

THE SOURCE
OF TRUE



HAPPINESS

souls with unrestrained joy. We could do with a little more of this joy here in the UK, a joy that is rooted in righteousness, and the joy of knowing that we truly belong to and that we suffer with our Lord. What a difference this Joy is to that which is manufactured in some of today's so called Christian Churches, with their guitars and drums, their being slain in the spirit and all the nonsense associated with these things.

May the God of our Salvation enable us to live a life that will glorify Him not matter what the personal cost to us, such a loss is in the long term our joyful gain in Him.

HAPPINESS

What is happiness? Is something that everybody longs to have? Hundreds of books have been written about, by secular authors, psychologists, religious organizations, story writers and so on.

Some define it as the enjoyment that comes from the pleasures of the world, sport, entertainment, the acquisition of material items, wealth some even think that paupacy can deliver it.

In other words, happiness as nothing more than a life of leisure. Yet the reality very few who follow this trend are happy, what is experienced by last for a few minutes even hours but eventually fades away and is stored in the memory bank.

All about us we see unrest, sadness, dejection, despair, cheerlessness etc., broken marriages. To find this elusive quality people, turn to all forms of highly questionable activities and relationships, which ultimately produce the same result sadness and misery.

Yet there is an answer to this demoralizing condition and that is found in the Greek word *makarios* often translated as into English as "blessed," but in the more common use "happy" or "blissful." And furthermore, it is something that is guaranteed, as it comes from the highest and most powerful authority. Let me give you a

clue, and before you throw it out read on “*Blessed (happy) are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.*” You find this in the Bible in the book of Luke chapter eleven and verse twenty-eight.

Our text is both very powerful and challenging, the great desire of people is for happiness, and this word “*blessed*” means just that. And in this day of Covid19 wars and rumours of wars, broken marriage and the depression that it is affecting millions of soul’s, happiness and its source is important

Now we are given in what are known as the beatitude’s specific instruction as to how *happiness* might be obtained, the word beatitude simply means supreme bliss, or supreme happiness.

However, before looking at the principles associated with this blessedness, we need first to realize that the, *happiness* according to our text is obtained by those who hear and keep the Word of God, “*Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.*” Luke 11:28, In other words, the words that Jesus spoke on the mountain comprise of the divine pattern for happiness.

TO WHOM IS JESUS SPEAKING?

The answer is found in vv1-2 “*when he was set, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them saying.*” The people whom Jesus was

never rejoice in the fact of persecution.

For what then are we to rejoice and be exceedingly glad? “*For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*” Now that makes sense that surely is something to rejoice about. If we are being maligned, persecuted, and accused falsely for Christ’s sake, then you are in very esteemed company, in the company of the Prophets you stand alongside men like Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Isaiah and other Godly men of former years. Men who are now in glory and such will be your reward. That something to *rejoice and be exceedingly about.*

The second cause-of Rejoicing, is the knowledge that this persecution is the evidence of where you will spend eternity *for great is your reward in heaven.* To be persecuted for righteousness’s sake is the seal that says you are destined for Heaven, that you belong to another realm, that Heaven, not earth is your home. This is something that ought to cause us to rejoice. I am going to Heaven hallelujah.

It is worth as we close to take a deeper look at this phrase, “*rejoice and be exceeding glad*” you see it means *to be filled up with joy, to leap with unrestrained gladness, to keep leaping for ecstasy.* The very thought of what will be ours should fill our

is your reward in heaven” v12, does this mean the Christian is to rejoice in persecution, for persecution is always something that is to be regretted and something we could all do without.

We are not to rejoice in persecution for persecutions sake, such is the spirit of the Pharisees, if we rejoice in persecution for persecutions sake, what one is in effect saying is this “Because I am being persecuted, I am clearly much better than those others who are living an easy life, that is why they are persecuting me.” Such was the attitude of the one who went into the temple and prayed, “*I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*”

The reason that persecution is levelled against the true believer is because of the Christ like life highlighting the sin of the world, and the result is persecution, this shows just how much Satan dominates unbelievers.

The Christian feels his heart breaking for them just as did the Lord Jesus when the nails! Were driven into His hands and feet and He cried out “*father forgive them they know, not what they do.*” Here then is something of the mourning found in verse four, not for our own sin, but for the sin, of others. So, we

addressing were His disciples, it is important that we understand this because there are many who seek to apply this way of *happiness* to the world, to the unsaved.

These words, this counsel was never intended to be applied to anyone other than the Lords disciples, we will see why in a moment or two.

When Jesus was seated, He called His disciples to Him and began teaching them. They were to hear what He had to say, now things have not changed over the years. What Jesus taught His first disciples, He today teaches us, and we are to hear Him just as the first disciples heard Him.

OUR BLESSED DISPOSITION!

As I have already said the word “*blessed*” means, “Supreme bliss or happiness,” every true disciple of Jesus has a happy disposition, and it is a happiness that will carry us through all adverse conditions.

If we are truly walking the Lord then we need never be unhappy, lonely, and furthermore we need never turn to those things He forbids to find happiness.

This does not mean that we will go through life, living on cloud nine. Neither does it mean we will have a perpetual grin on our faces such as the Cheshire Cat.

The blessedness we have as Christians is not a superficial thing, but is the result of a deep peace within the soul, the enjoyment of that “*peace of God which passeth all understanding.*”

Our happiness is not to found in the things of the world, it is not found in wealth, possessions or even social status, it is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a happiness found when we *hear him*, and apply His Word to our lives, or in the words of our text *blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it*. To Hear the Word of God and not keep it is a prescription for unhappiness, so if you desire to be truly happy, then “listen to the advice of Jesus when He says, “*hear the Word of God and keep it.*”

I can assure you, you will never be happy. You will never be blessed if you live in disobedience to it, as all one is doing is heaping up for themselves troubles and unhappiness,

Through His Word today, Jesus is speaking to us, just as clearly as He spoke to His first disciples. Today He seeks our happiness just as much as He sought the blessedness of His first disciples.

Let consider the principles He gives us as to the way of true blessedness, and let us *hear Him*.

it is to be *for my sake.*” The persecution that results in true happiness is that which is suffered for the sake of Christ. This persecution this reviling, this slander, the false accusations that are levelled against the righteous is for *Christ’s sake*.

It must be and can be for no other it is,’ after all said and done His righteousness that is given to us, for our righteousness is as filthy rags, so if we are to suffer for righteousness sake then it must be for Christ’s sake.

If Christ Himself suffered for our sakes, that we might be made righteousness in Him, then we in turn suffer for His sake. We are called to suffer for the truth that He came to bring, for the light that He came to give, for the hope that He has shed abroad in our hearts, for the love and peace that He left with us. You see, as His, we ought to be able to say with Paul “*for me to live is Christ.*”

We are no longer “*our own, we have been bought with a price.*” We therefore want to live our whole life for the glory of the Lord, our aim must be in whatever we do, we do unto the Glory of the Lord, for His sake and if we live like Him and for Him, we will be persecuted as He was.

We are to “*Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great*

Ana-Baptists of 300 years ago, they were persecuted not for righteousness's sake, but because of their religious position in respect of how baptism should be carried out.

Then there are the J.W.'s, they may face persecution because of the stand against blood transfusions. Now it must be said men have to right to stand for these things if they so desire and may well face persecution as a result, but such persecution does not entitle them to the right of *the Kingdom of Heaven*, or indeed to true happiness.

On the other-hand those men and women who were imprisoned and tortured, many being burnt at the stake during the Reformation were persecuted for righteousness's sake, for their faith in Christ. They rejected the false methods of salvation being offered by the medieval church, they rejected idolatry and all its associates, and the result they suffered for the cause of Christ.

We will only find true happiness in persecution if it is for righteousness's sake, for only the righteous will inherit the kingdom of heaven; this brings us to our third point, which is:

This however goes even deeper, as the Lord Jesus says

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT v3:

There is a worldwide religion, that goes falsely under the name of Christian that sees great spiritual benefit in many of its followers being poor, it twists this verse to mean something it was never meant to mean, by sleight of tongue they say. "Blessed in Spirit are the Poor,"

This is gross abuse of God's Word, and they use of it to the organisations own advantage. The Lord Jesus does not have temporal poverty in view, He is not saying it is beneficial be poor in the physical sense, temporal poverty is not in view at all.

What is in view here is spiritual poverty, "*blessed are the poor in spirit.*" There is no merit or advantage in being financially poor, to be poor in this manner does not guarantee spirituality, I can show you hundreds of very poor people, and there is not one once of spirituality amongst them.

Now it must be said before we go any further, there is not one inhabitant of Gods Kingdom, who is not poor in spirit. Jesus is here dealing with a fundamental issue and that is, how we see ourselves before Almighty God. and it is an attitude that is very different than that expected by the world.

Today the world teaches us to believe in oneself, trust in your own ability, project a self-confident image, develop a forceful personality, there are training courses for self-assertion.

Now as far as the things of the world are concerned, if that is the image the world wants then so be it, before the world we can be all these things, if that is what they want.

The problem is when these things are compared to our Lords teaching in this verse, people get all mixed up, and see the idea of “*blessed are the poor in spirit,*” as being the formula for producing weak, spineless, insipid, colourless, unexciting people, the result is that we have in the main, a generation of Christians, that dares not say “boo to the goose.”

We have Churches that are inhabited by cringing Uriah Heeps, people who are always moaning but fearful of doing anything least they give a wrong image.

