

Audio Transcript of Sermon

August 23, 2025

Blessed are They which do Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Righteousness is something the Bible tells us to seek, and through the prophet Ezekiel, God identified three Old Testament figures as having righteousness. We might think of righteousness as something belonging only to God, and yet, God named three people who according to Him had righteousness. That should help us understand that righteousness is not something just out of reach for people, but that righteousness is a quality that can be ascribed to people by God.

Striving for righteousness can be compared to letting our light shine. Seeing that light can be easy or hard depending upon the environment around us. For instance, if light is shining in the middle of the day, there is so much competing light from the sun that it might be hard to see a shining light. However, if light is shining in darkness, and that light is the only source of light to be seen, that shining light will be much easier to see, even from a distance. The three Old Testament figures identified as righteous were compared to the land, meaning the society. Ezekiel tells us the land, or society, sins by trespassing grievously, and when this happens people and animals suffer consequences. When sin led to widespread suffering, God tells us that three individuals, Noah, Daniel, and Job were spared from this suffering because of their righteousness. We are also told that when God decides to bring widespread punishment to a society for its sin, that the relief from suffering is only given to the people who have righteousness, and that the relief does not trickle down to other family members, that only the righteous will be delivered. It is only by the mercy of God, often directed at the righteous person that their family member may also be spared, but this result comes through God's mercy and not the righteousness of the individual. The righteous deliver their own souls when God brings punishment to a land. Ezekiel fourteen verse twelve.

Ezekiel 14:12-20

12. The word of the Lord came again to me, saying,

- 13. Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:**
- 14. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.**
- 15. If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:**
- 16. Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.**
- 17. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:**
- 18. Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.**
- 19. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:**
- 20. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.**

In thinking of all the notable historical people of the Old Testament it is Noah, Daniel, and Job that are directly named as righteous by God in this passage. From Genesis we can see that Noah was a just man who walked with God. Genesis six verse five.

Genesis 6:5-9

- 5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**
- 6. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.**
- 7. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.**
- 8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.**
- 9. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.**

Daniel acknowledged that the people had sinned and committed iniquity, but also knew that righteousness belonged to God. He also knew that God's mercy extended to those who love Him and keep His commandments. Daniel nine verse three.

Daniel 9:3-7

3. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4. And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5. We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6. Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

Job, who we tend to think of as having had a problem with self-righteousness, is called righteous by God in Ezekiel. Job explained he had no problem putting on righteousness and for him it was as easy as putting on clothes. Job twenty-nine verse eleven.

Job 29:11-17

11. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:

12. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.

13. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

14. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

15. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.

- 16. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.**
17. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

It would be later when Job would realize that power and greatness belongs to God, and he came to see that it is God Who can do everything. He eventually came to the point where he repented. Instead of taking righteousness to himself, he came to see that righteousness and the wonderful works of God belong to God. Job forty-two verse one.

Job 42:1-6

- 1. Then Job answered the Lord, and said,**
2. I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.
3. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
4. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
5. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.
6. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Righteousness belongs to God as Daniel explained, and knowing that does not give us a reason to ignore righteousness. Jesus made it very clear that along with the Kingdom of God, we are to seek God's righteousness. We are not to seek our own righteousness, but God's righteousness. Jesus explained this concept in a passage showing that it is so easy to get caught up in the frustrations and troubles of living life, that it is possible to overlook the spiritual things we should be considering. Jesus taught if we first seek the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, our needs will be provided. Matthew six verse twenty-five.

Matthew 6:25-34

- 25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?**
26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?
27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

That brings us to the beatitudes, when Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Matthew five verse six.

Matthew 5:6

6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

If we want to be filled with God's righteousness, we must hunger and thirst for it. Paul explained this as living life as ambassadors for Christ which allows us to be reconciled to God. With that reconciliation comes the opportunity to have our sins forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and that forgiveness provides us with the spiritual foundation allowing the development of the righteousness of God within us. Second Corinthians five verse sixteen.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

17. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

If we hunger and thirst for righteousness, Peter assures us that the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and that His ears are open to their prayers. We are also clued in that we might suffer for righteousness' sake, because the world in which we live is a world embodied by evil, and evil is the antithesis of righteousness. Knowing hardship may come our way is not a reason to be fearful, but to focus on that which is Holy by sanctifying the Lord God in our heart. First Peter three verse twelve.

