundown, think how much trouble this keeps us out of; likewise with the children; likewise with the youth. Don't be complaining because you can't go out on Friday night, because it's the Sabbath. *Be thankful you're not sucked into the vortex of what Satan has to offer!*

Notice, there's a little *and*: "...**and** the faith of Jesus" (v 12). *Keep* is the verb that belongs to both of the phrases: "...keep the commandments of God and keep the faith of Jesus." As we have covered, that's the faith we are to have.

When the world is out here seeking its own, doing its own, puffing up everybody, all kinds of vanity, all kinds of anti-God things going on:

- What are we to be doing?
- How are we to keep our minds?
- How are we to keep our sanity when the world is going insane?

That's a tall order, indeed!

- you have to *have faith*
- you have to *believe in God*
- you have to have *conviction of mind*
- you have to have *conviction in everything* that you do

—because the whole world is against you.

Let's come back here to Matthew 5; here is part of *the commandments and the faith* of Jesus Christ. We've gone through the first two of the Beatitudes. This is #2 in *From Faith Unto Faith—your faith toward God, Christ's faith back to you!* It's always an ongoing thing from you to God, and God to you; from you to God, and God to you, and toward each other in helping and serving and praying and doing those things.

We've covered, Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the ^{#[1]} **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Notice every single one of these things are *attitudes* that we supply some of it, but *God supplies most of it*. These are spiritual characteristics. *Poor in spirit and meek*, which we'll cover here today, are very similar, but it helps expand things out so that we know what kind of people we need to be and what kind of attitudes that we need to have.

Verse 4: "Blessed are those who ^{#[2]} **mourn**, for they shall be comforted...."

The Meek:

Verse 5: "Blessed are ^{#[3]} **the meek**, for they shall inherit the earth" (vs 4-5). Stop and think about it, how much do you own now?

It also talks about in Rom 8 that we are co-heirs with Christ. What we're going to find is that the earth is the down payment for the rest of eternity. The stakes are really high—aren't they?

Let's look at some other Scriptures and follow up on this. Let's see what Jesus said about Himself. Here we can see that meekness comes from our attitude of not lifting ourselves up and become braggadocio and thinking how great we are or any of those things, or egocentric or narcissistic. The ones who are narcissistic always blame someone else for everything that happens. It's never their fault.

Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened... [In this world, the modern age, we all labor and we're *overly* burdened with many, many things.] ...and I will give you rest." What is *the rest* of God? *The Sabbath!* As we keep the Sabbath we get peace and we get tranquility and we are settled because of keeping the Sabbath. 'I will give you rest.'

Verse 29: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; **for I am meek and lowly in**

heart..." *Meekness* comes from God and think how meek and how humble and how yielded that Jesus had to be in order to divest Himself of being God, to become a human being and be born of the virgin Mary. Every time you get to thinking, 'Oh, well, I have done this and I've done that and I've given up this and I've given up that,' stop yourself and ask:

- How much did God give up for you?
- How much did Jesus give up for you?

That will help you get your bearings.

"...for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls" (v 29). The biggest difficulty today is, especially with the war on terror, *people live in fear*. People are anxious. Look at all the medications that people take. Look at all the upset lives that there are. Terrible situation, that's the way that it is there.

Let's come to John 16 for just a minute because here's a very interesting verse. When you read all the way through John 14, 15, 16, and read all the things that Jesus said—we cover all of this every year on the Passover night. Anytime you think things are really getting tough for you—this is what He said just before His final prayer and just before He was arrested to be taken off and beaten and crucified.

John 16:33, Jesus said: "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation... [we're going to have difficulties; that's all part of what life is about] ...But be courageous!..."

- Was He courageous? *Yes, He was!*
- Was He also meek? *Yes, He was!*

Meek doesn't mean that you're milk-toast. Meek means that you're not filled with your own self. You are not filled with, 'I can do this and I can do that and I can do the other thing.'