This is a very different attitude to the early Church, when it is said of the Christians then, that they “*turned to world upside down,*” they did not do that because they were weak, spineless, or colourless, they did do it because they had the right relationship with the Lord.

It is this relationship that is needed today, the right

This is rubbish, dangerous and divisive rubbish, you see the only persecution that is valid in the eyes of God and is the cause of happiness, is that brought about for “*righteousness sake.*” It is not persecution on social, racial, economic, political, sexual, or indeed any other such worldly thing. There can be no doubt that people are persecuted for these things, for the general rule of thumb is, the people of the world do not like minorities, the world likes everybody to conform to a type, and those that do not are looked upon as freaks as outcasts and are often persecuted.

However, the persecution that is in view here is vastly different from this worldly concept for the result is the inheritance of *the kingdom of heaven*. This is accomplished by the Lord’s people living in harmony with God.

The fact is the world cannot tolerate such people. The man or woman, who has by the Grace of God been made righteous, that is one who is a true Christian, is a constant protest to the evil, ungodly and unrighteous character of the world. These are the people the world hates and will persecute.

Let us revert to what we were saying about false ideas regarding this persecution, the persecution in view here is not that which is brought about because of certain doctrinal convictions, such as those of, the

avoid all the unpleasantness by conforming to the world's ideas, and still be a Christian." This, is a doctrine that is widespread throughout the Church, it even has a name and is called "New Evangelicalism."

Jesus says that if we are to be *Salt and Light*, we are to be unlike those we seek to help. How can the blind lead the blind? If you have light, how can you walk in darkness. You have light so let it shine on those who are in darkness, do not hide this light under a bushel, but set it on a hill where it can be seen despite the fact those in darkness will be upset and try to extinguish it.

It is often a matter of doing as, Martin Luther and placing our Ebenezer firmly in the ground by saying as he did! Here I stand I can do other" Once done, men will laugh, scorn, even revile and hate you going out of their way in an endeavour to extinguish your witness, such however is the glorious price we pay for following the Lord Jesus.

We then have the reason for this persecution which is, "*for righteousness sake*" it is very important that we take note of this, as there are some strange characters about who go out of their way to make trouble and then claim that they are being persecuted. These are very sad people, who glory in the idea that everyone is against them, and that they are being persecuted for the Lord's sake.

relationship with the Lord, and the Church will once again be accused of turning the world upside down.

Jesus is not saying to us in this verse "*blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of the world,*" listen to what He says, *blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.*"

He is not speaking about our appearance before the citizens of the world, or our financial or social position in the world, Jesus is speaking about our standing before God, as citizens of His Kingdom.

The reality is this, if in the presence of God, we feel anything other than utter spiritual poverty, then we have never truly entered into His Grace, as proud, haughty, self-confident spirit is not of God, but rather of the chief adversary the Devil, listen he says, "*I will ascend above the heights; I will be like the most high.*"

Those who claim that they will be saved by their works, their good deeds, their vain religious observances, their own efforts, are literally walking in the footsteps of their father the Devil.

To be *poor in spirit*, is the absence of pride, of self-assurance, of self-reliance before Almighty God. It is a consciousness, that in His presence we are nothing, that we are totally reliant upon Him, it is the deep and

growing realisation that “*without him, we can do nothing,*”

It is that spirit manifested by Peter when He first saw the Lord, which declared “*depart from me for I am a sinful man.*” as he came face to face with the holiness of Jesus, He saw his own wretched state, his weakness, sinfulness, all his pride, self-assurance vanished in the presence of the Lord, in short, when he saw Jesus, he saw just how poverty stricken he was.

This was made clear on another occasion when most of the other disciples had turned away from Jesus because they did not like His doctrine, but Peter acknowledge his own paupacy when he said “*to who can we go, thou hast the words of eternal life.*”

Yet although Peter acknowledged his spiritual poverty:
He never became a limp wristed wimp,
He did not become spineless in the face of adversity,
He never lost his colourful personality,
He never liberalised the doctrines of Christ,
He could never be described as a weak man.
He was *poor in spirit* but strong in the Lord and in the faith, being prepared to fight for it and lay down his life for it.
Now the blessedness or happiness comes in knowing that such a spirit is that which inherits *the Kingdom of God.*

Then there are those who will go out of their way to avoid conversation with us about spiritual matters, then there is the reviling of one's character, slander, and abuse. This is mental and spiritual persecution, and can be found in family situation and it wears away, seeking to grind one into the ground, it hurts just as much if not more than physical pain.

It is often destructive, for it causes many to question their motives, tempting them to lower their standards, causing them to question the wisdom of following the ways laid down in Scripture, leading them to look for ways to compromise between the Worlds way and the ways of God.

For example, there are many who take and practice this idea: “if I am to help others, then I must become like them, I cannot be so heavenly minded that I am no earthly good, if I am to help the people of the world, I must to some degree be as worldly as they are and do the things they do. In this way I can get alongside them and win them for Christ.”

What this is in truth saying is, “why should I give up the things of the world, why should I suffer any form of persecution, why can't I enjoy the things of both kingdoms? After all, said and done did not Paul say we are to be “*all things to all men?*” I can therefore

persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you, rejoice and be exceedingly glade for great is your reward in heaven” As soon as we seriously accept and take up the challenge of these Divine Principle we are in trouble, real trouble, because the microbes of corruption do not like being disturbed and those who are in darkness, do not like the light and they will rebel against what they consider intrusion.

When we think of persecution we will almost certainly think of great physical deprivation and slow tortuous death. Now of course such is not to be ignored. Indeed, one religious organisation has according to some statisticians but to death over 50,000,000 people for following the Lord Jesus. It was reported in the press some time ago that some 300 people a month, mainly Christian Ministers and Missionaries are being killed for the faith in Christ.

Many saints face great physical persecution. But as severe as this is it is not the only form of persecution, there are many more subtle forms that are equally devastating and from which there is no hope of death or release. I refer to the persecution that falls short of violence, and which is rampant in the U.K. today it is seen in marked disrespect people have for those who follow Christ, is seen in the ridicule that one endures when the name of Christ is mentioned.

As Christians we have no good or valid reason to be miserable for, we are inheritors of Gods Kingdom, a Kingdom ruled over by the One who so loved us that He died for us, and was raised from the dead in order that we might be made Just in the presence of a Holy and Righteous God.

Ruled by a King who is Just and righteous in all things, whose government far surpasses anything that the word can offer, that alone when you see the corruption that seems to be inherent in all world governments, when the leaders seem only to want to line their own nests, with the hard-earned cash of its citizens.

Those who are *poor in spirit*, have an inheritance that is *incorruptible, undefiled that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, secure from rust, moth and thieves and robbers*, not to mention the Inland Revenue.

In fact, *the poor in spirit* are joint heirs to this inheritance with Christ their King. When we think of the many other benefits that we as true Christians have. Such as that wonderful “*peace that passes all understanding*,” the none Christian, operating with the spirit of the world, knows nothing about this.

For the proud arrogant spirit that they manifest, brings

in its wake all manner of warlike activity, just look at what this spirit is producing today, broken marriages, abused children, thefts, and robberies, not to mention violence on a scale unprecedented in recent generations, killings and abortions on a horrendous scale and God will require that these murders account for their foul deeds.

These are the products of a proud self-righteous spirit, and the question is do these people know *happiness*? The answer is very clearly No. They may gain a few moments temporary pleasure from their deeds, but peace and happiness are far from them, they are very sad people. Only those who are “*poor in spirit*” can and do know happiness and peace.

Think again of some of the other, factors that the spirit of this world produces, there is the spirit of greed, the product of which affects us all to some degree.

The world’s resources are being plundered at an alarming rate; the bottom line for this activity is greed. Now not only are the lungs of the earth being torn out, but also being released from their dark haunts deep within these forests are armies of unseen enemies.

Demons of devastating power, many of which can cause serious illness whilst others if set free can mass destruction.

us from God, but surely the promise we have before us is the most wonderful to date “*they shall be called the children of God,*” this is a high honour a position of dignity.

This identifies the true Christian with His heavenly Father and the Fathers work. God from the very beginning has only ever sought peace with His creation, ever since man set his heart against God in Eden God has sought to bring us back.

Now those who by His grace and power are given over to this work, His work. He has given us the Gospel of Peace to take into the world, seeking to promote that peace amongst all who we encounter, you see Gods Wants His people to be happy people and the way to real happiness is by the proclamation and practice of peace, God Peace.

Are you at peace with God, do you have you the Peace of God in your soul? Do you know the reality of *the peace that passeth all understanding*, do you know the happiness of sins forgiven? Are you at peace with God?

We have not finished yet as we learn in Matthew 5:10 that “*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile and*

that His work of peace making would often end up as if He had applied the sword, because He would not and could not compromise the truth.

Did He not say “*I am not come to bring peace by the sword,*” a strange saying, but the application is this when the truth is presented, even if in love, it will sometimes have the effect of a sword, because men will refuse to comply with the truth, they will rail and rebel against it.

Yet even so we never see Jesus in any way watering down the truth, He always presented it in love, He always sought the best for all who came to Him, and He was frequently saddened by those who would listen and turned away from the truth and the path of peace. Jesus never once compromises the Word of God in the quest for peace, and neither should we. There is no peace with God, accept we come by way of the truth.

