

# 06

## *Off the Menu*

---

### **WHAT'S THE SAME | EATING + DRINKING**

Guess what's back again? Eating and drinking.



Why does Jesus keep coming back to eating and drinking and worrying about it? We are far enough into the study now that we can begin to see a rhythm to Jesus' teaching. He is relentless in his pursuit of our whole hearts, one bite at a time apparently.

The original audience was worried about all kinds of things. They were a part of a culture that put performance before anything else, so they were riddled with fear and doubt and concern for their needs and for their souls. The disciples and the crowds needed to be reminded of God's essential character of care for their everyday needs. Just like us.

But I also believe Jesus keeps coming back to eating and drinking because they are everyday activities. If we remove any of these things from the day, it is noticeable. If breakfast is skipped, we get hungry. If we forget to drink water, we get thirsty. If we forget to wear clothes—well, naked is never easy to ignore.

I have three children, and when they get hungry it's unlike anything I've ever seen. They thrash about. They wobble and splay out on the floor. They lose movement in their limbs. They cry. They curl up in balls. And all it takes is one sandwich and the crisis is averted. We don't need to lose movement in our limbs or anything, but drawing near to God should be something we demand and prioritize.

In Matthew 5:6 it says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." The words *hunger* and *thirst* are not metaphorical. They are used to describe literal feelings one would have when physically in need. Jesus says that our very bodies were designed to be satisfied by righteousness; it is like superfood for the soul.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS IS LIKE SUPERFOOD FOR THE SOUL.** Righteousness is described as many things in the Bible pertaining to moral reflections of God's character, but how it is attained remains the same, "by faith" (Genesis 15:6, Romans 9:30).

And in turn, when we are filled by righteous faith, we are equipped to feed others the very same way:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, I was naked and you clothed me...*Then the righteous* will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' And the King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:40, *emphasis added*).

What I love about "the righteous" in action is that they are very surprised when the King praises them. *Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?* If our hearts are wholly devoted to Christ, righteousness is something we engage in without even thinking about it. It pours out of a soul satisfied.

Soul surprise happens when we become enchanted by the joyful encouragement that obedience reorders into our lives. Righteousness takes what was once seen as a suffocating list of rituals and reemerges them as an adventure of faith. "Not only do we let God be God as he really is, but we start doing things for which he made us. We take a certain route; we follow certain directions; we do specific things."<sup>1</sup>

A righteous person lives their lives differently than the “nations of the world.” We can treat everyone and every duty as if we are serving God. We can wash Jesus’ blood spattered feet while walking the neighbor’s dog. We can be covering up Jesus’ naked body on the cross when we patiently dress our tantrum-throwing two-year-old. We can also give water, food, shelter, dignity, and healing to anyone who needs it because Jesus has done that for us.

**WE CAN TREAT EVERYONE AND EVERY DUTY AS IF WE ARE SERVING GOD.**

A life drunk from the reservoir of righteousness will produce a worry-free way to serve the world. The righteous don’t need recognition. They have one need: to know and be known.

**WHAT’S DIFFERENT | SEEK VS. SEEK**

In Luke, the word *seek* is used in two very distinct ways. And since Luke’s version is intended for the disciples, let’s zoom in on why this distinction makes a huge difference for those who say they want to follow Jesus:

“And do not **seek** what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world **seek** after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.”

The first time we find seek, Jesus uses it as *ζητεῖν*, which means, “to try to get or reach something one desires,”<sup>2</sup> or to “deliberately demand” and “make efforts.” So Jesus is pretty clear about this: do not try, demand, search, or put all your energy into the urgency of your everyday needs. Instead, demand and wear yourself out for righteousness. He’s got the rest handled.

**WEAR YOURSELF OUT FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

The second time Jesus uses seek it is specific to how the world seeks—they look with a laser-focused kind of looking, *ἐπιζητεῖν*, to “look for a specific person or thing”

Jesus doesn’t look at the world that way. He looks for one specific thing and one thing only: his Father’s will in every single moment. There is nothing overtly specific about being a Christ follower, aside from following suit.

