

**Day 20**  
**Spiritual Superfood!**

***Matthew 5:6 (AMP) Blessed and fortunate and happy and spiritually prosperous (in that state in which the born-again child of God enjoys His favor and salvation) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God), for they shall be completely satisfied!***

We are learning from Jesus what it means to truly live a blessed life. There is no mention of things, but there sure are some incredible spiritual truths that Jesus is giving out, not only to those who were there on the mountain with Him, but also to us. **This is spiritual superfood!** We might not like the initial introduction to these principles, but on further investigation, we find out that they might be hard, but they sure do lead to a completely satisfied life. Other things will give us momentary pleasure and even enjoyment; we will even continue to crave them, but Jesus' words will stand up through the highs and lows of life. Jesus wants us healthy and strong. He wants us vibrant and full of life. **He gives us truth that will help us change the unhealthy appetites we possess, but He also gives us the grace to follow where it is difficult.**

The hunger and thirst He wants us to have for His righteousness does not immobilize us; just the complete opposite. We still have the responsibility to live out the righteousness that we have received from Him. We know that He became our righteousness, which far outweighs anything that we could've done on our own. Jesus did not tell the crowd that they no longer have to pray, fast or give. If that is the impression you have, you need to let the Holy Spirit give you a fresh understanding and revelation of what Jesus preached in the sermon on the Mount. We must catch this: **Jesus did not want us to stop pursuing Him in our prayers, fasting and giving. He wants us to do these things, but for a very different reason and with a completely different motivation.**

Jesus did not dislike what the Pharisees did when it came to works of righteousness, He had a problem with the reason they did it. The Pharisees practiced righteousness to be seen by people and to gain God's approval. Then, to top it off, they boasted in their own works of righteousness. ***"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 6:1 NIV)**

Jesus did not say, "Don't do acts of righteousness," He said, "be careful not to do them to be seen." See how Jesus addresses giving, prayer and fasting: ***"When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get."* (Matthew 6:2 NLT)**

What about prayer? ***"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get."* (Matthew 6:5 NLT)**

What about fasting? ***“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get.” (Matthew 6:16 NLT)***

In every single one of these verses Jesus says: ***“When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do.”*** Then He addresses prayer: ***“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites”***; then, again, fasting: ***“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do.”*** Note these two very important observations from the words of Jesus: Jesus did not say, “If you give, if you pray” or “if you fast,” He said “when”! “When,” not “if”. “If” means I might or might not do something. “When” means there is a specific appointed time for something to happen. **These three spiritual disciplines are essential ingredients for a healthy spiritual life. They are superfood for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. They are crucial for our spiritual development; they are necessary for our spiritual maturity, and needed for a healthy spiritual appetite.**

**A Christ follower who does not practice these spiritual disciplines is short sighted, malnourished and immature in their understanding of righteousness.** Jesus addresses the most crucial part of our pursuit of righteousness. We do not give, pray or fast so we can obtain righteousness or that we can showcase our obedience to the Law. Why is our righteousness greater than that of the religious leaders of the day? We received our righteousness from Jesus as a gift of grace, and then, we operate in the works of righteousness based on love, not law. Why do we produce these qualities? Not because we have to, but because we want to. **We live now in the power of God’s love, not in the letter of the Law.** Paul expresses it so clearly: ***“So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. 5 When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. 6 But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.” Romans 7:4-6(NLT)***

Our hunger and thirst for righteousness produces a harvest of good deeds. **These good deeds are done with the right motivation and are based on our response to God’s love for us.** We pray, give and fast not to get our reward from man. We pray, give and fast with the knowledge that God sees everything, including our motives, and His rewards fully satisfy. So our pursuit is for His Kingdom and His righteousness, and we leave the rewards in His Hands because only the Father truly knows if we do them and if we do it for the right reason. ***“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33 NIV)***

Prayer is our communication with the Father; it’s our spiritual lifeblood. Jesus taught us and showed us to pray, “Our Father in Heaven...” Are you praying? Giving shows who we trust. Generosity is our spiritual light. Jesus told us we cannot serve God and money. Are you giving? Fasting is our purposeful discipline; it’s our spiritual dedication. Jesus told us to fast, especially once He was gone. Are you fasting? If you are trying to justify a lack of practicing these spiritual disciplines in your life, ask yourself,

“Why?” These spiritual superfoods will boost your spiritual immunity, build your spiritual stamina, and create an appetite for His righteousness.

Partake of them daily, and you will find that they give strength to the weary, hope to the hopeless, joy to the despondent, wisdom to the foolish, direction to the wanderer, grace to the struggler, healing to the broken, power to the faint and fresh starts to those who need it! Have you partaken in your spiritual superfood today?

#### **Reflection and Prayer:**

- Righteousness has to do with learning to follow God’s instructions. If you can’t follow God’s instructions and do what He says, you will never be wise! How wise are you?
- These following verses show one of the paradoxes of Kingdom living. *“What I’m getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you’ve done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived **in responsive obedience**. Now that I’m separated from you, keep it up. **Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God’s energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.**” (Philippians 2:12-13 (MSG))*

It has to do with our righteousness. We are righteous because of Jesus, but we must also work out our righteousness because that shows that God is working in us. **How energetic are you in the arenas of prayer, giving and fasting?**

- **If you are struggling, simply pray: “Lord, You know that I cannot fool or pretend before You. You know the best of me and the worst of me, and You still love me. Father, help me to seek You in prayer, not once in a while, but daily. Help me to fast, not when it is convenient, but when it is truly directed by the Holy Spirit. Give me a generous eye so that my whole life will be filled with light. Remind me that my treasure is not here, but with You. I want to pray and fast like Jesus taught us, and I want to be completely generous like Jesus showed us. Make me more like Jesus so that all I do will be motivated by Your pure love. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.**