We now have the high honour afforded to peacemakers: “*they shall be called the children of God,*” We have seen some wonderful reason for happiness we have seen to become inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven was the first, then to be comforted, followed by, inheriting the blessings of earth, to be filled, to obtain mercy, to see God, all of these are wonderful sources of real happiness given to

When I said demons, well did not mean disembodied spirits but rather unknown viruses, that have been contained in the deep green forests, but today because of men’s greed they are being released into the world at large.

Often, when we get sick, we go to the doctor and he says, “Oh it’s a virus,” there is little I can do to help you, stick with it and it will eventually go away, or as with the Covid 19 evil a form of vaccination can be developed.

Fortunately, most do go away, but we are seeing more and more that are causing deep concern in scientific circles. Why mention this, well the thing I have in mind is this, many of the illnesses we suffer are the result of mans greed and selfishness, following the spirit of the world which says do as you please, when you please and how you please.

The result sickness, heart disease, high blood pressure, Aids to name just a few.

Yet for those who are *poor in spirit*, inheritors of *the Kingdom of God*, we have the promise, that if we walk in the ways of the Lord, these illnesses, that is those diseases, associated with ungodly practices and ways will not affect us, that does not mean to say we will never be ill, but it does mean that by walking

according to the ways of the Lord, many of the illnesses associated with the ungodly can be avoided, simple because we do not participate in activities that spread them.

When we humbly walk in the ways of the Lord many of this life's ills will be avoided, but allow the proud and greedy spirit of the age have control, we can expect trouble, listen to Gods own Word on this matter, *“if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the lord thy god do that which is right in his sight and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the lord that healeth thee.”*

Furthermore, the Bible tells us that the days is coming when we will free from all pain and suffering. This is another reason why the Christian is a happy person when compared to his worldly counterpart, in that we have an eternal and wonderful hope.

The worldling, living according to the spirit of the world, is without hope, they are outside of Gods Kingdom, and living in a Kingdom that is perishing and doomed to destruction, the end of which is eternal death, complete and final separation from God, described in the Bible as the second death.

marriage has failed, but not through lack of love, many a divorced couple still love each other, yet they cannot live together, the basis of any union of any real peace must have a more sure and solid foundation than love.

Peace making is a combination of love and truth, and truth must never be sacrificed for love, if you turn to the great love passage in 1Corinthians 13 you will see what is meant there we read, in vv4-6 *“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;”* Paul speaks of charity or love, and notice the thing that love rejoices in v6 *the truth*

If truth is missing from a relationship, even though love maybe present, then there will be no lasting peace, because without truth, there is no basis for trust, and without trust there is no peace, without truth the very basis of honesty and trust is missing, there is no foundation upon which to build peace.

Now the fact that peace makers are to be called “Children of God” should come as no surprise when we realise, that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God was also the Prince of Peace, and furthermore He knew

Himself. Next surely is the happiness of seeing two warring factions in the Church brought together with tears of repentance, seeing them reunited with each other and with the body of Jesus. There is nothing worse than seeing two of the Lord's people at each other's throats.

Now we must deal at this point with a little negative thought, because we must not run away with the idea, that we are to seek peace at any price. Peace making is not engaging in any form of compromise, to be a peace maker is not to try and accomplish peace at any price, it is not to negotiate with the enemy, with the hostage taker of souls, the peace makers who will be called the children of God, will be those who have gone about the task according to God's Plan, Will and Purpose. Peace cannot be brought about any other way that is if we are dealing with the peace of God.

God is both love and truth, this is something that we all need to remember, yet there is a strong school of thought, that love is all that is needed to bring about peace, this wrong. Love although it is very important in the peace process, it is only part of the equation, love by itself is no ground for a lasting peace.

A Peacemaker who bases their efforts of making peace on the foundations of love alone is headed for trouble, for all the efforts will prove futile, many a

Only those who at that great and final judgement whose name are found written in the Book of Life, will escape, those terrifying fires of Hell, listen to the words of Jesus as He describes this terrible and hopeless day Revelation 20:11-15 *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

The proud and arrogant spirit that through life said either in word or deed, there is no God, will on that day find out the truth, that not only is there a God, but that He is Just and Righteous.

The unbeliever is without hope and without God in this world, his proud spirit binds him to this world and to its destruction.

For the “*poor in spirit*,” there is hope, hope of everlasting joy and happiness, the hope of eternal peace and service with the Lord in Heaven, the Hope that we will see once more, our loved ones who have in Christ gone on before us, the Hope that we will see Jesus.

Finally, listen again to what Jesus says about the spirit of the world, Revelation 3:17 “*because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and poor and blind and naked.*” The proud spirit, is in reality the spiritual pauper

Whilst the truth is the poor in spirit, is truly happy, truly at peace, truly healthy, and truly the inheritor of the good things of God, both here in this life and in the life to come.

So, where do you stand? Is it in the proud and condemned spirit of the world, or are you “*poor in spirit*” and the inheritor of true happiness in Jesus? For the poor in spirit are the only truly happy people upon earth, for they and they inherit the Kingdom of God.

Listen the man that abides not in the Lord Jesus Christ is like a branch that is dead, “*and men gather them up, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.*” Jesus said *abide in me*, so let us hear what he says and act upon it.

through to the fervent prayers of others. It is all these things combined that make the Church effective in its mission of taking the Gospel of Peace, into the world that is a war.

The Gospel is the Gospel of Reconciliation, the medium through which sinful and rebellious men and women are reconciled to God. Is there any greater joy, any greater happiness than that for any company of Christians to see unsaved people being reconciled to Him, in other words being saved, if there is *great rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth*, then there should be equal joy and happiness here on earth, over a soul that has been plucked from Hell. Surely there can be no greater happiness for a Christian, that to see Gods elect being saved, being gathered in by the Gospel of Peace.

The happiness that comes next to this must surely be that of seeing backsliders restored, brought back into the fellowship of God that they once knew, but because of many circumstances, they fell by the wayside, the green grass of bye-pass meadow looked too good, but there they fell foul of Satan and his enticements and went back into the world.

The happiest day that will ever be in the life of Janet and myself will be when the Lord answers our prayers and brings our two erring children back into peace with

Christian to fall, and in so doing bring a discordant note to the Church. The placing of a stumbling block.

How often has the peace of the Church, been seriously disrupted by a brother or sister harshly and unlovingly criticizing another simply because they do not see exactly eye to eye on some minor matter.

How often do we see so called more mature Christians blindly blundering along their way, insensitive to the needs and feelings of those who are less mature. The result of such activity, is often the breaking of the congregation into factions, eventually one party become disinfected from the other. Here a peacemaker is urgently needed.

But there is wider sphere of peace-making, and that is taking the gospel of peace of those who are still at enmity with God. In this we can all play a part, even if we find it difficult to articulate the Gospel, it is not only the preacher and evangelist that are to be the presenters of the Gospel of Peace, but we can all in some way proclaim the Gospel Message.

All talents no matter how small they may seem to us can and should be used in the proclamation of the Gospel of Peace. From the man or lady who sweep the church floor to the preacher, from the door keeper to the pianist from the showing of Christian hospitality

A DIVINE PARADOX

We now turn our thoughts to another source of happiness “*Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted*” Matthew 5:4. At first glance this seems to be an absurdity.

How on earth can I be happy, cries the wife, when I have just lost my husband?

How can I be happy cries the mother as she lays her child to rest in the Grave?

How can I be happy, cries the husband as he turns from the grave side having laid his beloved wife to rest.

How indeed can these people be happy?

The answer is, they cannot. Jesus did not have such a situation in mind when He instructed the disciples in this matter. Just as the first principle, “*blessed are the poor,*” had nothing to do with one financial status, so this has nothing to do with mourning the loss of a loved one.

It is an unnatural thing to expect to see happy people at the graveside, but on the other hand it should be quite a natural thing to see happy mourners in Church! Sound strange? Well let me elucidate. Just as Jesus speaks of spiritual poverty in v.3, so He is speaking here of spiritual sorrow.

Before we look at the implication and application of this, it should be said that there are many who mourn, yet do not qualify for the happiness promised by Jesus.

For example, there is the sorrow associated with worldly loss, such as loss of possession, wealth, position etc, this is not a qualifying mark for happiness.

Then there is the sorrow we know when one's pride has been badly wounded, that does not qualify us for happiness.

Then there is the sorrow we often feel when all our hopes and aspirations are suddenly dashed.

None of these forms of sorrow qualify for the happiness that is in view here.

Can happiness and mourning mix? To the worldly mind these things are incompatible, as we have said, Jesus is not speaking about physical death and the sorrow associated with it, but of a Spiritual Sorrow, what we might call:

The mourning Jesus is speaking about, is that deep sorrow that springs from the depths of the soul, what we might call sanctified sorrow. Jesus is speaking about Godly sorrow for sin, and sin is indeed something that we can mourn over.

know nothing of the Peace that we have in view, where are peacemakers to be active? Let me suggest one or two places.

Firstly: in the church: in the visible portion of the Kingdom of God. As we look about the church scene, we see that there is a desperate need for peacemakers in this area, did not Jesus say, *“if a kingdom be divided against itself it cannot stand.”* If the citizens of God's Kingdom are constantly at logger heads with each other, if there are constant battles being fought, by the redeemed amongst themselves, then it is little wonder that the world is headed the way it is.

Men and women are today talking quite openly about the age in which we live as being “post Christian,” and it might well be the case, and one of the contributing factors has been the division that has arisen within the Church, and made it a thing of derision among the peoples of the world.

