

# Hunger and Thirst After What?

## Upside Down series

by Bill Aumack

So we're in our Beatitude series. Today we're looking at hunger and thirst after what? What is it? Righteousness, hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Let's be honest, this is something you have never said in your life. Right? You have never said, "Hey, look at Marie over there. Boy, she really hungers and thirst after righteousness, doesn't she?" You have never said that. And even when I think of people in my life, that were godly men and women, they were good Christians. They were doing it right. We don't describe them that way. We say they were good Christians. They were a devoted Christ follower. They were loving. They were kind. We never say, boy, they really hunger and thirst after righteousness. So what does that even mean? What does righteousness mean? dictionary.com says it's "acting in accord with divine or moral law, free from guilt or sin." Well, do we ever get that on this side of eternity? No. Right? We don't become perfect until we get to heaven. But it's something we're supposed to hunger and thirst after. Okay.

Now, you've heard the saying, You are what you eat. Right? So what if we apply that to this here? What do we put into our minds, into our souls, into our hearts? I was reading a report online and they said that the average American today watches more violence and sex on TV in one week than their grandparents were exposed to their entire life. Right, what's going in? In the computer science world, we have a saying "garbage in, garbage out." Right? We like to blame the computer because it did it wrong. Why did it do it wrong? Because we put the wrong thing in. Okay, garbage in, garbage out. And that's what happens. And many of us are not seeking righteousness. If we look around the world, are people seeking righteousness by and large? No, what's everybody after? Happiness. I want to be happy. And we look for happiness in a lot of ways. We look for it and power and pleasure, possessions, prestige. But the command is not to hunger and thirst after happiness. It's to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The story is told about Socrates or if you're a Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure, so crates, we'll never forget that. Go San Dimas High. But this young man comes up to Socrates and he wants to learn he says I want to be a student. I want knowledge. I want you to teach me. And Socrates says follow me. And they walk through the town down to the shore and out into the sea. And all of a sudden right about waist deep in the sea. Socrates grabs the young man and plunges him underwater and holds him there. And the man is struggling, is trying [to get up]. And just about the time he stops the struggle, Socrates pulls him up out of the water. The kid is coughing and spluttering. Socrates drags him back to the shore, throws him down on the sand and walks back into town. After the kid recovers he comes to looking for Socrates says, "Why did you try to kill me?" Socrates says "when I was holding you underwater. What did you want? More than anything?" He says, "I wanted to breathe. I wanted air!" Socrates says "when you want knowledge, as much as you wanted air, then you're ready to be my student."

How much do we want to seek righteousness? Are we hungering and thirsting after it? Right? Have you missed a meal? Sometimes you're busy at work. You skip lunch. What happens at supper time? I'm all hungry, right? Maybe Maybe you get sick for a couple days. You don't feel like eating. You start to feel better and what happens? I'm hungry. Right? Go raid the refrigerator, right? Do we seek out righteousness the same way we seek out food?

There's a lot of examples we could look at in the Bible, but there's one in particular I want to look at today. So take out your sermon notes. Get out your Bibles. Let's turn to Daniel chapter one. Daniel chapter one. So Psalms is in about the middle your Bible, Daniels a couple of books after that. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel. Daniel chapter one. What happens in Daniel chapter one?

What happens in Daniel chapter one? Right, Nebuchadnezzar comes with his forces, lays siege to Jerusalem, take some of the gold out of the temple and those precious things, take some of the people and he heads back to Babylon. Okay. Let's look at verse three. Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his court officials to bring into the king service some of the Israelites from the royal family and nobility, young men without any physical defect handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, qualified to serve

in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language in the literature of the Babylonians, the king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the King's table. They were to be trained for three years. And after that they were to enter the king service sounds a lot like college. Three years of studying and then you go into service. Okay? Look at verse eight. But Daniel resolved not to what defile himself with the Royal food and wine, he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way. Now God had caused the official to show favour and compassion to Daniel. But the official told Daniel, I'm afraid of my Lord, the King who has assigned you your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? Then the king would have my head because of you.

Right, fair enough. And so Daniel proposes a test in verse 10, right? He says, Hey, let's do a 10 day test. You bring us some vegetables to eat. And at the end of 10 days, we'll see how we look at how we compare. Now I don't know if any of you have ever gone on a diet. But at the end of 10 days, do you see too much difference? Not usually, right? Maybe you start to feel a little better, you know, you're eating better, you feel a little better. But you know, at the end of 10 days, how much difference do you see? So, you know, this is pretty brave. And he says, I'm so confident that you'll see a difference in 10 days. That's putting your money where your mouth is. Right? Verse 15. At the end of 10 days, they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young man who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were given and gave them vegetables instead. Wow. Verse 17. To these four young men, God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. Wow. Because they ate vegetables? I've been eating vegetables my whole life, that's not happened to me.