1 Peter 3:12-17

12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

Isaiah compares the righteous to sinners and hypocrites whom he describes as afraid and fearful. As the righteous, while we may have people speak evil of us because we live in a world where good is evil and evil is good, we do not need to live with any type of fear. God will allow evil to run its course with evil people and that should lead to fear for them, but for the righteous, those who do what is righteous, those who say what is righteous, those who despise oppression, those

who cannot be bought, and those who cannot imagine bringing evil to others will see the beauty of the Kingdom of God. Isaiah thirty-three verse fourteen.

Isaiah 33:14-17

14. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

15. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

16. He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.

17. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

Ezekiel writes that if a person is just and does what is lawful and right, that person will have eternal life. What embodies being just and doing what is lawful and right in God's eyes transcends the laws and practices of mankind. These are the people who remain true to God who refuse to be led into false beliefs, and they live their lives loving their fellow man as themselves. They value marriage and will not oppress another person. Ezekiel eighteen verse five.

Ezekiel 18:5-9

5. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

6. And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

7. And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

8. He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

9. Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God.

Hosea writes that we need to be seeking what is righteous when others around us may only be seeking those things for this life. We are to sow to ourselves righteousness and reap mercy. We are to break up the spiritual farmland, and seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness upon us. Hosea ten verse eleven.

Hosea 10:11-13

11. And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.

12. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

13. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.

We are told in the psalms to depart from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it knowing that the eyes of God are on the righteous, and that His ears will hear our prayers. God will deliver the righteous from all their troubles, and the righteous are described as having many afflictions. We should not think that God gives the righteous a carefree life, because we are told many are the afflictions of the righteous, but that God delivers the righteous from afflictions. Psalm thirty-four verse fourteen.

Psalm 34:14-19

14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

15. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

16. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

We are also told in the psalms that they who keep judgment and who do what is righteous are blessed at all times. Knowing there is this blessing from God we have every reason to praise and give thanks to God, because God is good and His mercy endures forever. Psalm one hundred six verse one.

Psalm 106:1-5

- 1. Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.**
- 2. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?**
- 3. Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.**
- 4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;**
- 5. That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.**

The Book of Proverbs was written so that wisdom could be understood. If all a person understands is secular wisdom, their life on this side of eternity will be far better because of it. We are told that wisdom is given to those who are righteous. That doesn't mean that all who are wise are righteous, but to reiterate, it does tell us that God gives wisdom to those who are righteous. He supports those who do what is righteous. He keeps open their paths of judgment preserving the way for His saints. Being called by God now even though we live in a world focused on evil will expose us to the wisdom of God that leads to righteousness. Proverbs two verse one.

Proverbs 2:1-20

- 1. My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;**
- 2. So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;**
- 3. Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;**
- 4. If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;**
- 5. Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.**
- 6. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.**

- 7. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.**
- 8. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.**
- 9. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.**
- 10. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;**
- 11. Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:**
- 12. To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;**
- 13. Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;**
- 14. Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;**
- 15. Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:**
- 16. To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;**
- 17. Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.**
- 18. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.**
- 19. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.**
- 20. That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.**

As we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, we also need to be pursuing mercy, not the kind of mercy that benefits us, but the kind of mercy that benefits others. It is when we seek righteousness and practice mercy that we find life, righteousness, and honor. Proverbs twenty-one verse twenty-one.

Proverbs 21:21

21. He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

If we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we know we rely on Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation, and there is nothing we can do that gives us salvation. Eternal life is a gift that comes through the forgiveness of sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Knowing we have this incredible gift given to us, seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's

righteousness also means we live our lives aligned to doing those things that are acceptable before God. We will not be living our lives as sinners, having no hope of the resurrection. Galatians two verse fifteen.