In Romans we are given several things that can and do bring discord and factions within the body of Christ.

The first is criticism, harsh and unnecessary judgement,

Then there is selfishness, or lack of self-discipline doing that which one wants to do irrespective of the fact that it might cause a younger and weaker

heart and soul, that knows no matter what may come, all is well with the soul.

One of the pieces of equipment given to every believer, are your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; everywhere we walk, every situation into which we go, we take with us the peace of God. This also gives us a further clue as to what this Peace is, it is the gospel of peace, to us is entrusted the gospel of peace.

Now when we speak about the happy peacemakers, we are to see the Christians as heralds of the gospel of peace, walking in gospel ways, in gospel light, bringing to this sin darkened world the message of peace, that peace which the Lord left to us, look at His own Words, John 14:27 *“peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world, I give unto you, let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid.”*

The peace Jesus gives is not the world's peace, but His peace, and that peace is the reconciliation between God His Father and us sinful men. There will never be peace in this world whilst man is at enmity with God, but men can be at peace with God, because that is what Jesus came to bring and make possible. And those who know that Peace are the Heralds of it, taking the Good News to those who are still at war.

If as we have said the world knows nothing and can

CONSIDER THIS UNDER FOUR HEADINGS OR ASPECTS:

First there is personal mourning for our own sin, the deep sorrow which arises from the knowledge that we have all personally offended God. That even as Christians our lives are marred by sin, that there is not a day which passes that some sinful action or thought does not affect us.

That knowledge even as Christians are still habits and traits that are not glorifying to God. Many is the day that, like Paul, we must thank God *“that his grace is sufficient,”* How can we possibly be happy when such a weight comes upon us? We cannot, but we can when we look further into God's Word, for He tells us that *“if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* Remember our definition of happiness is “contentment and satisfaction received from the highest source and what is the promise contained in this principle, *“they shall be comforted.”*

Get it all together, sin causes us, or should cause us deep sorrow, if it does not, then there is something terribly wrong with your soul, but I assume I am speaking to those who know the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, and something of the Godly sorrow that follows. To each we have access to God who has

promised to forgive and cleanse us, now if that is not a source of “contentment and satisfaction from the highest source,” then tell me what is, if that is not the most comforting thing, one can possibly conceive, then I know nothing of Comfort.

Now maybe you know nothing of this happiness and comfort, maybe you are still trying to find happiness following the principles of the world. Well stop just for a moment, listen for a moment, you will not find any happiness until your sin problem, the root of your unhappiness is dealt with, you will never know the wonder of “contentment and satisfaction from God” until your sin has been forgiven and the guilt removed. There will be no comfort for your guilty conscience until it is washed clean and all stain and taint is cleansed away. God does not give comfort and contentment whilst sin is still undealt with.

The wisest man who ever lived, tried to find happiness in the things and methods of the world, he left no stone unturned in the pursuit of happiness, at the end of his quest he was forced to say, “*vanity of vanity, is all vanity,*” *vanity* mean empty, all his efforts proved empty, he was unable find happiness. So what was the conclusion ? “*Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man,*” If a man with all the resources at his disposal , came to this conclusion, then what of you, with nothing like the resources he had.

disciple of Jesus Christ is called to be a peacemaker.

Now immediately we begin to speak about peace, it is quite natural for us to think of the situation that I have just described, the wars and bloodshed that we see about us all the time, the result of mans hatred against God, being worked out amongst themselves.

When one speaks about peacemakers, because we equate peace with the worlds turmoil’s we tend to think of political peacemakers, men who have diplomatic skills who seem to be able to negotiate peace deals and sign peace treaties, but be sure of this, these peace treaties, negotiated by, are not the things that Jesus has in mind here, indeed does not Paul not warn, they shall “*say peace and safety; then cometh sudden destruction*” 1Thessalonians 5:3.” This principle before us has nothing to do with Christians becoming peace keeping envoys flying between Iraq and the U.N. or Israel, Palestine, and the like.

The question therefore is what is the peace we are to promote and keep? If as the result of peace-making efforts, we are to be called *the children of God*, it is then a reasonable thing to conclude that the peace we are to keep has to do with God, and what is in view here is surely the peace of God, that peace which *passeth all understanding*. The peace that true believers know and enjoy is that deep seated peace of

What of your heart, what condition is it in? Has it been renewed? Will you see God? To know that we will see God, and be with God for all of eternity must surely rank as being one of the greatest sources of happiness known to man, but this assurance can only be ours if the heart has been renewed and our sins washed away in the blood of Christ.

We now come a challenging aspect of happiness and that is peace making *blessed (happy) are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God,*” Matthew 5:9. If one is sincere in their desire to be truly happy then they are to become a peacemaker.

There is little doubt that in this world of strife, feuding, violence and war, the need is for peacemakers, nobody would argue with that. What is Peace? It is that condition which is directly opposite to that of war and strife, it is that wonderful condition where there is no trouble, where men live in harmony with one another, where nation and nation no longer fight each other, where God and Man live in perfect harmony.

The problem of war, of violence and all that it entails has arisen because man is at war with God, the Bible teaches us that *man is at enmity with God*, and until that situation is resolved then man will continue to fight each other, now in all this the Christian the true

Reader if you are seeking true happiness, you will only find it in serving God, in having Him deal with the problem that keeps you from Him, namely your sin. We all know what it is to mourn the death of someone we love, Janet and I have both laid our parents to rest, and in a sense this mourning is all part of the course of life, so we can all relate to what I am about to say.

Seeker after happiness, “it was your sin killed Jesus,” it was your sin that caused Him to come into this world in the first place, for *he came into the world to save sinners*. It was your sin that drove those nails into His hands and feet, it was your sin that mockingly place the crown of thorns upon his head, it was your sin that caused God the Father to turn away from His Son, as He became sin for you, and took upon Himself the full and terrible judgement that rightly should be yours, it was your sin that caused Him to cry in agony “*eli, eli lama sabbacthani*” It was your sin that caused your creator to die. reader “*greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friend.*”

The death of a friend, is a proper cause for mourning, and even more so, when you know He did it deliberately to save you, and that it was your fault, you sin, your ungodly behaviour, that caused it.

We hear a lot about the remorse that drunk drivers have when they have killed some innocent pedestrian,

how much more ought you sinner to mourn, when you realise that it was your sin that killed Jesus. And before you can start to know anything about real happiness, one must start here, at the Cross.

For the believer that sins, what a joy, what a comfort it is to know that we have an *advocate with father Jesus Christ the righteous* and that *if we confess our sins, he will cleanse and forgive us*. Happiness is the knowledge of sins forgiven and hope of heaven.

The second point we need to look at is that of Godly Sorrow for the sins of our families and friends indeed the world. As we look about us, as did the Lord Jesus we see a world full of people, sheep without a shepherd, souls living in the misery and squalor of sin.

A nation sinking deeper and deeper into the gutters of spiritual and moral depravity, a nation that is close to if not already under divine judgement. When the Lord Jesus saw people in the condition He was “*moved with compassion for them*” when He looked over the city of Jerusalem and foresaw the terrible judgement that was to come upon it, we are told “*Jesus wept*” in other words He mourned. Ought not the same emotions be ours as we see the state of things about us?

Then there is Godly sorrow for our slow progress in the things of the Lord. Are we progressing in the

nothing worth watching on TV. But when God creates in us a new heart, the Word becomes alive, and as we read through the pages, we *see God* in every word as He speaks to us.

We see God in all things, the diseased, sin ridden heart sees the things that take place as either being good or bad luck, things of chance, things that the stars foretell, the effects of a lucky charms, or other such superstitious nonsense.

But the man and women who have undergone a divine heart transplant see God in all things, knowing, that all *things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purposes.*” The Christian sees God at work even in the darkest of times.

We do however have one thing in common with the none Christian, in that they will also one day see God, but then it will be too late, for they will stand before Him in judgement, and be condemned to eternal damnation in the fiery pit of Hell, whilst those who have a pure heart will hear the words of Jesus “*well done though true and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of the lord.*” Can you think of a greater source, higher, richer, better source of happiness than to know that one day we will see the Lord of Glory.

Consider the result of a pure heart: **Firstly**, it is pure happiness, for it is a heart that is sin free, that is not plagued by the burden of guilt, that is conforming us day by day into the likeness of Christ.

Secondly is a heart that guarantees we *shall see God*. We could put it in a question form ‘what is necessary before I can see God?’ the answer is a *pure heart*. What does it mean to see God, considering that Jesus has told us that “*no man hath seen God*,” yet He here promises the pure in heart will see Him.

The sinful deceitful heart of men has for centuries sought to find other ways of explaining away the creation of the Universe, the latest of these theories is of course atheistic theory of Evolution, which changes almost every day. The dark diseased heart of man will not do not and cannot acknowledge that *in the beginning God created*, so they invent all forms of ideas get away from it. When a man becomes a Christian, when God creates in him a new heart this problem disappears and we see the hand of God in all creation.

We see God in the Bible, until a new heart is created in us, the Bible at best seems to be a very fine history book, a book of good moral standards and ethics, to others is it is little more than a dry dusty book that is given to babies at baptism, to brides at their weddings, or a book to be read in Hotel Bedrooms when there is

things of the Lord, are we growing in grace and in the love of the Lord? If the Lord’s people were growing and developing as they ought, would the world, the church be in such a sorry state as it is today?