"...But be courageous!... [courage comes from faith; courage comes from God] ...I have overcome the world" (v 33). So, we don't have to worry about a thing.

Now let's go back and see the fore-type of Christ, who was Moses. Let's see what it said about Moses. Did Moses have to go through a lot of things with the children of Israel? *Yes, he did*—even from Miriam and Aaron. You would think that at least Aaron would have been halfway decent, and Miriam.

Numbers 12:1: "And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had taken, for he had taken a Cushite woman." *Josephus* says that this happened when

Egypt conquered Ethiopia. The peace pact was that you marry a princess of Ethiopia and that guaranteed the suzerainty of the kingship. So, she was there with him.

Verse 2: “And they said, ‘Has the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses?... [Sounds like a lot of arguments today—right? *Yes!*] ...Has He not also spoken by us?’ And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek... [Why? *Because he had God’s Spirit!*] ...more than all the men on the face of the earth.)” (vs 2-3).

You know what happened, God took care of that real quick like—didn’t He? *Yes, He did!* What does this show us? *This shows us God will fight for us, because we yield to God and we are meek!* We’re not presumptuous. We’re not arrogant.

What did Jesus say when the Pharisees came to Him and said, ‘What are you doing healing on the Sabbath? You’re breaking the Sabbath.’ A lot of Protestants believe that that’s how He did away with the Sabbath. He broke the Sabbath. But that’s not true, the Greek there translated in the *King James* in that account, is ‘luo’—which means *to loose*. The man that He healed could pick up his bedroll and walk.

Jesus said, ‘I say nothing of Myself. I do nothing from Me, out from Me.’ That’s why He was meek. He always relied on God the Father. We rely on God the Father and Jesus Christ and that’s where the meekness comes. That doesn’t mean we are weak, it doesn’t mean we don’t stand up, it doesn’t mean we’re not courageous. *It means we are meek because we’re looking to God.*

Let’s come to the book of Psalms. We’re going to see quite a few Psalms. Here’s where we get the quote, ‘The meek shall inherit the earth.’ This is especially true for today.

Psalms 37:1: “Do not fret yourself because of evildoers...”

- don’t be jealous of them
- don’t be anxious because of them
- don’t be envious because of them
- don’t get frustrated because of them

All you have to do is remember:

- What happened to Elvis Presley?
- What happened to Michael Jackson?
- What happened to the great heroes of different sports?
- What happened to some of the Hollywood so-called stars?
- What happened to the Wall Street bankers?

A lot of them yet have to be caught.

“...and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD... [that’s where meekness comes from] ...and do good; dwell in the land, and cherish faithfulness.... [see how all of these things tie together] ...Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart” (vs 1-4).

Have you ever just said something to yourself, just sort of a fleeting thought and kind of a passing thing in your mind; you said, ‘That would be nice—wouldn’t it?’ And later you found it came to pass? Think about that! That’s in the last part of Eph. 3, that He is able to give us above all that ask or think. “Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

If you’re seeking God and doing the things that He wants, the desires of your heart are going to be right—isn’t that correct? *Yes, indeed!* What is the desire of our heart, the greatest desire that He’s going to give us? *Eternal life in the Kingdom of God!*

Verse 5: “Commit your way unto the LORD; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass.... [Doesn’t tell you how, *but He’s going to*. Doesn’t tell you when, *but He will.*] ...And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light, and your judgment like the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way; because of him who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger... [also bitterness] ...and forsake wrath; do not fret yourself... [3 times] ...it leads only to evil” (vs 5-8). Because you do and say things you really don’t want to do.

Remember this, v 9: “**For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.** It is but a little while, and the wicked shall be no more... [especially in our day] ...yea, you shall diligently consider his place, *but* he shall not be *there*. But the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (vs 9-11).

Look at how the Old Testament and the New Testament are all one together. When we get the Psalms finished editing, then we will put out a new CD that will have the Psalms, the Proverbs, and the book of Job all on there. Those are really great. The Psalms and Proverbs are great as well as the book of Job.

