

**HWMR: CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7 (Week 8)**

**Seeking First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness**

Scripture Reading: *Matt. 5:20; Psa. 89:14; Phil. 3:9; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 5:21; 2 Tim. 4:8a*

- Matt. 5:20 For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens.
- Psa. 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; / Lovingkindness and truth go before Your face.
- Phil. 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
- 2 Cor. 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?
- 2 Cor. 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.
- 2 Cor. 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- 2 Tim. 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing

**Day 1**

*Matt. 6:19-20 - Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves dig through and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not dig through nor steal.*

**I. The **Father's kingdom** is the reality of the kingdom of the heavens today, the reality of the church life today, and will be the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age—Matt. 5:3; 13:43:**

- A. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth...But store up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**”—6:19a, 20a:
1. The basic attitude of every believer should be **to not love money**—Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; 2 Tim. 3:2.
  2. If we store up for ourselves **treasures on the earth**, we will always be **servicing mammon** and not God—Matt. 6:19a, 24.
  3. The governing principle is that to store up treasures on the earth is **against God's economy** and expresses a kind of unbelief in His mercy and care—vv. 32b-33.
- B. “Where your **treasure** is, there will your **heart** be also”—v. 21:
1. Our heart always **follows its treasure**.
  2. No matter what we may say, our **heart will always be where our treasure is**.
- C. “**No one can serve two masters**, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”—v. 24:

1. Our heart must be **single** in order to serve God; we cannot serve God and mammon (riches) at the same time—Luke 16:13.
2. The **unrighteousness of mammon** is related to its nature (vv. 9, 11); as something invented by Satan, the nature of mammon before God is completely incompatible with every aspect of God, so in God’s eyes its nature is unrighteous.
3. The controversy of the universe is whether man will **worship God** or **mammon**—Matt. 4:9-10; 6:24.
4. **Deliverance from mammon** is the first and foremost condition for one to serve God—vv. 21, 24; Luke 16:13; Heb. 13:5.

The unrighteousness of mammon is related to its nature; as something invented by Satan, the nature of mammon before God is completely incompatible with every aspect of God, so in God’s eyes its nature is unrighteous. In Luke 16:1-13 the Lord Jesus told a parable about a steward who used unrighteous mammon to make friends for himself. Through this, the Lord reminds us that all of God’s children should learn to use unrighteous mammon to make friends. Unrighteous mammon does not refer to money obtained through unrighteous means; rather, **it indicates that the nature of money itself is unrighteous**. God created man with the intention that **man would rely on Him**; however, **Satan uses money to replace God** and cause man’s heart to be damaged and captured by money instead of serving God. From this perspective, money (mammon) is unrighteous.

Verse 11 says, “*If therefore you have not become faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you what is true?*” Today under God’s sovereignty, everyone’s prosperity is different. **Whatever abundance you have is entrusted to you by God**. Learn to offer what God has entrusted to you for the Lord and the needs of His work. If we are unfaithful, who can trust us with what is true? What is true refers to “the true possessions in the coming kingdom age” (v. 11, footnote 1). What God has entrusted to us today is temporary; that which is true will be entrusted to us in the kingdom age. This implies that if we are unfaithful, we cannot enter the kingdom. Ask yourself: Where is my money stored? This is a very serious question. (*The Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 10, chapter 8*)

## Day 2

*Matt. 6:25-26 - Because of this, I say to you, Do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat or what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of heaven. They do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father nourishes them. Are you not of more value than they?*

- D. “**Do not be anxious** for your life...For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking...**Do not be anxious for tomorrow**”—Matt. 6:25a, 32a, 34a:
1. Our human life is a **life of anxiety** and is **constituted with anxiety**—v. 32a.
  2. There is **no anxiety in the divine life and the divine nature**; God’s life is a life of enjoyment, rest, comfort, and satisfaction—Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7.

### Day 3

*Matt. 6:32 - For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

*Matt. 6:34 - Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself; sufficient for the day is its own evil.*

3. As we are fulfilling our human duty to work to sustain our living, we should not do anything for the sake of our anxiety, because **we have a divine life that knows no anxiety**—Luke 12:25.
4. The kingdom people should never live in tomorrow but always in **today**—Matt. 6:34.
5. Concerning our living, **we have the heavenly Father Himself to take care of us**; as He takes care of our material needs, He dispenses His element into us, and we experience the divine dispensing through the Father's care for our physical necessities—vv. 32-33; John 16:27a; Eph. 1:3.