Then there is Godly sorrow for the fact that we are so weak and feeble. This in a sense follows from the previous point. Today the church is no longer turning the world upside down, at least not in our own land. This again should be a cause of godly sorrow, of deep spiritual mourning. In both these latter points there should be a deep feeling and sense of loss.

The promise: “*they shall be comforted*” one of the great sources of human comfort in times of mourning, is when a loved one comes right alongside us, puts their arm around us and holds us tight, it is as if their strength is being given to us. Even in times of less deep sorrow, it is nice simply for another to give us a hug, when my wife Janet and I get a little down, as we sometimes do, we will say, how about a hug, we get alongside each other and encourage one another, just to know that the other is there and cares, helps to strengthen and comfort.

Well that exactly what this word “*comfort*” means, the word is paraclete, and means the one who gets alongside us. The Greek name of the Holy Spirit is

The Paraclete, meaning the one who gets alongside, it is in those time of spiritual sorrow, when we see ourselves as we are, that the Holy Spirit gets alongside us in a very real way, and lets you know that all is well, that the Lord has not, forsaken us, that we are safe and secure in His hands, that His promises are true, and that *“his grace is sufficient*, when we are at a low ebb, when things are not going as we would like them, when temptations get the better of us, and yes even when we sin.

To know that the Lord is ever present through His Spirit is a truly comforting thing, and that fact alone is a wonderful source of true happiness, for it is truly satisfaction and contentment from the highest source.

The tears of mourning are in many respects like the waters of the Jordan in which Naaman washed and was cleansed of Leprosy. Can you imagine his happiness as he went back to his own land cleansed and healed. So, it is with us, it is through the tears of mourning for our sin that we might know the joy of sins forgiven, the hope of Heaven and the wonderful continuing presence of Jesus with us.

So, you can see the progressiveness of these principles from being Poor in Spirit, through to being Mourners of our Sin, we have the double blessing of being Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, a wonderful gift bestowed

statement and needs some clarification, because the thing that you are thinking is this, “That we all still sin” and indeed we do, but it is not this wonderful new nature that sins, but rather it is the old nature, it is the old heart that still seeks to led us into sinful ways and habits. The old nature exists side by side with the new, Paul calls this the *old man*, and the old man does not give up without a fight, the old sinful desires are still very much part of our life again as Paul describes it, *“the flesh warreth against the spirit and the spirit warreth against the flesh.”*

The great thing that many Christians fail to realise is exactly what it means to be in Christ, to be in Christ means that the entire mass of the old nature is discarded, what do we want with those things, they have no value, no standing no merit and are no good for the Christian.

The new nature means that our lives are to be lived, no longer for ourselves, but for the Lord, for His praise and glory, that is why He has redeemed and saved us, that He might have a *“people unto his praise and glory.”* Our principles, ethics, practices as Christians are far removed or should be from the things of the old nature. If we are in Christ, born of His Spirit, then holiness, purity of life and practice is the objective of all that we seek and do.

So, we are talking about the implantation of a new heart a new nature, something that is not contaminated by the effluents of sin, Paul speaks about this new nature in 2Corinthians 5:17 when he says, “*if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*” The man in Christ, that is the true Christian, is not a piece of patched up humanity, not somebody who is a little better than his neighbours, he is not a remould, but a *new creature, he has a new heart, a pure heart*, as the hymn writer puts it “*a heart like thine, a heart divine.*”

When by the grace of God, we are enabled to believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, when we by faith trust in the finished work of Calvary, a very wonderful change takes place and in the words of Paul, “*old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*”

A new heart a new nature is divinely created in us, it is the Holy Spirit creating within us this new heart, that convicts us of sin, that brings us to repentance, that enables us to trust in Jesus, bring us to conversion and rebirth in Him. This is only the beginning, for from that moment on the Holy Spirit continues to work in us, developing this new nature, making us, and moulding us more and more into the image of Jesus.

The exciting thing is this, this new nature, this new heart, never ever engages in sin! That is quite a

upon us by God the Father, to the forgiveness of sin and the wonderful comforting presence of Jesus with, even in that godly sorrow.

Can there be any greater happiness than this? The answer is, believe it or believe it not “Yes,” but to learn about you must come next Sunday. But sufficient for the day thereof, is to know the happiness and comfort associated with mourning, as we said in closing last week “Happiness is to know the Saviour.”

In Matthew 5 we have the third source of happiness, again it is something of a paradox, as the happiness that is promised here, it is to be found in meekness “*blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,*” On the surface this just does not seem to be realistic, as the common idea is that happiness is in found, arrogance, haughtiness, superiority, pride etc. therefore we need to understand what this meekness Jesus is talking is not

As we have implied, we are living in days when men must be seen as being macho aggressive, go-getters, allowing nothing to stand in the way, men are expected to be or seek to be the Arnold Swarznegger type, whilst women are supposedly liberated, free from all restraints and inhibitions, able to do whatever they so please.

So, if we were to ask today's class of people what it means to be meek, we would get all the wrong answers. To the street-wise youngster, if they had ever heard of the word, meekness equates to weakness, you must be tough to survive on the streets of Britain today.

To the hardened business man meekness equates to incompetence, to a person that is unsure, unable to get on with the job without constant help and supervision.

To the modern Miss or M's and her liberated ways, meekness equates with feebleness she sees the meek man a being a nerd, Then to Mr and Mrs Average, meekness is seen as softness, even foolishness.

The general idea of meekness in the minds of people today is very negative. A meek person is one who allows others to walk all over them, is afraid to say boo to a goose, a person who runs away instead of standing his ground.

Meekness does not match up in the eyes of the world with the macho, liberated, self-seeking, go-getting image, portrayed by Hollywood, and promoted by the world's psychologists. Now because the world has this idea of meekness many Christians seek to emulate this concept, whilst others fit into this mould quite naturally, because they are weak, they are spiritually flabby, indolent, and lazy. Many Christians who are

diseased and very severe punishment was threatened, if he did not return Sarah to Abraham Genesis 20:6.

Sincerity, honesty, integrity are not signs of a pure heart, many a sincere heart will never see God. there are no pure hearts on this earth, unless God has made them so, no heart is truly happy unless it has been purified, no heart will ever see God unless it is pure.

David knew the truth of this when he cried, "*create in me a new heart o lord.*" Notice exactly what he says, it is not '*make this old heart new,*' it was not '*reform this old nature,*' it was "*create in me a new heart.*" He knew the hopelessness of the old nature, he wanted that old thing buried, it was dead and putrefying, he wanted a new one, he did not want a re-hash of the old, not even a reconditioned one, but he wanted a brand new one.

David knew that the old nature, the old heart was like a worn-out garment, full of holes, threadbare, and that there was little use in trying to patch it up or piece it together again, it needed to be totally discarded and replaced with one that was new. Paul describes this very thing as *casting off the old man and putting on the new*, not of picking up the old and washing it down, but of throwing it away and starting anew with a New one.

that has penetrated much of Christian thinking, some see a pure heart in terms of a person's sincerity, or of integrity, now although such things may be seen to some extent as virtues, they do not qualify for the description of a pure heart.

Many have the idea that so long as a person is sincere and honest in what they believe, they will see God. This is not so, never has been and never will be. We only have to look at the Bible to see just how far wrong this notion is, remember Elijah's confrontation with the Prophets of Baal, you could not get a sincerer group of men, than those prophets, so sincere were they that they danced from morning to noon constantly crying to their god to hear them "*baal hear us*" was their cry and as they danced, they inflicted terrible wounds in their bodies.

Now you cannot get much more sincere than that, yet when Elijah called upon Almighty God, these very sincere men all perished, their hearts were not right with God, despite their sincerity. Many a sincerely religious person, will in the coming days likewise perish eternally; sincerity is not purity of heart.

Then take integrity, men who are honest who can be trusted, well remember Abimelech, he was described as a man of integrity of heart, but that did not in any way make an impression on God, the heart was still

quite happy to be colourless and dull, people whom the world despises and rightly so.

Is the Christian, the seeker after happiness, really to be such a spineless, colourless, powerless wimp? Is the world to be inherited by such, weak, insipid helpless, foolish people? Well, if it is, in the word of the song, "stop the world I want to get off." I for one want nothing to do with such a hopeless environmental disaster as this would be. Indeed, such an idea is far removed from the days of the early church, and from the days of reformation and revival. So, what is it that Jesus is speaking about?

So, what meekness that Jesus has in mind, well in Matthew 11:29 we have a clue as Jesus says "*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*" We are also told that Moses, the great leader of Israel was also defined as the meekest man on earth.

The Greek word simply means, humble or gentle, it says nothing about weakness, feebleness, foolishness, incompetence, or powerlessness. The Christian in Thessalonica would not have been described by the citizens of that city as being weak, drab, powerless, unattractive wimps.

In fact, they would have described them as just the opposite because the Christians there were said to have *turned the world upside down*. Now weak, powerless, colourless, incompetent people just do not do such things, they are content to let things remain as they are, and do nothing. But the meek souls, followers of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit, had a dramatic effect on the lives of all they encountered. I am fully convinced that such meekness as this is the need of the hour.

One of the things that causes me a great deal of concern, is the lack of meekness among many of today's Christian leaders. There is a genuine desire to do things, to get things that are wrong put right. But there seems to be a great deal of belligerence, arrogance, some even having the sad syndrome of control freaks, rather than humbleness and gentleness. Seeking to turn the world upside down, for all the right and laudable reasons, but with the wrong attitude, an attitude that will bring grief rather than happiness.