Notice how our attitude needs to be. You watch this. If you don’t pray and if you don’t study, what happens? *Things don’t go so good!* What is the message from God? *Don’t do that!* I’ve talked to a lot of people who fall into the ‘backsliding’

category, that when there were troubles in the Church, because they watched and followed men too much, they just quit. They just stopped. But God wasn't done with them. Shows you how great God is. He wasn't done with them. I get letters and e-mails all the time. 'Oh, I'm so glad to find my way back to God.' Of course, then you have the parable of the prodigal son—correct? Was he welcomed back? *Yes!* But just like the prodigal son, *you have to repent.*

Here's one of the Psalms that will keep us in the right attitude continually toward God, Psalm 25:1: "To You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; do not let me be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none who wait on You be ashamed; let them be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause" (vs 1-3).

Here's what's going to happen when you have that kind of attitude. Here's how it will work when you're studying the Bible. You'll be reading and studying the Bible and studying along and a light goes on; you make a connection.

This happened to me the other day. I had been reading and studying about Peter. You know Peter never went to Rome, and so forth. Jesus said, 'The one who exalts himself shall be abased.' So, I was reading there where Jesus told Peter, 'Peter, Peter, Satan has wanted all of you, but I have prayed that your faith will be strengthened and not fail. When you are converted, strengthen your brethren'—that's all the rest of the apostles. Then what did Peter say. Peter didn't say thank you. 'Oh, Lord, thank you for that.' *No*, he said, 'Lord, I'm ready to go with you to the death and to jail.' He exalted himself over Christ—didn't he? It dawned on me, that's what he did.

How did Jesus abase him? *Peter, before the cock crows, you're going to deny Me three times!* 'Oh no, Lord, I'll never do that.' Then you read in the account in Luke where he was there in the high priest's house, where they were going through the preliminary judgment with Jesus. The different ones came up and said, 'You're one of them.' Peter said, 'No, I'm not.' Another one came up and said, 'Yes, you are one of them.' *No, I am not!* Then the third one came up and said, 'You are one of them because even your speech tells us you are one of them.' He denied it and began to curse and swear and the cock crowed. The account in Luke said, *Jesus looked at him.* So, they met eyeball-to-eyeball. Then Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Verse 4: "Show me Your ways, O LORD... [Not our way. We don't come along and say, 'Oh, God, I've got a great idea. This must be from You.' Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. Test it out!] ...teach me

Your paths." That's why we have Bible study. Who is the Way? *Jesus is!*

Verse 5: "Lead me in Your Truth and teach me..."—because we need to understand how evil and wicked that our human minds are and that they've got to be converted and cleansed and changed and re-programmed. That's a whole lifelong thing. You go along and everything's going good for a while.

Have you ever had something really great happen and you were really happy about it. Everything was great and then the next day you turn around and commit a really big blooper. Yes, that's God way of letting you know not to get lifted up.

Verse 5: "Lead me in Your Truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You do I wait all the day long." After all these good Psalms and everything that David did, did he have his big blooper? *Yes!* It was more like a landslide—wasn't it? Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite, and he figured he's going to make it right *his own way*. I wonder how much prayer and study he was doing during that time?

Verse 6: "Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your loving kindness, for they have been of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your loving kindness remember me for Your goodness' sake, O LORD. Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He will teach sinners in the way" (vs 6-8).

- How's He going to do it?
- What's the attitude we need to have?

Verse 9: "**The meek...** [After all of this, it shows whom He is going to deal directly with.] ...**He will guide in judgment; and the meek He will teach** His way.... [What's going to happen then?] ...All the paths of the LORD are mercy and Truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies" (vs 9-10). That shows us what meekness is really all about. That's something!