Now, what does verse eight say? Daniel resolved not to what? Defile himself. And when they resolved not to defile themselves, or when they resolved to seek righteousness, right? If you're not defining yourself, you're seeking righteousness, right? When they resolve to seek righteousness, what happened? Verse 17, they were filled with knowledge, understanding, and they could understand visions

and dreams. Sounds like blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be what? filled.

Number one, there is never a better time to seek righteousness than the moment you are in. Daniel was not in a good moment. Right? His city that he grew up in has been largely destroyed. People he knows and loves are dead. He's a prisoner in a foreign land. Right? Things are not going well. And what happens to most of us when things are not going well? We cry out to God right? But what do we do? God, why are you doing this to me? I was always a good kid went to temple every Sabbath. Right? Come on, I know you guys have done that. I don't deserve this God. But Daniel doesn't do that. Daniel seeks God and says, I'm not going to defile myself that way. Right? I'm going to seek righteousness even then. Because a lot of times we can be, you know, we want to wait till the time is right. Right. There's always going to be a better time sometime in the future. When I get my house, when the kids are a little bit older. Man, they are driving me crazy right now. When the kids get out of the house, because they're still driving me crazy. When I retire. When I when I get that promotion at work. There's always something down the road that we say, well, then things will be better and I'll do it then. Right? There is never a better time to seek righteousness than the moment you are in. Okay, there's a bonus thing here we could talk about. Here we see God keeping a promise to Daniel that Jesus hasn't made yet. We talked about God being the same, beginning to end. Here's a perfect example. He hasn't told us yet he will do this. That doesn't happen for a couple of 100 more years. But God's the same and he does it for Daniel long before the promise is ever made.

All right, let's flip over to Daniel chapter six. What stories in Daniel chapter six? Daniel in the lion's den, right. We know and love this story. We've learned the story. And if you've been around church, you've been doing this since you were a little kid. Daniel and the lion's den now, we're going to hear a lot about satraps. I had to look up this word and see how to say it right? Because it's where the syllable goes. The syllable goes after the T before the R, sat-raps, okay. And this is derived from an old Latin word that basically means governor. Okay, so these are going to be rulers. Okay. So, here we see a new King Darius, Nebuchadnezzar is gone. We have Darius, and Darius is setting up some satraps to rule over the people and some administrators to rule over them, and then there's going to be the king. This is the same thing Moses does in the Old Testament, right? It's the

same thing we do in our current way of governing, right. There's local leaders, and then we have layers of leaders, right. So this is this is the system he's setting up. So let's begin here, verse one, it leaves Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel, the satraps are made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel, so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king plan to sent him over the whole kingdom. Who does this sound like? Joseph goes from a prisoner to second in charge to Pharaoh. And here we have Daniel going from prisoner to second in charge under King Darius, right? Very similar

verse 4. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were on able to do so they could find no corruption in him because he was trustworthy, and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally, these men said, we will never find any basis of charge against this man, Daniel, unless it has something to do with the law of his God.

So these people are looking for something to accuse Daniel of right? Make him look bad in front of the king. I don't know about you, but if people weren't looking for something in my life to find, they'd find some. Right? I haven't been that good. But when they looked at Daniel's life, they couldn't find anything. Nothing. He was not negligent in anything. He was not corrupt. That's the only thing we can find is what you know, he follows his God. So you know the story, they get the king, they appeal to the kings pride, say, hey, for 30 days make a law that nobody can worship anybody, but you for 30 days. And the king is like, yeah, that sounds good. And well, let's do that. So he makes the law. And then verse 14, records the king's reaction when he learns that Daniel is still praying to God. Verse 14, says, He was greatly distressed. He was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort from to sundown to save him. But remember, when the king made a law, there was a law that the king couldn't unmake the law. So the law had to stand and he tried every loophole that he could try to get around it and he couldn't. So And finally in verse 16, they have to put Daniel in the lion's den. Verse 16, says, Darius tells Daniel May your god whom you serve continually rescue you, and He

seals the stone with his own ring. Darius, trust Daniels God more than he trust his own satraps. And He seals the thing to stop any funny business. There's no sleep that night. Of course, the next morning, they race down there, verse 21. Daniel answered the king, May the king live forever. My God sent His angels and he shut the lion's mouth. They have not hurt me because I was found innocent in his site. He sought righteousness, nor have I done anything wrong before you your majesty. The king was overjoyed gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him because he trusted God.

What do we learn from this? Seeking righteousness will not guarantee you a problem-free life? I mean, Daniel's gonna be going, . "God really? What is it? I'm gonna prisoner. all this bad stuff happened to me. I've been following you. I've been perfect. Nobody can find anything wrong with me. And now they're still persecuting me." Right, this would be a great chance to whine and cry and complain, wouldn't it? But Daniel, during this whole thing, there's nothing recorded that he ever said a word to defend himself. He just let happen, what was going to happen. You will have problems in your life. Daniel had problems Jesus had problems we all have problems. But when you seek righteousness, you see your problems differently. They are no longer the universe is trying to get to. Everybody's out to kill me, everybody's out to get me. Nobody likes me God. Why? Why why, right? It's not that anymore. Now this is an opportunity to show the goodness of God. This is an opportunity to be righteous, and to say, hey, it's alright. Now, if we look through history, there's a whole bunch of Christian martyrs that don't get delivered from the quote unquote, Lions Den. Right? There's Christian martyrs that have died through the years. You're not guaranteed to be saved, you're not guaranteed all these things to seek righteousness. You are guaranteed to be filled. There is a difference.

