

Lessons From the Sermon of Jesus on the Mountain Part 18

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled:” (Matthew 5:6 KJV)

We continue in this message to study how we hunger and thirst for righteousness from studying the life of the righteous man called Cornelius:

“1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. 9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. 21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath

shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? 30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” (Acts 10:1-33 KJV)

In verse 22 the soldiers who came to call Peter told him about Cornelius, *“And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.” (Acts 10:22 KJV)* They mentioned about Cornelius that he is a just man. The Greek word that is used for ‘just’, is ‘*Dikaios*’, and it means ‘*Righteous man observing divine laws*’. Cornelius was a Gentile, not a believer in Christ, he had not yet met Christ, but he was observing the divine laws. The questions how the divine laws were revealed to him? Paul said to the Romans, *“14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” (Romans 2:14-16 KJV)* The Scripture here explains how they were following the divine law that is the law of God, and the works of the law of God are written in their hearts, and their conscience is convicting them, bearing witness in their minds and thoughts that they need to obey God’s Word and instruction that they are receiving from the Holy Spirit.

Cornelius was following the divine laws of God that is why you find him believing in one God and not in idols. He was not immoral, not fornicator, not extortionist, and taking advantage of people like the rest of the Gentiles, and their soldiers they were doing.

So righteous men need to observe the divine law; those who had met Christ follow and observe the Word of God and will live according to the doctrines of God’s Word.

But those who did not know about Christ and about the Scriptures they will be directed by the laws of God and the work of the laws of God that are written in their hearts that they are receiving by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they will do spontaneously the things that God wanted them to do.

As we are studying Scriptures, the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the life of righteous men in the Bible, we are learning new things. What we are informed from Scriptures will help us to be later on transformed as we are willing to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Now, what are the things that Cornelius did that showed He is a righteous man? And what are the things that Cornelius did and we can learn and apply in our lives to live a righteous life that God desires to see in us?

1. Cornelius was a devout man: ***“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” (Acts 10:2 KJV)*** The Greek word for ‘devout’, is ‘Eusebes’, and the meaning of it is ‘pious, or dutiful’. Pious is virtuous, dutiful and moral. So Cornelius was a man who believes and follow moral values and, who has virtue (which means asset, the character that will bring goodness to others, good quality, good rules, good value and good worth) that will finally lead to good work and impartation of good things into the people lives. The man who is righteous in his life and conduct is a dutiful person, who will do a good job in order for him to achieve good service to the people around him.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, we need to dedicate ourselves to develop the virtue and the dutiful things, that we need to achieve what is right as ordained by God and He wants us to do righteous things to others.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, we need to dedicate ourselves to develop the virtue and the dutiful things so we can impart the goodness of God to the people who are under our care and those who are around us.

2. Cornelius was a man who fear God: ***“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” (Acts 10:2 KJV)*** Cornelius was a man who feared God, who would not do anything without God’s permission or God’s approval. Although he was a soldier, a centurion who was responsible for over one hundred soldiers, he was a man who fears God. *As we hunger and thirst for righteousness, then we need to endeavor to live in the fear of the Lord.* Cornelius, had power and he had soldiers under his power but he did not use them to harm others because he was a man who feared God.

3. Cornelius was a man who fear God with all his house: ***“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” (Acts 10:2 KJV)*** Cornelius had also reared up his house (his family and those who are living with him in the same house) and trained them to fear God. *As we hunger and thirst for righteousness, then we need to endeavor to train our families and reared them in the fear of the Lord. Not only our families but those who are with us in the same household; those who are living with us.* Cornelius, after he saw the vision, sent two of his servants and one soldier who is devout and of the same mind and way of life, ***“And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually.” (Acts 10:7 KJV)*** Who when they arrived at Peter, they gave the good report about Cornelius of how he is a just man who fears God, and ***“And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.” (Acts 10:22 KJV)*** *Therefore we are called to train our families and those who are living with us to live a righteous life in the fear of the Lord. Dear Brethren everyone of us is called to care, to love, and train our households in the righteousness of God.*

4. Cornelius gave much alms to the people: ***“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” (Acts 10:2 KJV)*** Being a righteous man, Cornelius did not forget to do his part toward the people who are in need of his material or financial help. *To hunger and thirst for righteousness, we are called to help those who are in need of physical and material needs.*

We are called to give much, but we need to find the real poor, who will not only be receptive to receive material helps and finances, but as well as, instruction and guidance from God’s Word. Cornelius was in contact with people who are in need; he was a blessing to the people who are in need. He was not in contact with rich people, but he was more in contact and associate with poor people whom he not only helped but he led them to the Lord.