Zephaniah shows us in the end-time how important it is to have *the strength of Godly meekness*. Zephaniah 2:1: "Gather yourselves together; yea, gather together, O nation not desired—Before the decree is brought forth, and the day passes like the chaff; before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you" (vs 1-2). What is he saying here? ***Don't wait for trouble to come into your life to call out to God!***

Verse 3: "Seek the LORD, **all you meek of the earth** who have executed His judgment; **seek righteousness; seek meekness...** [This leads into the next one that we'll see here, which is

righteousness. So you have to seek these because they come from God.] ...It may be that you shall be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger."

With all the things that are going on right now, a lot of people are all wanting to get arms and weapons to protect themselves, and things like this. I wonder what's going to happen when all of that fails? ***The meek will be protected! and The meek have an inheritance coming to inherit the earth.***

(go to the next track)

Hunger and Thirst after righteousness:

Matthew 5:6: "Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after ^[#4]**righteousness**..." Of course then, righteousness is:

- God's way
- His laws
- His commandments
- His character

Everything right there. This becomes really very important.

"...for they shall be filled" (v 6). What was the promise that Jesus gave? Remember those who came to Jesus after He fed the 5,000? *They wanted to make Him king!* 'This is good; this is entitlement; we have food; let's make Him king and every day He can do this for us.'

John 6:35: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time.'" That means that every day you're ***hungering and thirsting for righteousness*** and you are filled every day.

Let's look at this way. We have plenty of food to eat today—correct? We don't hunger and we don't thirst. We have food and if we want it we've got more than we need; and we've got water. So it doesn't mean that once you get some knowledge of God, then you don't have to do anything after that. You do! You have to

- study
- grow
- grow in grace and knowledge

It doesn't mean that.

Psalms 45:1: "My heart overflows with a goodly matter; I speak of my works to the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. You are more excellent than the children of men..." (vs 1-2). You're ***hungering and thirsting for righteousness***. You're looking to God:

- for His character
- for His love

- for His Truth
- for His laws

and everything that He has. "...grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever.... [this is talking about Christ, personally] ...Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O mighty one, with Your glory and Your majesty. And ride victoriously in Your majesty in behalf of **Truth and meekness and righteousness**... [all of these are characteristics of God] ...and let Your right hand teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under You. Your throne, O God... [this is said of Jesus] ...is forever and ever; a scepter of justice... [or a *scepter of righteousness*] ...is the scepter of Your kingdom" (vs 2-6).

Notice how you are to seek after righteousness, v 7: "**You love righteousness** and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God... [All the way through the Bible you have two—not three, not one, but two.] ...has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows."

We're going to see some Psalms looking at the attitude that we need to have. We all need to understand this: ***never is there a time in our short physical lives that we will ever come to a point of knowing everything***. Because everything that is in the Bible, the Scriptures, comes from the mind of God. So therefore, there are so many things inner woven on top of many different things at the same time that you can never, ever come to a point, like you would with a textbook in school—you read it and you study it, you get done, you pass with it, and you know everything that is there—you can never say that of the Scriptures.

Here's how we satisfy the thirst and we satisfy the hunger; notice this attitude, Psalm 42:1: "As the hart pants after the water brooks, so my soul pants after You, O God."

This reminds me of when you watch any of these documentaries on Africa or the plains or something like this. Especially when there are drought conditions and you have the elephants, zebras, hippopotamus in the water and the mud; you have all the animals coming to drink. Then it gets down to where there is hardly anything left. The poor hippopotamus' are getting stuck in the mud.

Then God sends the rain. It starts out months ahead and it flows south. It's the only river in the world that flows south and never goes to the ocean. It comes to the Tunguska Plains and it fills it like a lake with water, mile after mile after mile. The documentary showed a herd of desert elephants. They walk through, literally, hell, heat, wind, sand, no water. They lost a couple of the little calves. They

died on the way. But when they got there and they got to the water, it showed how they drank the water and got in there and swam and rolled over and all of this—all the deer and all the zebra—they all had plenty of water.

