

Panthers:

Do you desire any life apart from God? That's sin which leaves a gap between God and us, accompanied by a desire to have it filled (Isaiah 59:2). It's a vicious cycle. We attempt to satisfy our sinful desires apart from God through *unrighteousness* and then try to fill the resulting gap with our *self-righteousness*. Consequently, we are left dissatisfied.

Righteousness is important to God Who wants us to do what's right more than He wants us to give a tithe or an offering (Prov. 21:3). However, our best at doing right is like filthy rags in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6). Either we think that our desire to fill the gap will be satisfied by our own self-righteousness, or we just give up and continue to sin in our unrighteousness. It's as if we are damned if we do and damned if we don't. Jesus gave us an alternative for satisfaction of our desires in the fourth secret to satisfaction through surrender. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled*" (Matt. 5:6).

**Who are satisfied?** Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are satisfied. "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*" Righteousness is what is right in God's sight. We find a hunger and thirst for righteousness in the heart of Christ Who did not sin but became the payment for our sin so that in Him we might be the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). Just like us, Jesus was tempted in every way and did not sin (Heb. 4:15). He is the only truly righteous one. Jesus' close friend said it this way, "*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the father in our defense—Jesus Christ the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world*" (1 John 2:1). So, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness desire Christ Who is the righteousness of God.

**Why are they satisfied?** "*They will be filled.*" The desire and the resulting gap can only be filled by Christ who fills everything in every way (Eph. 1:22-23). The psalmist said that the Lord satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things (Ps. 107:9). Sin never satisfies, and its resulting gap in our hearts will never be satisfied outside of Christ.

**How are they satisfied?** They surrender their sin which comes in two forms: *unrighteousness* and *self-righteousness*.

*First, we must surrender our unrighteousness.* Paul compelled the self-indulged Romans to surrender their unrighteousness to Christ, clothing themselves in His righteousness, not even thinking about how to gratify the desires of their sinful nature (Rom. 13:14). We must exchange our unrighteous filthy rags for the righteousness of Christ.

*Second, we must surrender our self-righteousness—our self-atonement program to fill the gap left by sin.* Jesus said that our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law to even enter the kingdom of heaven—God's divine reign, rule, and order in our lives now and in the future (Matt. 5:20). He challenged the Pharisees to acknowledge their pretense of self-righteousness on the outside while they were unrighteous on the *inside* (Matt. 23:27-28). Once again, we discover that satisfaction through surrender is a heart issue. Jesus pleaded with the self-righteous to surrender to Him, but they were not willing (Matt. 23:37). Neither will we if we don't

surrender our self-righteousness. We must exchange our self-righteous filthy rags for the righteousness of Christ.

Surrender says to Christ, "I can't. You can. I can't satisfy my desires. You can. I can't fill the gap of my sin. You can." This week, surrender your sin and its gap to Christ. You will be satisfied when you hunger and thirst for Him.

Satisfied through surrender,

Mitch