Galatians 2:15-21

15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

It's alluded in Paul's second letter to Timothy that seeking God's righteousness is a lifetime endeavor. He told Timothy to flee youthful lusts and to follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace with others who are also called. In our lifetime pursuit of righteousness, that begins as a young adult fleeing youthful lusts, it's important to know that it is those who are also called who seek righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Because we also know not all are called at this time, not all will be seeking righteousness, faith, love, and peace at this time. As we seek these things Paul also cautioned against focusing on those things he called foolish and unlearned questions, because he shared these can cause division. To the Romans, Paul called these disputes over doubtful matters. Second Timothy two verse twenty-two.

2 Timothy 2:22-26

22. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Hungering and Thirsting after righteousness means we must allow God to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It means in our pursuit of righteousness, we cannot deceive ourselves into believing we are without sin, because if we are already righteous, what need would we have to hunger and thirst after righteousness? It's like if we exercise or vigorously work before a meal, we might come to the table very thirsty and very hungry, but if before the meal we have eaten and drank all we wanted, we may be completely full having no need to eat or drink. Hungering and Thirsting after righteousness should tell us we haven't yet arrived at righteousness, but we know that along with this hunger and thirst for righteousness, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins through Jesus Christ, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. First John one verse eight.

1 John 1:8-10

8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

While God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, it is Jesus Christ as our older brother, Who along with God the Father is righteous. We seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and it is when we do righteousness that we have hope of eternal life. First John two verse twenty-five.

1 John 2:25-29

25. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

26. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

If we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we will do what is righteous. What we do will be consistent with what we believe. Because we know sin is inconsistent with what we believe, we will not be living a life reflecting sin. From time to time, we will still sin, but our effort and our focus will be doing what is righteous. First John three verse seven.

1 John 3:7-9

7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

We are called to a faith that requires a level of righteousness that exceeds the religious elites of this world. In the time of Jesus the religious elites were the scribes and Pharisees. Whoever is seen as the religious elites of today, our righteousness must exceed their righteousness. At the heart and core of what we must do is that what we do must be consistent with what we believe, and what we believe must be aligned to seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. Matthew five verse seventeen.

Matthew 5:17-48

17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

If we want our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the religious elites, unbridled anger cannot be part of who we are. Some are more prone to anger than others, and all of us have a responsibility to shun unbridled anger. Specifically we are told to not be angry without a cause, so it is possible to be angry for specific reasons, but anger is best avoided. Verse twenty-one.

21. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

If we want our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the religious elites, we have to stop sin in the earliest stages of the thought process. In the Old Testament, adultery was taught as a physical act of sin, and Jesus showed the importance of stopping sin in the thought process. Verse twenty-seven.

27. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

If we want our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the religious elites, we cannot quickly walk away from those things, like marriage, which God intended to last a lifetime. While there are legitimate reasons to dissolve a marriage, those are far and few between. Verse thirty-one.

31. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

If we want our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the religious elites, we must be known for following through on our obligations. We should never resort to only holding ourselves accountable for those things we have legally agreed to or publicly stated. Whatever we see as an obligation, we need to follow through on. Verse thirty-three.

33. Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35. Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

36. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

If we want our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the religious elites, we cannot repay evil for evil or wrong for wrong. We have been given mercy by God, and we must extend mercy to others. Verse thirty-eight.

38. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

If we want our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the religious elites, we will love our enemies as much as we love our friends. It is by seeking the Kingdom of God and God's righteous that we will become perfect. Verse forty-three.

43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

When we are told in verse forty-eight to be perfect in the King James Version, the future tense of the Greek is used telling us that we are to become perfect. We will pursue righteousness, by seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. We will hunger and thirst after righteousness. Having hope of

eternal life, we will do what is righteous. What we do will be consistent with what we believe. Because we know sin is inconsistent with what we believe, we will not be living a life reflecting sin. We will hunger and thirst after righteousness doing what is righteous.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.