This gives you a good picture of what it means: “...so **my soul pants after You, O God**. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?” (vs 1-2). That’s the promise we’ve been given—right? *The meek shall inherit the earth. The poor of spirit, they will see God.*

Verse 3: “My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day, ‘Where is your God?’ I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me... [to God] ...for I used to go along with the multitude; I led them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping the feast. Why are you cast down, O my soul... [Why do you get depressed? Why do you let these things come upon you?] ...and moan within me?... [here’s the answer]: ...Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the salvation of His countenance” (vs 3-5). That’s how we need to approach it.

There are three particular Psalms that have some really good things on how to approach God. What we’re studying here right now, we could say is the cure for the lukewarm Laodiceans. Get yourself going this way.

Psalms 63:1: “O God, You are my God, earnestly **I will seek You!**...” What did Jesus say we are to do? ‘Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you.’ (Matt. 6:33)

“...**My soul thirsts for You!**...” (v 1). How? This is the cure for the Laodiceans. If you’re lukewarm and you’re lazy and haven’t done what you know you need to do, then get on your knees and read these Psalms and let that help you come out of it.

“...**My flesh longs for You!**... [in God we live and move and have our being] ...as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is” (v 1). Just think of yourself out on this desert. Your canteen has run dry. It’s 110 degrees. You’re completely out of water. Every time you look ahead, you see a lake and you struggle to get there. You come over the sand dune and look at it, and it was a mirage. You need the real water of God.

Verse 2: “To see Your power and Your glory... [David added this]: ...as I have seen You in the sanctuary.” That’s quite a thing to understand. That’s something none of us can have yet, but we will have it. But when he brought the Ark of the

Covenant to Jerusalem, the Tabernacle was up in Gibeon. David brought it to his house, had a special room built for it, and put a small tent in there and put the Ark of the Covenant inside that tent. Then he had Asaph and the other priests manage it. He would come there and bring his Psalms and give them to the priests. Even David’s Psalms had to be approved by the priests. So, when he was there, he must have seen some kind of outline of God in the sanctuary, because there was a thin veil that came down in front of it. This gives us a clue of the relationship that he had with God.

Verse 3: “Because Your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.... [notice the zeal; notice the longing] ...My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips When I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the night watches” (vs 3-6).

This is truly one of the times that you really come to understand more about God is when you wake up at night and you can’t sleep. You lay there and you pray or you toss and turn. Maybe you even get up and go pray, because God deals with us at night sometimes. Sometimes the most important things in our lives happen at that time. So, this is what David is referring to.

Verse 7: “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me” (vs 7-8). This is the attitude that we need to have.

Let’s look at the third Psalm that comes along with this; we even have a hymn based on this one. Psalm 84:1: “How lovely are Your tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!”

What’s it going to be like—now think of this, {note Rev. 21 & 22, New Jerusalem}. That’s where we’re going to be. Think what it’s going to be like in New Jerusalem. Especially when you remember Jesus said, ‘If I go away, I’m going to prepare a place for you. If I prepare a place for you, I will come and bring you to Myself.’ Think of what Jesus is going to prepare.

Think on this: It’s going to be in New Jerusalem. Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest of all the prophets and he did no miracles. But the one who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John the Baptist. What God has for us is really something.

Verse 2: “My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.” This is the attitude that we

need. We're going to face a lot of tough times. This is going to give us the strength to face them.

Verse 3: "Yea, even the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God." Think of that, right at the top of the temple there, birds' nests.

Verse 4: "Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will still be praising You. Selah.... [notice what happens with this attitude] ...Blessed is the man whose strength is in You... [rather than in himself] ...Your ways are in their hearts; Who passing through the valley of weeping make it a place of springs; yea, the early rain also clothes it with blessings. They go from strength to strength, every one of them appearing in Zion before God" (vs 4-7). It's like saying, 'Let's have the saints on review.' So we all come marching by the throne of God. Can you imagine that?

Verse 8: "O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah" (v 8). So those three Psalms combined together show how we need to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Let's look at some other things concerning *righteousness*. Note Psa. 119:172—'All Your commandments are righteousness.' You can remember and use that for a lot of things, especially for some of your Protestant friends who say, 'Oh, that hateful law.' Don't get mad at them, just tell them about Psa. 19 where it says *it's perfect*. How can it be hateful if it's perfect?

