



Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches

Weekly Update ~ February 23, 2007

Volume 3, Issue 8

Associational News & Prayer Requests

- Please pray for a possible church start in Freemont, Nebraska.
- Please continue to pray for John Sneed in Davenport, Iowa.
- Pray for a church in Waterloo, Iowa, as it makes several decisions about the future.
- Pray for the churches in Seneca, Kansas, and Dubuque, Iowa as they strive to find ways to proclaim the Gospel in Roman Catholic areas.
- Pray for the Lord to send workers into the harvest. While Kansas and the surrounding areas are certainly in a time of severe drought and famine spiritually, in our poverty let us pray and desire to send workers into other areas where the Gospel has never been heard or has been wiped out by years of Communism and that form of worldview. Pray that the Lord would send workers into the Czech Republic and Indonesia and don't refuse if one of those workers is you. Pray for the Lord to give you a broken heart and a true spirit of intercession for these places. Our greatest desire should be to seek His glory in the whole world in accordance to the Great Commission.
- If you would like to submit information for the weekly update, please e-mail it to trinityb@wamego.net.

Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches blog:
<http://spurgeonbaptistassociation.org/blog/>

To view back-issues of the Spurgeon Baptist Association weekly update, visit our website:
www.spurgeonbaptistassociation.org

SOUTHERN BAPTIST FOUNDERS CONFERENCE

MIDWEST 2007

"Feed My Sheep"

February 27 & 28th
 First Baptist Church, St. Peters, Missouri

Speakers:
 Dr. Pat Campbell
 Dr. Bill Ascol
 Dr. Tom Ascol
 Dr. Curtis McClain
 Rev. Jim Eliff
 Rev. Scott Lee

For more information, please visit the Founders website: wwwFOUNDERS.org/conferences

Beatitudes XVI, Hungering I

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

The first thing that should be noted in a verse like this is that those who are blessed are not dull and lifeless in their pursuit of God. These are not people who are half-hearted and settle for any little service or any little affection. No, those who are truly blessed are those that are marked by a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Let us not think that this is just a slight thirst and a slight hunger, but this is a life that is marked by a craving and a deep thirst for God and His glory. How we should be ashamed in our intellectually slovenly and religiously insipid lives and desires.

Jonathan Edwards puts it this way: "That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak,

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Beatitudes (Continued)

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dull and lifeless wouldings, raising us but a little above a state of indifference: God in His Word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good earnest, fervent in spirit, and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion." Christianity and true blessedness are not just a bit above indifference, or even a fair amount above indifference. It is to be earnest and fervent. It is to have our hearts vigorously engaged in religion. Edwards remarks again, in his book on *Religious Affections*, that "true religion, in great part, consists in holy affections." He then tells us what the affections are: "the more vigorous and sensible [things pertaining to the senses] exercises of the inclination and will of the soul." For Edwards (built on I Peter 1:8) true and biblical religion consisted in the vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul. Not just the exercise of some affections, but vigorous affections. As Scripture proclaims: "And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8).

Well, one might say, that is Jonathan Edwards. But what does Scripture say? After all, it is imminently rational and surely is above such things as Edwards speaks of. I Peter 1:8 has already been quoted, but it is only one verse. It speaks of a joy so great that it could not be expressed and that based on love for Christ. We then go on to read Psalm 36: 8: "They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights." If that is not strong enough, we can move on to Psalm 16:1:1" You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." Fullness of joy is only found in God. That full joy will never be found in the world. So why do people seek the things of the world with such desire and affection? Maybe believers have not discovered the true glory of Christ. Maybe believers are too much involved in the inferior things of the world too. After all, Psalm 73:25 should describe all of us: "Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And besides You, I desire nothing on earth."

As we look at these few verses of Holy Writ, let us understand that this is a common theme in Scripture. Man is not to live with weak desires toward God and His glory, but man is to be like Paul who said that for him "to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Whatever else that is, it is not half-hearted. Perhaps one real problem with the churches of

today is that things are so watered down and diluted with the world that people have no real hunger and thirst for God except to obtain worldly things. Churches today are far more like those described in Revelation 3:15-16 than we realize: "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.'" Rather than that, the biblical model is like the verses listed above from Psalm 16:11 and 73:25. We have far too many desires on earth and so we have virtually no hunger and thirst for things above. In other words, we are idolaters.

