

Help Lord, I Need You First
6 Help Lord, My Prayer Life Needs CPR

Introduction

Have you ever been thirsty? I don't mean just a regular thirst like when you've been outside on a hot summer day. I mean really, really thirsty ... where your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth and you have to peel your lips off of your teeth and all you can think about is water.

In 1996, - young marine corporal named Joey Mora was standing on a platform of an aircraft carrier patrolling the Iranian Sea.

Incredibly, he fell overboard. - absence was not known for 36 hours.

A search and rescue mission began, gave up after 24 hours.

No one could survive in the sea without even a lifejacket after 60 hours.

His parents -notified- he was "missing and presumed dead."

Rest of the story is one of those "truth is stranger than fiction" events. Considered "not believable."

- Four Pakistani fishermen found Joey Mora about 72 hours after he had fallen from the aircraft carrier.

- treading water in his sleep, clinging to a makeshift floatation

- delirious when they pulled him into their fishing boat..

- His tongue was dry and cracked and his throat parched.

Two Years Later - he spoke with Stone Philips of NBC Dateline,

- told unbelievable story of will to live

- He said it was God who kept him struggling to survive.

Most excruciating thing of all? Joey said that the one thought that took over his body and pounded in his brain was "Water!" [NBC Date Line: Nov. 1998]

Have you ever been thirsty like that?

Thirst is one of the most powerful spiritual symbols in all of scripture. As dehydration draws the whole of our physical being to a longing for water, so a spiritual void will draw our spirits into a search for deeper meaning for our lives.

I. The Deep Thirst For God Himself

*** I BELIEVE A DEEP THIRST FOR GOD IS AT THE ROOT OF A SATISFYING PRAYER LIFE.**

- Used to think Prayer was about getting things from God.

- to a degree it is ---John R. Rice Book

- But I have discovered that Thirsting for and seeking God Himself is at the very root of a rich and satisfying prayer life.

**** Desiring God - Longing For God.**

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (Ps 42:1-2)

I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. (Ps 143:6)

*** Turn With Me To John 7:37-39**

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

* Jesus said, "If you're thirsty - come to Me and drink" - Somehow - the satisfaction of our souls is found in Him. And He tells us to thirst for the living water.

II. Thirsting For Living Water

There were three great annual national "feasts" in the Jewish religious calendar. The first was the Feast of the Passover; the second was known as the Feast of Pentecost; and the third was known as the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now we know **from v.2** that Jesus was speaking here during the **Feast of Tabernacles**. This was a high, happy, holy day in the life of the Jew.

During that feast the High Priest would go to the Pool of Siloam, take a golden pitcher, dip it into that pool, and carry it back to the temple. There he would pour that water out on the altar of sacrifice.

At that moment the Levites would blow the trumpets, and the great crowd would cry out, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). There would be leaping, and dancing, and shouting, and singing, and great hallelujahs would fill the air.

It was right at this climax of this great holiday that the Lord Jesus stood up in that crowd, and with that royal voice, cried out, **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."** (v.37b)

Jesus realized that these people were drinking from the river of ritual...that after this day was over they would go back to the same old fears, the same old faults, the same old failures, the same old frustrations.

What was wrong with that crowd in that day is what is wrong with many people today. They were drawing water from the wrong well.

To often, we try to quench our thirst in all the wrong places. We drink from the worldly well instead from the well of life, which is found in Christ.

The problem with many people is, they are just not thirsty for God and spiritual living

You see, before we can really have a close relationship with God, we've got to thirst for God. I mean we've got to thirst like the Psalmist who said...

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God"(Psalm 42:1-2a).

We've got to cry out as David cried out...

"God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1).

We must come to a point where we can get before God and say,
"I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land" (Psalm 143:6).

We will never have a close relationship with God until we thirst after Him. That is why Jesus said, *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."*

* PRAYER AND THIRSTING FOR GOD.

III. Drawing From God's Well

John 4:1-23

* (Unfold the Narrative)

* She was desperately trying to fill the void in her life. Her soul was thirsty but not satisfied.
5 Husbands – on her 6th Man

"Sir, Give me this water" (vs 15

- my soul is thirsty and dry -

- she may have been thinking of physical water - but I think she knew Jesus was talking about something much richer and deeper.

