



## **The Trusting Heart**

Matthew 5:6, John 14:1, Isaiah 43:1-4

After we mourn over past sin, then we become hungry for righteousness. Jesus spoke these words: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” (Matthew 5:6) The Lord’s kingdom is not for the self-sufficient but it is for those who have realized their own need. The world’s hungering and thirsting is in the pursuit of material

possessions. The Jews sought to establish their own righteousness through the law but failed to submit to God’s righteousness. As Christian we are first justified to gain the right relationship with God and to accept God’s righteousness, then we are to seek it continually in our daily living.

The Pharisees practiced external righteousness through legalism (following the rigid letter of the law) but Christ wants inner righteousness of heart, mind and motive. Moral righteousness is that righteousness of character and conduct which pleases God. As Christians we are to hunger and thirst for this righteousness. We do not seek righteousness through our own works. Our righteousness comes through a right relationship with God.

A dictionary will tell us that to be righteous is to be morally right or virtuous and law-abiding. Anyone can aspire to this description, but having God’s righteousness means to be living according to God’s standards. We do not become righteous by our own goodness but God sees us as righteous because of our faith in Jesus Christ.

To the Christian, righteousness is not for the benefit of the individual only. It extends through the Christian to the home, business and civic organizations. A healthy, hearty spiritual appetite means progress in a Christian life. Psalm 107:9 says “for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.” God promises a day of judgment when right will triumph and wrong will be overthrown. “But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.” (II Peter 3:13)

Hunger and thirst are perpetual characteristics. They are satisfied at times but one must keep returning to the food and water that satisfies them. Our hunger and thirst will not be totally satisfied until we enter heaven. “Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:16-17)

This hungering and thirsting should not be only for the blessings that God gives but it should be hungering and thirsting after God himself. This is what David was speaking of when he wrote Psalm 42:1, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.” God longs to fill us with His righteousness. Happiness comes as a by-product of God’s

righteousness.

When we are God's children and trust in Him we have nothing to fear. In Isaiah God tells the Israelites that they are His and therefore have nothing to fear. Ask someone to read Isaiah 43:1-4 aloud.

In the New Testament, Jesus confirms that His followers should fear nothing. When Jesus was comforting his disciples in the upper room before his death he said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me." (John 14:1) Jesus knew that His disciples were facing a time of fear and disillusionment and even shame. His answer for them is to completely put their trust in God and their Savior. His words also speak to us in today's world when we face our own fears. We may have fears for the security of our families and of ourselves, fears about finding the right partner or of losing a partner, fears of inadequacy, and many other kinds of fear. Whatever the situation in which we find ourselves, whether at the present time or in the future, our assurance is that we can trust in God and do not have to deal with our fears alone.

### **Heart-to-Heart Activities:**

1. As a group, sing the hymn, *As the Deer*.
2. On a chalkboard or chart make two columns. In the first column have women of the group list the types of fears they are currently facing in their lives. In the second column list what they believe Jesus' response to their fears might be. When this list is finished, the leader may use these fears in a responsive prayer with the participants responding after each fear named: "In God I trust; I will not be afraid."

Example:     **Leader:** When I fear for the security of my family;  
                  **Everyone:** In God I trust; I will not be afraid."

(Continue in this way until you have covered all the fears.)

### **Reflection Questions:**

- ♥ What does the word "righteous" mean to you? With a partner, discuss your thoughts and feelings about being called "righteous."
- ♥ Name some ways in which you hunger and thirst after righteousness. As a "Woman of the Word" how have you tried to fill your hungering and thirsting? What happened? What did you do? What can you do tomorrow to try to fill your hunger and thirst? Next week? Next month? Next year?
- ♥ Can we ever be satisfied with being righteous enough?
- ♥ With a partner, name some things that make you fearful. What do you do to try and overcome your fears? With your partner spend a few moments praying for each other. Pray for courage, fears, presence of God, comfort, etc. Should Christians lead

fearful lives?

**Prayer:**

Righteous God,

Thank You for giving us Your great standards to guide our living. Forgive us for those times when we do not measure up to those high standards. Renew in us the desire to align our lives more closely to Christ's example. Help us to place absolute trust in You at those times when we become fearful. May others be able to glimpse You through the efforts we make to be like Christ. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen