



Satisfaction through Surrender (Part 3): Be Righteous and Merciful

Do you desire any life apart from God? That's sin, which leaves a gap between God and us, accompanied by a desire to have it filled (Isaiah 59:2). It's a vicious cycle. We attempt to satisfy our sinful desires apart from God through *unrighteousness* and then try to fill the resulting gap with our *self-righteousness*. Consequently, we are left dissatisfied.

Righteousness is important to God Who wants us to do what's right more than He wants us to give a tithe or an offering (Proverbs 21:3). However, our best at doing right is like filthy rags in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6). Either we think that our desire to fill the gap will be satisfied by our own self-righteousness, or we just give up and continue to sin in our unrighteousness. It's as if we are damned if we do and damned if we don't. Jesus gave us an alternative in the fourth secret to satisfaction through surrender saying, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled*" (Matthew 5:6).

Who are satisfied? Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are satisfied. Jesus proclaimed, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*" (Matthew 5:6). Righteousness is what is right in God's sight. We find a hunger and thirst for righteousness in the heart of Christ who did not sin, but became the payment for our sin, so that in Him we might be the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Just like us, Jesus was tempted in every way and did not sin (Hebrews 4:15). He is the only truly righteous one. Jesus' close friend said it this way, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the father in our defense—Jesus Christ the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1). Consequently, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness desire Christ, the righteousness of God.

Why are they satisfied? "*They will be filled*" (Matthew 5:6). The desire and the resulting gap can only be filled by Christ, who fills everything in every way (Ephesians 1:22-23). The psalmist said that the Lord satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things (Psalm 107:9). Sin never satisfies, and its resulting gap in our hearts will never be satisfied outside of Christ.

How are they satisfied? They surrender their sin, which comes in two forms: *unrighteousness* and *self-righteousness*.

First, we must surrender our unrighteousness. Paul compelled the self-indulged Romans to surrender their unrighteousness to Christ, clothing themselves in His righteousness, not even thinking about how to gratify the desires of their sinful nature (Romans 13:14). We must exchange our unrighteous filthy rags for the righteousness of Christ.

Second, we must surrender our self-righteousness—our self-atonement program to fill the gap left by sin. Jesus said that our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law to even enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20). He challenged the Pharisees to acknowledge their pretense of self-righteousness on the outside while they were unrighteous on the *inside* (Matthew 23:27-28). Once again, we discover that satisfaction through surrender is a heart issue. Jesus pleaded with the self-righteous to surrender to Him, but they were not willing (Matthew 23:37). Neither will we unless we surrender our self-righteousness filthy rags, exchanging them for the righteousness of Christ. Surrender says to Christ, “I can’t. You can. I can’t satisfy my desires. God, in Christ, You can. I can’t fill the gap of my sin. God, in Christ, You can.”

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Surrender your sin and its gap to Christ by letting go of your unrighteousness and your self-righteous attempts to compensate for your desire apart from Him and its resulting chasm. You will be satisfied when you hunger and thirst for Christ.

Conclusion

Left to our sinful nature, we seek satisfaction of our desires in our pride, attempting to be designer and restorer of our own lives. However, in God’s kingdom, the pathway up is down, through the door of humility. We find *satisfaction through surrender* to Christ who brings us into the kingdom of heaven when we say to Him, “I can’t. You can.”

Where do you go to satisfy your desires? Jesus gave the secret to satisfaction in the greatest speech ever given when he addressed an estimated 20,000 followers along the mountainside outside Capernaum. He taught that we find *satisfaction through surrender* to Christ who brings us into the kingdom of heaven, His will for our lives.

(5) Satisfied are the Merciful (Matthew 5:7)

Who has seized an opportunity to wrong you? Do you find yourself believing that your desires can be satisfied only through condemnation of that person? Perhaps, you pray for God to bring justice, conviction, and punishment. Too often this is the case in our lives, and we discover that seeking satisfaction of our desires through condemnation of an offender leaves us dissatisfied. In His fifth secret to satisfaction through surrender, Jesus offered us a different way: “*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy*” (Matthew 5:7).

Who are satisfied? The merciful are satisfied. Jesus taught, “*Blessed are the merciful*” (Matthew 5:7). By definition mercy implies two components: (1) someone is condemned and (2) someone is forgiven. This takes place in our lives vertically with God and horizontally with others. As sinners, each of us stood condemned vertically with God (Romans 5:16-18). Consequently, when we condemn others horizontally in our relationships, we are dissatisfied (Romans 2:1). In His statement about the kingdom of heaven—God’s divine reign, rule, and order in our hearts and lives now and in the future—Jesus said that horizontal mercy is evidence of vertical mercy received from God.

The Bible tells us that mercy is the desire of Christ’s heart (Matthew 9:13, 36; 12:7; John 3:17-18). One of the most powerful images of mercy rests in the story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). “Mercy” in Latin, *miser cordia*, combines two words “pity” and “heart.” Mercy flows from the heart cheerfully and only by the gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:8).

Why are they satisfied? “*They will be shown mercy*” (Matthew 5:7). They will receive mercy vertically from God. They will be free of condemnation. Paul said that there is no condemnation for those who are in the mercy of Christ (Romans 8:1). The Old Testament prophet Micah said that God delights in giving mercy to those who are condemned (Micah 7:18-19). Recognizing our mercy received vertically from God in Christ frees us to show mercy horizontally to others.

How are they satisfied? They surrender their condemnation—vertically and horizontally (Luke 6:36-37). Jesus said that if we are not characterized and known by administering mercy horizontally to others, then we will not receive mercy from God (Matthew 6:14-15). To do so, we must surrender our condemnation. Surrender says to

God, “I can’t. You can. I can’t satisfy my desires through condemnation of the person who wronged me. You can satisfy my desires through mercy.”

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By the power of the Holy Spirit, surrender your condemnation of the person who wronged you today. You will be satisfied through mercy.