The Meekness that Jesus has in view, is not something that merely relates to the world, but has far deeper implications, it has nothing to do with the way that we appear to the world.

The meekness that is view, this humble attitude has to do with our relationship with God, and with His dealings with us.

New Labour, Old Labour, Liberal, Conservative can legislate, no matter what health reforms may or may not be introduced, they will have little or no impact on the real misery and suffering of men and women. The so-called Equal rights Movement along with LGBT and other such groups, can never generate happiness,

We can build bigger and better prisons, but that will not make for a happier or safer society, we can build bigger and better schools, but whilst the educators insist on teaching the students godless ideas, godless philosophies, they are only adding to the already existing serious problem, they are feeding hearts that are severely diseased with even more diseased and corrupting materials, with larger and larger doses of malignant toxins.

The only answer to the misery that is about us, and maybe is part of your life, is to have major heart surgery at the hand of Almighty God, to have the diseased heart removed and a New one installed in its place, the diseased heart has to go and be replaced by a pure heart if true happiness is to be yours, in the word of Charles Wesley, "*a heart from sin set free, a heart that's sprinkled with the blood, so freely shed for me.*"

Let us first remove from our thinking a terrible myth

unhappiness. It is because of this that our world is in the terrible mess that it is in today, it is this major heart problem that is the cause of all evil that we about us, the cause of all the killings, the drug abuse, the sexual crimes, child abuse, abortions. Along with the evils that are taking place under the name of Islam etc, etc.

Now it is a fact of life that the folk who follow these things, who partake of these activities, are not happy, they are far from knowing real that supreme contentment and satisfaction that comes from the highest source.

King David was a man who knew the need of having major spiritual heart surgery, he sinned greatly, his heart condition, led him into the sin of adultery and murder, and the result was that his entire body and soul began to be affected, he began to dry up, as he put it.

He was diagnosed by the Prophet of God, as being guilty of sin, Nathan pointed out to him in no uncertain terms that he was Guilty of these terrible sins, realising his desperate condition, knowing that his heart was desperately wicked he cried to God “*create in me a clean heart O God.*” Psalm 51:10.

Now here in is the answer to all the misery and unhappiness in this world, major heart surgery is the answer to today’s dilemma, no authorities, be they

The meekness that is in view here, is that quiet acceptance of His Word, of His judgements as they affect us individually.

The Meekness that is in view here, is that humble willingness to serve and obey Him, to walk in His ways, to follow His precepts, it that quiet submission to His authority, to be disciplined by Him.

The Meekness in view here is the laying aside of all pride, all self-interest, all self-seeking and the humble accept Gods Will for our lives.

Meekness is the unflurried acquiescence of the Divine Will, such will result in a deep inner peace, an equanimity of spirit, that will give strength so that we will be able to face anything that the world can throw at us. You see this meekness comes for that rich and blessed assurance “*that all things worked together for good, to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose.*”

Like the first two beatitudes this is a spiritual matter and has to do with our relationship with God. Now such meekness as this will inevitable have practical and outward manifestations, such as was seen by the citizens of Thessalonica when the Church *turned the world upside down*, you see it was turned upside down, not by a belligerent or arrogant, proud group of

Christians but by those who were in submission to the Lord and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We need now to consider the practical application of meekness, for whilst the world may see nothing of our spiritual poverty, or of our spiritual sorrow, it should see something of real Christian meekness, for it is something that is inseparably tied up with the earth, for it is the Earth, that meekness inherits.

As we have said meekness equates with gentleness and humbleness, therefore the outward manifestation of submission to God, to His Word and principles, will be a caring, compassionate character. As Christians, followers of Christ, we are called to emulate Him, and the one great visible characteristic of His life was meekness, so let us see how these two qualities worked out in His Life, so that they may be worked out in ours.

Gentleness, of all men there is no doubt that Jesus Christ was the gentlest of all, He cared for people, He was gentle in the way that He handled them, we never see any going away from Him without receiving the answer to their need.

See how caring He was at the Wedding Feast when they ran out of Wine, He did not say, as maybe some would today, “Well that’s tough, you will have to go

going to Heaven, that we have a Peace and Joy that the world knows nothing about. Happiness is to give to others the same Mercy that God has given to us, may we be a merciful people, a merciful Church, and a Truly Happy people.

This search or and the answer to true happiness goes on for we continue to read. “*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,*” Matthew 5:8. Before we can understand the meaning of this verse we must try and get some understanding of what the natural heart is like, you see we all suffer from a severe heart malfunction, we all have chronic heart disease.

The Bible tells us that the “*heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,*” Jeremiah 17:9. In the Book of Ecclesiastes we are told “*the heart of the sons of men is full of evil and madness.*” Chapter 9:3. Whilst Jesus the great heart physician tells us that it is out of “*the heart of men that proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye*” Mark 8:21-23. Paul also informs us that we should “*take heed, lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God,*” Hebrews 3:12.

So, we see that there is a very severe heart problem, a problem that rather than producing happiness source of

fatherless.” that is to ensure that they are cared for, that they are not left out, that they are loved. Now such Mercy can only be found in those who have seen first their own sin, who have mourned it, who have humbly and meekly accepted the Word of God, and who themselves *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, for it is such who have been born of the Spirit of God and who possess the Spirit of Christ.

Then we have the promise, *“for they shall obtain mercy.”* To obtain such mercy is True Happiness, remember that day, when you became a Christian? Remember those early days of your faith, the joy, the happiness, the wonder of it all. I remember Pilgrim in Pilgrims Progress, on that day when he reached the Cross and his burden of sin was taken away, he *“gave three leaps for joy and went his way signing,”* and this is what he sang;

“Thus far I did come laden with my sin;
Nor could aught ease the grief I was in,
Till I came hither: What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here must the burden fall off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it me crack?
Blest Cross blest Sepulchre! Blest rather be
The man that there was put to shame for me!

It is by the mercy of God that we are saved, that we are

without.” No, He turned round and met their need.

When people came to Him who were sick, He did not once turn any away, but healed them,

When the disciples found that they owed the Temple their tax money, He did not say, “Well that’s your fault, you should have taken more care,” He simply met the need.

When 5000 sat down, without food, He did not say, “Well that hard luck, you should have come better prepared,” No we learn He was moved with Compassion for them and then He fed them, and then not with the Bare minimum, but with more than they could eat.

What about the woman at Jacobs Well, in Samaria, a woman with deep moral and spiritual need, did He turn her away, condemn her, did He say, “Well, you’ve made your bed, now go and lay on it.” No, Jesus cared, and gently and mercifully met her need.

If we want a pattern for the local Christian Church, then here it is, a Church reaching out into the community, touching, and helping those who are in need, getting alongside the people as Jesus came and got right alongside us. You see the heart that has seen its own spiritual poverty, the heart that knows what it

is to mourn over its sin, it is a heart that has been made meek, for it is a heart that seek to be like Jesus, gentle, caring full of compassion. It is only when a heart has been to Calvary, that we can expect to find such meekness.

This is the second quality of meekness, a heart and soul devoid of pride, of self and self-interest. Meekness never stands aloof, never too proud to get involved in the rough and tumble of life and its problems. Look again at Christ we never see Him, standing aloof from the harsh realities of life, He did not shut himself in some Ivory Tower where He was immune from the things of life? Oh no, Jesus was touched by our Infirmities, He came from the highest echelons of glory and got right alongside us. Jesus did not stand off from the beggars, the lepers, the prostitute, the corrupt businessman, no matter who it was Jesus rubbed shoulders with them and in their need and desperation helped them.

Again, such humility can only be seen in those who have seen themselves for what they are you see spiritually, not one of us is any better than the leper, the beggar, the prostitute, the corrupt businessman. Like the leper our sin made us unclean, like the beggar we lived of the things we could beg from the world, like the prostitute we sold ourselves, body, and soul for a few of life's riches, like the corrupt business we accepted

Jewish families, Sodomy and Lesbianism, was rampant, unwanted children were cast out to live life as best they could either by begging, prostitution, or thieving. Children born with any deformity was drowned at birth, it was a merciless place.

Into this mess came Jesus Christ Mercy Incarnate, and He Mercifully got right alongside us, He healed the Broken hearts, He healed the Sick, He gave sight to the Blind, He made the Lamé to walk, He raised the Dead, and then the greatest act of all acts of Mercy, He gave His life to ransom our souls.

This, is mercy, and as Christians as part of the visible body of Christ, this is the mercy we are to show to others as far as it is possible. The True Citizen of the Kingdom of God, is the soul that is full of mercy towards others, who has a deep pity for and yearning to be tender and helpful, to all who are suffering, and that implies all men.

We are to be like Jesus and get right alongside them and then like Him touch the unlovely, embrace the unclean as He Himself touched and embraced us. We are to get alongside to make their pain and suffering less, to make their burden easier by taking something of their pain and suffering upon ourselves.

As James tells us we are to “*visit the widows and the*

In Psalm 119:64 we learn of Gods Providential Mercy, *“the earth O Lord is full of thy mercy.”* We live, we move, we have our existence, all by the mercy of God, everything we need to life, is off Gods mercy, the food we eat, the air we breathe, all things needful to our existence here on earth is all of Gods mercy, if God ever went on strike, this old world would come to a grinding halt, for it is in Him *“we live and move and have our being.”*

When you think of it, and what we are doing to the world, the way that was have abused it, polluted it, poisoned its atmosphere with all manner of toxins, it is a miracle we are still here, and we are because of Gods mercy.