5. Cornelius was living a life of consistent prayers to God: ***“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” (Acts 10:2 KJV)*** Cornelius *prayed to God alway*; he was a man of prayer along the way because He believed that all His needs will be met and satisfied by the Lord alone. *Righteous men and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will have a life of prayers with fellowship and communion with God.* Cornelius was always holding prayers in his house with his family and with those who are part of his household, ***“And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing.” (Acts 10:30 KJV)*** *Many people are good in prayer in the church and in Bible studies, and among friends, but they are not willing to hold daily prayer with their families and with their households.*

6. Cornelius was living a life of fasting: ***“And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing.” (Acts 10:30 KJV)*** *Righteous men and people who hunger and thirst for righteousness, delight in fasting and not feasting. We are called to keep days to fast as we are led by the Holy Spirit of God to fast for certain struggles and issues that we need God, the Holy Spirit to fill us and to go before us to combat the enemy, and to speak to us and instruct us of what we need to achieve and to do.*

Cornelius fasting continued till the third hour in the afternoon, ***“And at the ninth hour I prayed in my house.” (Acts 10:30 KJV)*** Before he wants to break his fast he held a prayer in his house to endorse his petition to the Lord and sump up to him his requests and desires behind his fasting. The ninth hour was the time of the evening sacrifice, the time that Jesus on the cross gave up His Spirit and died and brought us to God after he paid the penalties for our sins.

7. Cornelius was of good report among the people of God: ***“And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.” (Acts 10:22 KJV)*** Cornelius was known among the people of God that he was a righteous man who fears God and lives for Him and serve Him. *Now a day as the love of most is growing cold, the people of God started to*

compromise, and for this reason, we who want to live a righteous life and is doing all that we can to hunger and thirst for righteousness, need to correct them and rebuke them whenever that is needed.

Therefore, for this reason, we might be hated by others and getting a bad reputation because of our firm and strict stand. God will see us through that, and He will give us the favor whenever and wherever is needed.

Now a day when we see people love so much a certain person, then we need to have doubt for that person. If that person will be strict and disciplinary with the people, they will hate him.

As well as certain times, the devil, the accuser of the brethren, will accuse us and try to make us believe that we are of bad report, but the Lord, is our help, the Holy Spirit will work for our behalf and will speak to defend us. All we need to do is go back to the Scriptures and compare ourselves with the Word of God and trust Him as long as we are obeying His Word.

8. Cornelius was assured by the Lord: The Lord spoke to him clearly, “**4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.**” (Acts 10:4, 31 KJV) In the same way, as we hunger and thirst for righteousness our prayers and acts will be in line with the will of God, and the time shall come that the Lord who hears our prayers will answer them, and He will come Himself and comfort us and assure us about His acceptance to the way we live and for our prayers.

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius he declared that Cornelius is a righteous man and He is accepted by the Lord, “**34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**” (Acts 10:34-35 KJV) That is another comfort that Cornelius received from the Lord through Apostle Peter. We need to persevere in our prayer, fasting, righteousness, giving help to the poor, living in the fear of the Lord and train our families and household to be in the same style of life, and let us be assured that one day the Lord shall visit us and confirm to us the truth that we are walking on.

The assurance of the Lord is not like the assurance that we receive from the world. God in a certain time will keep silent for a long time, and we will not hear from Him. He might take a long time to commend us and what we are doing. God does so to tests us so that He will test our faith and obedience to Him.

So as Cornelius was listening to Peter he received the assurance and the acceptance of God toward him. So when we hear the message, we receive the assurance and the acceptance of God, as well as God’s instruction of what He needs us to do.

9. Cornelius was a righteous man who took the warning of God: “**And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for**

thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.” (Acts 10:22 KJV) He is like Noah, when God warned him, he responded immediately. Cornelius took the warning seriously and immediately send for Peter to bring Peter from Joppa to Caesarea to hear what God wanted him to hear from God’s Word through Peter. As we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we ought to obey immediately, and hearken to His voice and obey His command so we will be receiving further blessings and encouragement from the Lord.