The things of the world have our affections & we give God but a nod. This beatitude takes that attitude & shoves it back in our face. We are to crave with insatiable desires Christ & righteousness. What has our hearts and affections? Do we show desires after Him? Do we have desires to be righteous? We have desires, but where are they? Are we hot for the things of the world and so cold to Christ? Does Psalm 42:1 ("As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God") and 63:3 ("Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You") describe the yearnings and cravings of our hearts? Why not? Has God and His glory changed? Are we just going on in the world with Christianity being part of our life, maybe even the largest part, but it is primarily intellectual? Where are those strong desires? What do our hearts burn within us for? Are we hungry for God's Word and prayer? Are we thirsty for Christ? God's people are commanded to love Him with all of their hearts, minds, souls, and strength. Where is the evidence for that? Sure there are many rock concerts given in the name of worship and there are places where tears and shouting may be heard. But where are those that have a true hunger and thirst for Christ Himself and not just the things they might get from Him?

We do not want or at least will rarely accept coldness or half-heartedness in the actions of others. We want children to obey with good attitudes. We want spouses to kiss with affection instead of wooden, perfunctory pecks. We want friendly waiters that will appear to enjoy serving us, and we find artificial sweetener in their smiles revolting. We find careless attitudes and divided attention revolting in salespeople. We desire those who help or wait on us to be sincere and joyful. Shouldn't we do at least the same for Christ? Do we praise our children or spouses in a wooden monotone voice

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Beatitudes (Continued)

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with a smile pasted on? Do we tell people that they did a good job or that we enjoyed what they did with a wooden monotone voice? Then why do we think that praise for Christ in song and prayer is acceptable in that way? We are much like some of the Israelites of old that brought to God as a sacrifice the lame and disfigured animals when they would not dream of giving those things to a human being as a gift.

Hungering and thirsting is a sign of a desire or even need in the soul. We must have nutrition, so we hunger. We must have water, so we thirst. We must have love, so we hunger. We must have life, so we thirst for the fountain of life. Our bodies hunger for the elements of life, so the soul hungers for the elements of its life. We crave the bread of life and the water of life. We hunger for the milk of the word and the meat of the word. For dessert we taste and see that the Lord is good and that the judgments of the Lord are sweeter than the drippings of honey from the honeycomb. The eyes of the soul hungers for beauty, and it is satisfied with the character of God displayed in nature and most of all in Christ. The ears of the soul longs to hear delightful sounds and is only satisfied with the voice of Christ in the Word. The soul hungers for pleasure and that is found in the command to delight ourselves in the Lord. The world seeks pleasure with entertainment and sensuality. The believer seeks Christ above all and finds true pleasure in Him. The believer has pleasure in his food, digestion, and drink because they are Christ. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is not walking around with a lack all of the time, it is one that is filled and the filling leads to more desires for walking with and pleasing God.

A true hunger and thirst for righteousness is a sign of love for God. II Timothy 2:22 shows this: "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." One must flee from youthful lusts in order to pursue righteousness. But along with pursuing righteousness one must pursue faith, love, and peace. That is part and parcel of pursuing righteousness. But those things are necessary if one is to call on the Lord from a pure heart. What is a pure heart? It is a single and undivided heart, or an unmixed heart. Its focus is on God and God alone. This shows that to pursue true righteousness one must be pursuing it out of love for God. I John 3:10 also shows this: "By this the children of God and the

children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." Love for God and our brother (Greatest Commandments) are not possible if one does not practice righteousness. True love and true righteousness go hand in hand and cannot be separated. The pursuit of righteousness flows from a heart that loves God.

We think of Christianity as something added on to the rest of our lives rather than being our life itself. The true form of hungering and thirsting comes from the life of Christ in the soul. He gives the soul its desires and works in it the pursuit of God. It is this concept that makes sense out of Philippians 2:13, "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure." Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is indeed the work of Christ giving the soul a hunger and thirst to be like Him. To put it another way, hungering and thirsting after righteousness is the work of grace in the soul. It is possible for people to hunger and thirst in some way to be moral for the sake of self-righteousness. That means that people long to have a form of righteousness out of self-love and want it for a selfish purpose. But the true hungering and thirsting after righteousness is the work of grace in the soul. It is grace giving the soul the desires to do all for the glory of God. Assuredly, then, a true hunger and thirst in the soul is the work of grace drawing a person to share in the glory that flows from the throne of God to His people who are united to Christ in love. Being united to Christ in love and receiving the love that flows from the Father through the Son to His people which gives them a love for Him is indeed the greatest of blessing. As hungering and thirsting are the workings of the body that demonstrate a lack of food, so hungering and thirsting spiritually show us our desperate need to feed our souls upon the glory of God in Christ. There is satisfaction and joy in that, but also a longing to know more and more of God.

Richard Smith

SBC Prayer Lines

Use these numbers year round to obtain current missions prayer requests.

North American Missions ~ 1-800-554-PRAY

International Missions ~ 1-800-395-PRAY