- You say God is a God of love? *Yes!*
- You say God is a God of righteousness? *Yes!*
- Why would He give a law that's hateful?

Let's come to the book of Jeremiah, chapter three. Poor Jeremiah, he had a tough assignment. He even complained to God about it a couple of times. God told him, 'Don't worry, I'm with you.' It also shows us how we can recover from troubles and difficulties. This was when things were really going bad in Judah.

Jeremiah 3:21 "A voice was heard upon the high places weeping and supplications of the children of Israel; for they have perverted their way, *and* they have forgotten the LORD their God."

I was thinking of that and watching this thing with the terror attack in Boston and then they all came out with a new slogan—Boston-strong! Boston-strong! I was thinking, why don't they understand *they have to be strong in the Lord*? Instead of Boston-strong, it should be *God-strong!* *Christ-strong!*

Verse 22: "Return, O backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. 'Behold, we come to You; for You are the LORD our God. Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the high hills... [they come to their understanding, you're not going to do it your way.] ...Truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel'" (vs 22-23). That's what they have to look to.

Verse 24: "The shameful thing has eaten up the labor of our fathers from our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covers us; for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God" (vs 24-25).

Quite a thing! That's what's happened with America! I was going through a booklet, which was showing what happened when the pilgrims landed in Massachusetts. The wind came along and pushed them north. They were supposed to come to Virginia. Surprise! They landed in Massachusetts. What they did in praying and thanking God to be there; they had to leave England, go across the channel to Holland and hopefully get a ship to come over to the 'New World.' *When they got there they dedicated themselves to God!* There were some among them who were Sabbath-keepers because Sabbath-keepers were chased out of England. There were some who were Sunday-keepers.

God says when you're in a situation like that, Jeremiah 4:1: "'If you will return, O Israel,' says the LORD, 'Return to Me... [See how God does it?] ...And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be removed.'" God was saying, 'I'm going to send you away. I'm going to take you out of this land.' There's going to be a lot of death, destruction and slaughter in the meantime.

Here's what they needed to do, v 2: "And will swear, 'As the LORD lives,' **in Truth, in judgment, and in righteousness...** [That's how we need to approach God. Just think what would happen if the Protestants would repent to this point.] ...then the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him they shall glory."

That's really quite a thing for them there in coming after the righteousness of God. The Psalms have an awful lot to say about the righteousness of God. I think it's interesting how the Psalms start out. Let's see the blessing that comes from following God, in spite of what the world is doing.

Psalms 1:1: "Blessed is the man... [You want the blessing of God? *Yes, indeed!*] ...who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the

way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law does he meditate day and night.... [What's going to happen?] ...And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither, and all that he does shall prosper" (vs 1-3). That's juxtapositioned against the wicked.

Verse 4: "The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish" (vs 4-6).

Notice the confidence that this brings us in starting out all the Psalms and a confidence that we need to have. Psalm 4:1, and I like the way it begins: "Answer me when I call, O **God of my righteousness**... [all the righteousness that we have comes from God] ...You gave me relief *when I was* in distress... [That's what we need—right? *Yes!*] ...be gracious to me, and hear my prayer." He says answer me and hear.

Verse 2: "O sons of men, how long will my glory be put to shame? How long will you love delusions and seek after lies? Selah." We sure have a lot of that today—don't we? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 3: "But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for Himself... [Think on that! You have the Spirit of God; you have been set aside by God Himself. God is dealing in our lives directly.] ...The LORD will hear when I call to Him. Tremble, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah" (vs 3-4). There we go, God dealing with us in the night.

Verse 5: "Offer the **sacrifices of righteousness**... [What are the sacrifices of righteousness? *The fruits of the Spirit*, loving one another, loving God, keeping His commandments—all of those.] ...and put your trust in the Lord."