My dear and beloved: As we are studying Scriptures, the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the life of righteous men in the Bible, we are learning new things. What we are informed from Scriptures will help us to be later on transformed as we are willing to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness means the followings:

Righteous men need to observe the divine law, therefore you who had met Christ ought to follow and observe the Word of God and will live according to the doctrines of God’s Word.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you need to dedicate yourself to develop the virtue and the dutiful things, that you need to achieve what is right as ordained by God and He wants you to do righteous things to others.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you need to dedicate yourselves to develop the virtue and the dutiful things so you can impart the goodness of God to the people who are under your care and those who are around you.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, then you need to endeavor to live in the fear of the Lord.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness you are called to train your family and those who are living with you to live a righteous life in the fear of the Lord. Dear Brethren everyone of us is called to care, to love, and train our households in the righteousness of God.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are called to help those who are in need of physical and material needs and not only that but to give them the Word of God.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are called to find the real poor, who will not only be receptive to receive material helps and finances, but as well as, instruction and guidance from God’s Word.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are called to have a life of prayers with fellowship and communion with God.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are called to delight in fasting and not feasting. You are called to keep days to fast as you are led by the Holy Spirit of God to fast for certain struggles and issues that you need God, the Holy Spirit to fill you and to go before you to combat the enemy, and to speak to you and instruct you of what you need to achieve and to do.

Now a day as the love of most is growing cold, the people of God started to compromise, and for this reason, to hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are called to correct them and rebuke them whenever that is needed.

Therefore, for this reason, you might be hated by others and getting a bad reputation because of your firm and strict stand. But, God will see you through that, and He will give you the favor whenever and wherever is needed.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are called to go back to the Scriptures and compare yourself with the Word of God and trust Him as long as you are obeying His Word that He will defend you and protect you at the time of trials and the accusation of the devil.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, you ought to obey immediately, and hearken to His voice and obey His command so you will be receiving further blessings and encouragement from the Lord.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, your prayers and acts should be in line with the will of God, and the time shall come that the Lord who hears your prayers will answer them, and He will come Himself and comfort you and assure you about His acceptance to the way you live.

You need to persevere in prayer, fasting, righteousness, giving help to the poor, living in the fear of the Lord and train your family and household to be in the same style of life, and be assured that one day the Lord shall visit you and confirm to you the truth that you are walking on.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from death on the third day to give me eternal life.

Let us confess and renounce our sins to the Lord. Let us renounce our worldliness, our idols, and the wrong plans, the wrong attitudes, and the wrong ways of life that contradict the Word of God. Let us renounce our laziness, complacency, and lack of commitment, and zeal for the Lord.

Let us commit ourselves to live in holiness, to the fear of the Lord, to live a life of prayer and fasting, helping the poor and needy, teaching and training our families, households, and the people around us to hunger and thirst for righteousness as ordained by God.

Lord, I commit my life to be willing to hunger and thirst for righteousness and to do the principles that I learned from your Word in this message. Lord, I commit myself to hearken to your voice and to the instructions of your Word. Lord I commit myself to preach your Gospel with precise Word and clear instructions for my family, my household, and the people with me to live in holiness and in the fear of the Lord as I learn from the message of today. Lord provides for me and enables me to do that successfully.

Lord, I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who had humbled themselves before you to live the righteous life that you want them to live and apply the principles that we learn from

your Word in this message. Lord makes a way for them to come out from all temptations and to live the life that is pleasant to you. Lord protects them and provides all their needs. Lord comfort them and assure them that you are with them and leading them in their lives. Lord fills them once again with the Holy Spirit and makes their lives' testimony attractive to others so that people will believe in you and start to follow you and live according to your Word and your righteousness.

Lord, I pray for us as a church to help us to go on in serving you and do your work and your will in the midst of the people who are opposing the truth and living in worldliness, corruptions, and immoralities. Lord, we commit ourselves to do what is right and just in your eyes. Lord fills us once again with the Holy Spirit and enables us to evangelize and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the Word of God. Lord, we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus' name, Amen.

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