Look now at the greatest show of God mercy ever seen, 2000 years ago the world was in a mess, the Iron Boot of Imperial Rome, had crushed the world into submission, the worship of the One True God, had almost been extinguished, the Jewish people who were the Holders of the Faith, had all but perverted it out of recognition, in the whole nation only a handful of True Believers could be found, and then only by the Grace and Mercy of God.

Violence was the order of the day, Corruption existed in all Government Offices, most of the officials were on the take, Immorality was widespread, even in

bribes, to better our souls need. And Jesus despite this spiritual filthiness of ours came to be our Saviour, and such humility we are to manifest.

The product of such meekness is, *“they shall inherit the earth,”* Now neither the Second Coming or even, as some believe, a future millennium reign of Christ on earth, are anywhere in view in this passage, therefore we can omit any idea that Jesus is looking forward to these things.

This has a very down to earth application. God has given to us many wonderful blessings on this Earth, blessing and benefits that a proud, arrogant spirit take away from us, blessing that are by rights ours, yet they are often lost to us, because of pride.

Let me give just one example: “A missionary in Jamaica once asked the boys in his group, what the meaning of the text was, said one young lad, “Sir it is to give a soft answer to rough questions,” How often have we lost much happiness because we have given rough answers to rough questions?

Take the family, which should be the source of great happiness, the Bible is full of exhortations of how we should see the family and of its blessings to us. Children are a blessing a rich source of happiness. When I look back, and please do not let Janet my wife

know what I am about to tell you, but I wish we had had a dozen children, instead of two. Yet it is so easy for this wonderful thing to be blown away by a father's stupidity.

“A young lad was visiting a family, who had a distinct and unwholesome reputation, such a reputation that no self-respecting father would want his child associating with them. When the father learned of this friendship, he began to rage and storm, shouting the odds. But his wife, was calmer, and she said to him, if you go blustering away at Tommy in this fashion you will drive him away from us and into their arms, if you are violent with the lad, you will do more harm than good.

The father saw the wisdom of his wife. And when he saw the boy coolly and calmly held a conversation with him, and gently, lovingly allowed the lad to see the situation for himself and the boy dropped the friendship. Yet how many fathers have lost their heritage, their son or daughter because of their proud, arrogant, and belligerent behaviour, they did not inherit what was their earthly right, but allowed pride to destroy it.

This is simply one example, how through pride, arrogance, and un-Christ like behaviour, it is possible to lose the blessings, that deep contentment and satisfaction that is our earthly right. Lost because we

Satan, and will restore man to his former glory, even in the Garden where man violated Gods Law, the Hand of Divine Mercy is seen. How merciful are we to those who offend us?

Move on a couple of thousand years, to the Great Flood, here again we see the Mercy of God in action whilst His perfect Justice is also exemplified. Again, God could have justly destroyed the entire world population, including Noah, because he too was a sinner and as such deserving of death, but as it was the Hand of Divine Mercy reached down once again and saved mankind.

It was the mercy of God that saved Lot from the horrors of the terrible judgement that befell Sodom and Gomorrah.

It was Divine Mercy that saved Joseph and which raised him up to be the saviour of both Egypt and of his own family.

It was the Mercy of God that permitted David to have a son and heir, after his great sin.

Nearer home, it was the mercy of God that caused this once Great Nation to come into being, that made it a safe refuge for those fleeing persecution in Europe over 300 years ago, it was the mercy of God that saved and preserved us from invasion during the last war and from the dangers of the Cold War.

Then turn to Psalm 100:5 “*his mercy is everlasting.*” The Mercy of God is no temporary thing, it is not limited to time, it will never run out, it is not one of those things that are here today and gone tomorrow, it is a mercy that flows for ever. Just to give us some idea of its duration and durability.

Let us go to the Garden of Eden, and see there our parents hiding in shame from God, because of their sin, fearing to face Him, knowing that the awesome Holiness of God demanded their lives. Now into that Garden comes the Lord Himself, and the only one that could be is the Pre-Incarnate Son of God Himself, for as the Word says *no man at any time has seen the father.*

Now does His love for Adam and Eve cause Him to change His Laws, does He turn a blind eye and in so doing condone their sin, does He just give them a gentle telling off. No on the contrary He does Not, Justice is required and if it is meted out, the consequences of their action are to be allowed to take their full course.

The Lord does not in any way change, but what is also seen in the Garden is the gracious hand of mercy being held out to mankind. It is to be found there in the fifteenth verse, for here the Lord promises Adam that the day will come when He will come and defeat

fail to meekly accept God's way of doing things, reject His Word, Happiness lost because we fail to take a humble and gentle approach to the earthly things designed by God the highest authority there is for our happiness.

We now turn our thoughts to the next complimentary source of happiness Matthew 5:6 “*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.*” Matthew 5:6. Here we are given four additional characteristics that bring about true happiness

The first thing to notice is that there needs to be a real appetite, if you are to be happy you require a healthy appetite. One of the great problems I have seen in over fifty years of ministry is that there are far too many Christians suffering from either spiritual anorexia or bulimia, they have major eating disorders when it comes to the things needful to sustain a spiritual healthy life.

We all know what it is to have a good healthy appetite for the food that feeds the body, we all know the necessity of regularly taking on board fuel to keep our bodies working, if we do not eat, we soon become weak and powerless, food is essential. We have good appetites for the good food that is available to us so readily.

Now if this appetite for bread were to be turned to the same strong desire for good wholesome spiritual food, then both the Church and Nation would be in a far healthier condition than it is right now.

If I were to ask how your appetite is for food, the answer I would get would be, fine, that is great, nothing wrong in that, but what about the spiritual appetite, how does that fare, are we truly hungry for the things of God? Do we have the same strong desire for spiritual nourishment?

What it is we are to hunger for? The man or woman who is going to be truly happy, must have a strong desire for the right spiritual food, and it is given us right here, it is a diet of righteousness, we are to *hunger and thirst after righteousness*.

This means that we are to desire those things that are the very opposite of the things that the none Christian desires. Some time ago I was watching the news on TV, reporting some violent act had taken place in a town, and a woman was bemoaning the fact that children, in her street were out of control, they were violent and people feared going out.

Now we can all sympathise with her, with her anger and all the other emotions that she had, but what is so sad is that like so many before her she cried, “where

The Greek word for *mercy* or merciful is ele-l-mon and simply means to be actively compassionate, having implications of Divinity. Mercy is the sorrow at and for the suffering of others, it is to see these things and be moved to do something about it, and not let up until the situation has been rectified.

If we are to understand this, we need to look closely at the source of mercy itself and that is to God. As you look at God and at His Mercy, we do not find Him watering down laws to accommodate us, He does not lessen His just demands upon us, but this does not lessen His wonderful Mercy to us.

Our God is truly the Merciful One, for the Mercy of God is outgoing kindness, the active Compassion of a loving and caring heart. Therefore, if we would be truly happy knowing the supreme satisfaction and contentment that is only obtained from the Highest Source, we would do well to look at the very source of mercy itself, Almighty God.

Look at Psalm 36 v5 “*thy mercy O Lord is in the heavens.*” What this tells us that God Mercy is so vast that it fills the Heavens themselves, it is beyond imagination and without limitation. Think about that in the light of human mercy, which is very limited and extends only to those upon whom we are pleased to bestow it.

We see this exemplified in the mass mercy efforts orchestrated by Pop Stars, Sport and Entertainment and the like, this is in no way decrying these efforts as they are generated by feelings of pity? Often however they are no more than spasmodic outbursts of emotion, and often conditional with rarely any lasting value, in terms of continuity.

Often such acts are a release from guilty consciences, and when all the motive power has died away, so does the Mercy Giving. Often these things are very good publicity stunts and good Tax deductibles. In fact, the very word “humanitarianism” should ring warning bells for the Christian, for it is indicative, of its real source, namely that of humanism, an atheistic principle.

The world’s mercy, and yes it does show it, is wanting in so far as the mercy spoken of the Lord Jesus. You see the mercy referred to here is something that brings happiness, and this is very different from the transient and often self-centred, self-gratifying mercy shown by the world.

Now we must be very careful that as Christians the mercy we show is Biblical mercy and not merely a combination of the worlds concept of it, or Buddhism’s brand, for as the New Age religion gains ground, it will infect the Church and Christian thinking.

have we gone wrong, why are the young people in such a mess, where have we failed them?”

The answer is as plain as the nose on the face, we have failed them, by feeding their hearts, minds and souls on all the junk food that is offered by the world, we have encouraged them to have appetites that demand all their passions be satisfied at any cost, we have said to them that there are no standards of absolute right or wrong and that it is alright to do what you want to do, and then we get all up tight, show great surprise and hold up our hands in horror when the kids do as they have been taught, and they have been taught that there is no right or wrong.

We are living time described by Paul as *perilous times*, Times when men have become *lovers of their own selves*, when all that matters is the satisfaction of their own ungodly appetites.

We cannot feed the minds and souls of our children with perversions, lust, violence, and mayhem, and all other ungodly ideas and expect them to grow up as law abiding citizens, let alone little angels.

We are feeding their appetites with food that is unlawful and will cause them to grow into little devils, the more they have of this ungodly fare, the more they will desire, because this food is addictive.

What does all this mean? In a nutshell, the world and its citizens are hungering and thirsting after unrighteousness, and even those who hold up their hands in horror at what is taking place are all too often feeding their own souls on the very same spiritually toxic food that has poisoned the souls of the young who carry out these horrendous crimes.