Psalm 5:1: "Give ear to my words, O LORD; consider my meditation." Stop and think about this. Is God a heart-knowing God? *Yes, He is!* That's what He's called in the New Testament. God knows the hearts of men. God knows everything that goes on in the mind.

What we produce out here for other people to see may not be what's going on in the mind. This is what conversion is all about. This is why there is repentance daily. This is why there's the washing of the water by the Word so that we can become converted and our minds can become changed and our minds can become righteous. "...consider my meditation." Stop and think about some of the

thoughts you don't want God to know about. He knows about it, but He's kind enough to reveal it so you can repent of it.

Verse 2: "Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You do I pray.... [notice how he's just reaching out to God] ...My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct my prayer to You, and I will look up" (vs 2-3). That's why pray everyday, pray every morning.

Verse 4: "For You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness; nor shall evil dwell with You." Think about the way the society is today. Compare that verse.

Verse 5: "The boasters... [opposite of being meek] ...shall not stand in Your sight. You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloody and deceitful man. But I, in the abundance of Your loving kindness, I will come into Your house; I will bow down in Your fear toward Your Holy temple" (vs 5-7). That's what it is when we pray—right? Our prayers go right up to God.

Verse 8: "Lead me, O LORD in **Your righteousness**... [We are to *hunger and thirst after righteousness* and we will be filled.] ...because of my enemies; make Your way straight before my face. For there is no Truth in their mouth; their inward part is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. Hold them guilty, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against You" (vs 8-10).

Would that happen to Washington, D.C.? That would be something—wouldn't it? I don't think we're going to see that.

Verse 11: "But let all who put their trust in You rejoice; let them always shout for joy because You defend them. And let those who love Your name exult... [that means *joyful*] ...in You, For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield" (vs 11-12). Yes, God is going to:

- watch over us
- take care of us
- be with us
- look after us

Here's what we are to do in these days, in this time, when we see evil on every side, Psalm 71:1: "In You, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame."

- if you're meek
- if you're humble
- if you're seeking after righteousness

- if you're loving God
- if you're doing all these things

God will do it!

Verse 2: "Deliver me **in Your righteousness** and cause me to escape..." Think about how many things you had come along that have gone right past you, that you have missed, and you're happy that you missed them.

"...incline Your ear unto me, and save me. Be my strong Rock of refuge to which I may always go..." (vs 2-3). Remember this: ***you sin, you have a guilty conscience, that's when you need to go to God and repent and have it cleaned up!*** Too many times we think, 'Oh, well, I'll go to God as soon as I get squared around.' How are you going to get yourself squared around when you've sinned against God? ***It has to come from God to get you squared around!***

Verse 3: "Be my strong Rock of refuge to which I may always go; You have commanded to save me; for You are my Rock and my Fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and ruthless man, for You are my hope, O Lord GOD, my trust from my youth" (vs 3-5).

That's how we need to approach God! This is how we need to hunger and thirst after God's way!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Timothy 3:1-5
- 2) Revelation 14:12
- 3) Matthew 5:3-5
- 4) Matthew 11:28-29
- 5) John 16:33
- 6) Numbers 12:1-3
- 7) Psalm 37:1-11
- 8) Psalm 25:1-10
- 9) Zephaniah 2:1-3
- 10) Matthew 5:6
- 11) John 6:35
- 12) Psalm 45:1-7
- 13) Psalm 42:1-5
- 14) Psalm 63:1-8
- 15) Psalm 84:1-8
- 16) Jeremiah 3:21-25
- 17) Jeremiah 4:1-2
- 18) Psalm 1:1-6
- 19) Psalm 4:1-5
- 20) Psalm 5:1-12
- 21) Psalm 71:1-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 5
- Romans 8

- John 14-16
- Ephesians 3
- Matthew 6:33
- Revelation 21, 22
- Psalm 119:172
- Psalm 19

Also referenced:

Series: *From Adolescence to Adulthood*
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Books:

- *The Death of the Grown-Up* by Diana West
- *Josephus*

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