Sometimes we may be in acute seasons of worry and anxiety because we are seeking the way the world seeks. We are enslaved to the specific. Sometimes we are looking for something God never promised us. If we have prerequisites before we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we will not be as filled and free as God intended us to be.

“But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people...God’s very own

*A life drunk from  
the reservoir of  
righteousness will  
produce a worry-free  
way to serve the world.*

possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.”<sup>3</sup>

### **WHAT THAT MEANS | FRESH SHEET**

In all, these verses are an invitation for Christ followers to go off the menu.

I worked as a server in college at an upscale Italian restaurant. Every night, there would be a “fresh sheet” which featured an item you couldn’t get on the set menu. It was a creative collaboration between the local farmer and the chef. This item was made with the freshest ingredients at the peak of their season. The fresh sheet items were the most expensive, most unique, and most in sync with what was going on in the culture and community.

This is what Jesus is trying to get us to understand: the set menu of this temporary life won’t meet your greatest need.

He has more in mind than a list of specific physical needs he can meet for you. He has something that is dependent upon your season, your skill-set, and your sacrifice. It is something that will look different from what the rest of the world is doing. And it will look different than what your fellow follower is doing. It will look like what God is doing. Co-creating is where intimacy will uniquely deepen between God and you, but the rest of us will recognize the recipe.

### **WORRY AND ANXIETY ARE POOR INGREDIENTS.**

The truth is that worry and anxiety are poor ingredients. They don’t add anything to what God is up to. That’s why there is an emptying that takes place, instead of the filling up that God promises.

The incredible news is that we are being invited to an undefined adventure, one that engages our individual gifts with God’s all-seeing and all-knowing ways. And here’s a spoiler alert: when we follow the fruit of righteousness it always lead to more Jesus. More freedom. More joy. And more, dare I say, fun.

It’s a mystery that only the Chef can explain. You should ask him.

Going off menu means denying hunger and thirst for what we’ve been told is standard. This terrifies people who’ve fed their worries a steady diet of plan and predictability. I am one of those people. But I learned, there is no such thing as security. Man made security is false fruit.

Jesus concludes this verse by saying that God knows our needs. And he is asking us to forage for a new way of living to meet those needs. We have to either accept or reject that there is a rational, relational, and reliable comfort to be had in trusting an all-knowing, all-seeing God. We either have to believe there is a good God looking out for us or believe we have to look out for ourselves.

**THERE IS A GOOD GOD LOOKING OUT FOR US.** Psalm 44:3 says, “Not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you delighted in them.” Delight is what moves the arm of the Lord to provide our deepest need: *more of him*. The light of his face, his glory, his radiance, and magnificence is what moves us to live off the menu.

So now may be a good time to put our sword down and ask God what’s in season. And if I were a betting gal, I’d say righteousness is probably ripe for the picking.



---

## **DISCUSS**

Do you notice when you miss spending time with God? What is noticeable about it?

Do you worry about temporary things often? What would those things be?

Have you ever considered a relationship with God that looks more like a chef developing a menu to share with many people instead of a waiter meeting the needs of a single customer?

What season of life are you in right now?

What would you say you have to offer others in this season?



---

## READ & REFLECT

If righteousness is a superfood for the soul, let's spend some time studying it.

Read Job 29:14.

Job's life was hard. What does he say that righteousness did for him?

Read Psalm 85:13.

What does righteousness do for us in verse 13?

Read Isaiah 32:17.

What is the the "effect" and "result" of righteousness?

Read Hosea 10:12.

What does the "harvesting" process of righteousness entail? And what will the Lord do if we take the time to seek him?



---

## **PEACE PRACTICE | DEVELOP A FRESH SHEET**

Look around your life. Take note of the season. Take a look at what ingredients in your life God can use to develop righteousness. Remember what you are good at. And then put together a “fresh sheet” of how you think you can best come alongside God in what he is already doing in your church, your community, or your family. Bring it next week to share.

# *First Look*

**Luke 12:31**

Instead seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

# *Second Look*

**Matthew 6:33**

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.