Are these people happy? The answer is very clearly “No they are not,” they are filled with anxieties, cares, they live a life of fear, unrighteous living is the sure way to utter and complete unhappiness.

But the truth is “*happy are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.*” Just as unrighteous living brings misery, so hunger for the things of righteousness brings happiness.

The question then is ‘what is righteousness?’ In short it is the very opposite as we have said to unrighteousness, to hunger and thirst after this places us in direct opposition to the way of the world, and this is why we have so many Anorexic Christians, because they do not like to be different from the world, they do not like to stand out, so instead on hungering for the things of God, they will after a good spiritual meal which they did not enjoy, do all within their power to stop its benefits getting into the blood stream, the devil to come and take away the good that they have heard and go

they teach and practice the brand of mercy formulated by Buddha. Here was a man born to luxury, he lived in luxury, but there came a day in his life when for the first time he saw life as it was, he saw people suffering, he saw the decrepitude, the disease and death.

The result as he was moved by what he saw, he renounced his lifestyle of luxury and searched until he thought he had found a way of emancipation from life. Here was a man who seeing the stark realities of life, was moved with a form of mercy, but who failed to come to grips with it, for he sought through his spiritual exercises to get away from it.

Buddhism, deplores human suffering and misery, but the way they deal with it, is by seeking to remove themselves from the scene and source of it, through spiritual exercises. If you look at the Nations where Buddhism is the major religion you will see terrible poverty, sickness, and distress, the main help coming from Nations influenced by Christianity.

There is yet another form of mercy popular in the world today, it is called Humanitarianism, and it is one that without any doubt is doing some real good in many areas of the world, insofar that money and other resources are being poured into the needy areas of the third world.

barren place to be if you were sick, aged, widowed, or orphaned, but as the Lord's people grew, so did the advent of mercy, as they followed the divine principle of showing mercy to those less fortunate than themselves.

The question is "what is mercy?" this question is important because people have very different ideas as to what it really is, you see some people think that mercy is the relaxation of the Law of making things easier. "Oh" they will argue, the law is too tough, its standards are too high, there is no way that people can live by it, it hurts them, causes them deep grief and sorrow, however, if we relax its demands people will find life easier, be able to their own thing without having a guilt complex and be very much happier.

That is not being merciful, that is madness, giving people licence to what whatsoever pleases them is far from being merciful to them, because it places them and all others in great danger, the laws are there to protect us, shield us from harm, remove them like the Do Gooders want and you make the people even more vulnerable to the effects and consequences of sinful activity. Do-gooders and their self-centred brand of mercy are the curse of 21st century society.

Then we have the idea of mercy that is fast creeping in from the East in the form of the Buddhist Religion,

about living their lives as if nothing had happened.

Righteousness has several applications which are worth looking at:

Sometimes it signifies rectitude, living an upright and moral life. Sometimes it means the righteousness that is given to us by God, which makes us Just in His sight,

However, following on from Jesus has been saying about *mourning*, *meekness* and spiritual *poverty*, the application here has to do with death to sin, with the renunciation of the world and a deliberate choice to follow and obey God.

To *Hunger and Thirst* after it, is to have that longing to live a life in conformity to Gods Will, to be what God wants us to be, to live a life that shows forth the glory and love of Jesus.

It is that desire to be like Christ, for He was the only righteous person to walk the earth. Righteousness is to walk in the Light of God's Word of Truth as Christ Himself walked in it, it is to react to situations in the same way that He did, and it is positive obedience to the Law of the Lord.

It is to have His compassion for the sick, halt, the blind and the lame. It is to have a love for sinners such as Christ had for us.

Now those who would truly be happy, that is having the happiness promised must, desire this *righteousness* just as a hungry man long for food.

This is a real test of our faith, it points out whether our profession of Christianity is real or superficial, you see it is not merely the desire to see righteousness prevailing in the world at large, neither is it merely doing righteous acts, as even the heathen can often do things that are right, in fact there are those occasions when the world shows the Christian up.

This is far deeper; it is being righteous a deep hunger that longs to be just like Jesus Christ.

Here is a very personal question, “do you long with all our being to be *righteous*, to be like Jesus?” Now if we are truly born again, possessors of the divine nature, then such a hunger will be ours, because no longer will the things, the appetites and the food of the world bring any form of happiness to our souls,

Why, because the things of the world, its pleasures, pastimes, entertainments, habits, and the such are at enmity with the things of God. Righteousness is to live a life as far removed from the unrighteousness of the world as it is possible to get, yet at the same time live in the world, for as Jesus said, “*ye are in the world but not of it.*”

What is it your soul hungering for?
What is it that it longs for most of all?

Think of this, if it longs for anything other than righteousness, then it is on a starvation diet, one that will eventually cause it to perish. The Bible tells us very plainly that the number one priority in life is to “*seek first the kingdom of god and his righteousness,*” To be in tune with, and to follow Him and His ways, which are the ways of righteousness, now although we will never in this life experience the beauty of perfect righteousness, it is something that our souls are to hunger for, and the way to find it is in Jesus Christ, to have His life imparted to us by Grace through faith in His finished work on Calvary.

Moving on we have another wonderful source of happiness; it is found in Matthew five verse seven and reads. “*Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*” If a person wants to be truly happy then be merciful.

This world in which we are living is crying out for *mercy*, and the Christians are or should be the ones that show it. History has shown that it is the Christian who has benefited mankind more than any other group of people.

Prior to the advent of Christ, this world was a cold and

sinfulness. He died that we might be forgiven, He died to make us good, that we might go at last to heaven saved by His precious blood.

What does this mean? In a nutshell, the world and its citizens are hungering and thirsting after **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS**, and even those who hold up their hands in horror at what is taking place are all too often feeding their own souls on the very same spiritually toxic food that has poisoned the souls of the young who carry out these horrendous crimes.

Are these people happy? The answer is “No they are not,” they are filled with anxieties, cares, they live a life of fear, unrighteous living is the sure way to utter and complete unhappiness. On the other hand, “*happy are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.*” Hungering after the things of God, hungering after Christ.

Just as unrighteous living brings misery, so hunger for the things of righteousness brings happiness, to hunger and thirst after this places us in direct opposition to the way of the world, and maybe this is why we have so many anorectic Christians, because they do not like to be different from the world, they do not like to stand out.

The question is, what is it that your soul desires?

There is to be a noticeable separation from and not a blending with the world, The world is a very unrighteous and hostile environment, and as Christians, citizens of *the Kingdom of God* we are not to be dictated to by the unrighteous laws, practices, and fashions of the world.

As Christians our entire mode of life, dress, practices, habits are to be in conformity with the righteous laws, practices, and fashion of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. Our hungering for the things of Jesus, to be like Him is a sure sign of our spiritual health.

One of the first things a doctor says when you visit him with some complaint is “what is your appetite like?” you see it is a good indicator to our health. So, do we hunger for the things of Jesus, to be like Him, to live like Him, to follow the will of God like Him, to obey the law of the Lord like Him, to do the will of God like Him?

The one good thing about having a good appetite is to sit down and have a good meal placed before you, and then having given thanks to God for His bountiful provision, to eat it. Then, and having eaten it, to be able when offered another helping to say, thank you, but no, because you are full, you are satisfied, there is no way that you eat any more.

There are millions in this world who would give all they have, to sit down and have a good, satisfying meal. There are even millions more, who are trying all the things of the world to try and satisfy their souls hunger, but they are hungering after the wrong things, they are like the Prodigal who are far from God and His righteousness and are feeding off the husks of the world, and never find anything to satisfy.

Remember the definition of happiness, is “supreme contentment and satisfaction from the highest source.” The promise text is that those who “*hunger and thirst, after righteousness, “they shall be filled”* that is they will be satisfied and contented.

Remember those days when our children were babies, some may yet have that pleasure to come, and believe you me there is nothing worse than a baby *hungering and thirsting* after its 3am. feed, and one ends up arguing whose turn it is to get out of bed to warm the milk feed that baby and change its nappy, its great fun!!!!

But oh, boy what a blessed thing it is, when the feed has been given, the baby winded and all is quiet, and one can get back to sleep, it is great when you are a grandparent because you only must do these things when you want to, but that is another tale.

Today, the world is screaming like an unfed baby, feed me, feed me it cries, feed me more lusts, feed me more violence, feed me more pleasure, feed me more power, and the more garbage, they are fed the more they want, they are never satisfied, this is the food of devils, for the more they have of this ungodly fare, the more they will desire, because this food is addictive.

Yet when offered them *sincere milk of the Word*, when they have laid before them the *Bread of Life*, they refuse it and continue their soul starved way to eternal damnation in the fiery bowels of Hell, where their thirst and hunger will never ever be quenched. For the soul *hungering and thirsting after righteousness*, it will be fully satisfied, filled, nothing will be wanting.

The soul that hungers for the things of God, is a soul that has everything, for it is fully fed. That hungry soul is filled with God's Grace, it has a *peace that passeth all understanding*, you see the soul that hungers after righteousness is the soul that has entered the land that *floweth with milk and honey*. It is that soul which is fed with heavenly *Manna*, with all the good things of God.

The wonderful thing about this is, God not only feeds the souls, but when He does, He also gives us a new wardrobe, for He places upon us the robe of perfect righteousness, *Christ's Righteousness*. Because on the cross Jesus took on Himself the robe of our wretched