### Day 4

*Matt. 6:33 - But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

*2 Cor. 5:21 - Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

## II. The **Father's righteousness** is the righteousness expressed by the keeping of the new law of the kingdom (Matt. 5:20); this righteousness is **Christ**, who is lived out by the kingdom people:

- A. According to the New Testament, righteousness has **four main aspects**:
  1. Righteousness is **being right with persons, things, and matters** according to God's righteous and strict requirements—Matt. 5:20.
  2. Righteousness is the **outward expression of the Christ** who lives in us as the life-giving Spirit—2 Cor. 3:9, 18; 1 Cor. 15:45b:
    - a. The Spirit is the essence of God living, moving, and acting within us, and **righteousness is the essence of God manifested** outwardly as God's image to express Him—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.
    - b. The divine essence that has been inscribed into us will have a particular expression, and this expression is righteousness—2 Cor. 3:3, 9; Matt. 5:20.
  3. Righteousness is a **matter of God's kingdom**—6:33:
    - a. God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation—Psa. 89:14; 97:2.
    - b. Righteousness **issues from God** for His administration and thus is related to God's rule and government—Isa. 32:1.
    - c. Righteousness first issues in the image of God and then establishes the kingdom of God—Rom. 8:4, 29; 14:17.
  4. Righteousness is a matter of **being right with God in our being**—1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 5:21:
    - a. To be right with God in our being is to have an inner being that is **transparent and crystal clear**—an inner being in the mind and will of God— Rev. 21:11, 18b, 21b; 22:1.

- b. To be righteous in this way is to become the righteousness of God in Christ—2 Cor. 5:21.

### Day 5

*Phil. 3:9* - *And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith.*

*1 Cor. 1:30* - *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*

- B. There are **two aspects of Christ** being righteousness to the believers:
1. Christ is the believers' righteousness for them to be **justified before God** objectively at the time of their repenting unto God and believing into Christ— Rom. 3:24-26; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:24b, 27.
  2. Christ is the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the **manifestation of God**, who is the righteousness in Christ given to the believers for them to be justified by God subjectively—Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24a; James 2:24; Matt. 5:20; Rev. 19:8.
  3. These two aspects are typified by the **best robe** and the **fattened calf** in Luke 15:22-23:
    - a. The best robe typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers to **cover them outwardly as their objective righteousness** before God.
    - b. The fattened calf typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers as their **life supply for them to live out God in Christ as their subjective righteousness**.

Galatians 3:24b says, "That we might be justified out of faith." Verse 27 says, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Our justification by faith is like putting on a garment. This garment is **Christ as our glorious dress** (Hymns, #295, stanza 1). When we stand before God and He sees the glorious dress we are clothed with, **He declares us righteous**; that is, He justifies us. Isaiah 64:6 says that all our righteousnesses are like a soiled garment. In God's eyes, righteousness and the garment are connected. Therefore, Isaiah uses a garment to describe righteousness, saying that our righteousnesses are soiled and that we cannot come before God by our own righteousnesses. However, by believing into Christ and being baptized into Him, we put on Christ, and we thereby are justified by God. **Our justification is entirely due to our putting on Christ**. This speaks of objective righteousness.

Subjectively, Christ is the righteousness of the believers to be lived out by them as the manifestation of God. There are a few verses that speak of this subjective justification. Matthew 5:20 says, "I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens." The righteousness mentioned here is not related to God's freely justifying us by grace and through faith. Rather, it is a righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees and emphasizes a certain kind of behavior—one that is not performed by man but **lived out by man**. There is a difference between doing and living. Doing is carried out by man's will and natural life, but the living spoken of here emphasizes our **union with Him, our enjoyment of Him**, our experience of the power of His resurrection, and then our allowing Him to **live Himself out from within us**. (*The Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 10, chapter 8*)

## Day 6

*2 Tim. 4:8* - ...There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

*1 Cor. 9:25* - And everyone who contends exercises self-control in all things; they then, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.

- C. “There is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day”—2 Tim. 4:8a:
1. The crown, a symbol of glory, is **given as a prize**, in addition to the Lord’s salvation, to the triumphant runner of the race—1 Cor. 9:25.
  2. In contrast to salvation, which is of grace and by faith (Eph. 2:5, 8-9), this prize is not of grace nor by faith, but is of **righteousness through works** (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
  3. The believers will be recompensed with such a reward, not according to the Lord’s grace but **according to His righteousness**; hence, it is the crown of righteousness—2 Tim. 4:8a.

2 Timothy 4:8 says, “Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me in that day; and not only to me, but also to all those who have loved His appearing.” The crown is a symbol of glory given as a **prize**, in addition to the Lord’s salvation, to the triumphant runner of the race. This prize is neither of grace nor by faith as salvation is, **but of righteousness through works**. Such a reward will be awarded the believers not according to the grace of the Lord, but **according to His righteousness**. Hence, it is the crown of righteousness. The One who awards it is the Lord as the **righteous Judge**, not as the merciful God or the gracious Redeemer. Paul was assured that such a prize was reserved, laid up, for him and would be awarded to him at the day of the Lord’s second appearing.

Paul says that such an award will be given to **all who love the Lord’s appearing**. The Lord’s appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us. We should love it and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy. By it, the apostle charged Timothy to fulfill his ministry.

The crown of righteousness of which Paul was assured is the incentive to the inoculator. If we are **faithful to the healthy word of the truth** and if we are **faithful inoculators** to dispense the ingredients of the divine inoculation into Christians today that they may return to the full knowledge of the truth, this reward will be given to us at the time of the Lord’s appearing. This means that if we are **faithful to the Lord’s ministry**, we shall receive the crown of righteousness as our reward. (*Life-Study of 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon, Chapter 19*)