All right, real quick. Last thing, let's go over to chapter 10. The rest of Daniel is a lot of visions and interpretations of the visions. Remember way back and or when Daniel was a young man, God gave him the ability to understand visions. So there's a lot of talk about visions, we don't have time to go through all those that will take months. But in chapter 10, Daniel has a dream, and he doesn't understand it. Now remember his whole life, he's been able to understand dreams. And now all of a sudden, he's an old man, and he can't understand the

dream. Right? Do you get why that's frustrating to him? Okay. And he's been working on this dream for three weeks trying to figure out what it means. And one day he's down by the river with some friends and someone appears to Daniel, the friends that he's with, can't see the person that appears to Daniel, but they somehow feel His presence and leave in terror. That's weird. You're hanging with your friends and all of a sudden they are booking out of there scared for their lives. Okay, look how Daniel describes this person in verse 5. A man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz was around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face was like lightning. His eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs, like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice, like the sound of a multitude. Sounds intimidating to me. Right? I mean, let's face it, if you saw somebody that looked like that, what would your first reaction be? I'm out of here. Right? The old flee mentality, right? Protect oneself. That sounds pretty intimidating. Okay. And Daniel falls to the ground overwhelmed verse 10. A hand touched me and sent me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, Daniel, you are what? highly esteemed. And wait a minute. Here's an angel from God, who appears to Daniel and what does he say to Daniel? You are highly esteemed. Wow. Wow. You are highly esteemed. Consider carefully the words I'm about to speak to you stand up now for I have been sent to you. And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. Okay, now we get a great look behind the scenes at the spiritual warfare that's going on this. This being [angel] talks about being held up by other forces, and help need to be sent to so he could get through. And that's why Daniel hasn't understood this dream, because for 21 days a battle has been going on. And that's why this being has got a belt of gold around his waist, because it's girding up his his robe so that he can fight. And now he's here to talk today and after 21 days of battle. It'd be worthwhile to go look at that vision, but we don't have time. So let's go all the way to the very end of Daniel. Daniel chapter 12, verse 13.

Daniel 12:13, very last verse of Daniel. And then this is the being talking to Daniel and he says, "As for you go your way till the end, you will rest. And then at the end of days, you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." What happens to Daniel when he dies? Does he go to heaven? No. Does he go to hell? No. Where does he go? He goes to rest. And at the end of days, he's going to rise and do what? receive His allotted inheritance, eternal life. Right.

Those who seek righteousness will be filled, if not in this life, in the next

The question is, how can we become the type of person who hungers and thirst after righteousness? How do we live our lives so that somebody we know will finally say oooooo.... You know that guy, he really hungers and thirst after righteousness. How do we do that? What would that take? That's easy to put Daniel on some kind of pedestal and say, I could never do that. I couldn't be like Daniel. But what made Daniel different than you and me? Maybe if we did what Daniel did, hunger and thirst after righteousness, we'd be something special too. What if instead of watching TV for a couple hours every night, we spent that hungering and thirsting after righteousness? What if instead of putting our nose in our phone all the time for Tik Tok and Facebook and YouTube and on and on and on and on? We hunger and thirst after righteousness? What have we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone? Never leave home without it. Some of you go on haha Bill, I got you, I put my Bible on my cell phone. When was the last time you opened it? Having the Bible on your cell phone and never opened doesn't do you no good!

How do we do that? Your challenge this week, no matter how much time you spend in study and prayer each day, spend a little bit more. Some of you may be if you're brutally honest, may be at zero. I'm not spend any time. Okay, two minutes. Try to two minutes. Some of you are saying, I do two minutes. I read that little, you know, one page devotional thing that comes out in the book. I spent two minutes. All right, four minutes for you. Some of you may say I'm spending half an hour. All right. 45 minutes for you. Some of you may be saying I'm alright. You know, I'm righteous. I spend an hour. All right, An hour and half for you. Up your game. It's playoff time. The End Days are coming. It's time to up the game. Right? What are you doing? To be the kind of person will say They hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to be the kind of people that seek righteousness above everything else. Above the food, above the water, even above air itself, Lord, let us resolve like Daniel not to be defiled, not to put garbage into our system. But to focus on the things that are pure and good and kind. The things that come from you. Lord, help us to be these kinds of people.

Because it's what you've commanded us to do. Be with us in this upcoming week.  
In Jesus name, Amen.