*** Now, I want to relate this to our prayer lives and our thirsting for God Himself as the key to a dynamic prayer life. So- let's drop down to vs 19-24**

- Women wants to engage in a religious discussion about the right place to worship and Jesus cuts to the point.

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24)

* GOD IS SEEKING FOR THOSE WHO WILL WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.

- Spirit - from the depth of their being - from the heart

- Truth - according to the truth - rooted in truth.

**** NOW WHEN IT COMES TO OUR PRAYER LIVES -- WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING THE ANSWERS TO YOUR PRAYERS - OR ARE YOU SEEKING GOD IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH?**

3 Kinds of Spiritual Thirst (Donald Whitney - 10 Questions to Diagnose Spiritual Health)

1. Thirst Of The Empty Soul

* Unconverted pursuing something to fill their empty souls.

- Women at the well — men - relationships

– money, sex, power, houses, things, sports, hobbies, entertainment, education

Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

2. Thirst Of The Dry Soul

Has experienced the living water

Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)

- Knows therefore what he/she is missing.

but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John 4:14)

* A Christian can become thirst by drinking the wrong things. Going to the wrong well. Looking for satisfaction someplace other than in God Himself.

* The dry Christian is what the Psalmist is describing:

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God"(Psalm 42:1-2a).

* Nothing else but the living water of God Himself will do.

3. Thirst Of The Satisfied Soul

* The satisfied soul thirsts for God precisely because he is satisfied with God.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! (Ps 34:8)

- Has tasted and seen it is good and he wants more.

** HERE IS THE APPLICATION TO OUR PRAYER LIVES
"HELP LORD, I WANT YOU FIRST"

Communion with Christ is incomparably satisfying because there is no disappointment in what you find in Him. The Spiritual gratification you find in Him initially is never ending. He is an infinite universe of satisfaction.

There is no lack of satisfaction in Christ, but its so satisfying that you want more. One drink of Christ satisfy all future thirsts for Him.

* John Piper:

"When you drink my water, your thirst is not destroyed forever. If it did that, would you feel any need of my water afterward? That is not my goal. I do not want self-sufficient saints. When you drink my water, it makes a spring in you. A spring satisfies thirst, not by removing a need you have for water, but by being there to give you water whenever you get thirsty. Again and again."

* HELP LORD, I NEED YOU FIRST –

COME TO PRAYER - THIRSTY FOR GOD - READY TO DRINK OF THE LIVING WATER THAT SATISFIES YOUR SOUL OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

Conclusion

The great artist Michelangelo produced some of the best works of art the world has ever seen. His sculpture of David and the multiple paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel are among the greatest creations of all time. Nearly all of his subject matter was religious, and he often worked at the bidding of the pope. Since he was a devout man, we should not be surprised that he took appropriate pride in what he was doing for God.

Toward the end of his life, under the influence of his dear friend, Vittoria Colonna, he became intrigued with what the Reformers were teaching about justification through faith apart from works. Accepting the reality that all his good works could do nothing to remove his sin, he embraced Christ as his forgiving Saviour. This act changed every thing for him. Michelangelo now realized that what he had supposedly done to gain favour with God had actually eclipsed God in his life. In a sonnet penned in his later years he confessed:

*Whence the loving fancy that made of art
my idol and my king
I know now well that it was full of wrong ...
Painting and sculpture shall no longer calm
the soul turned to that love divine
that spread its arms on the cross to take us in.*

As taken as he was with Christ, Michelangelo never stopped expressing himself through art. He was busy until the day he died. But he did it then for a different reason than in the past – not for merit, but for love. Michelangelo was overwhelmed with the touch of redemption and never recovered from the encounter.

Illustrate: *The story is told of a young student who went to his spiritual teacher and asked the question, "Master, how can I truly find God?" The teacher asked the student to accompany him to the river, which ran by the village and invited him to go into the water. When they got to the middle of the stream, the teacher said, "Please immerse yourself in the water." The student did as he was instructed, whereupon the teacher put his hands on the young man's head and held him under the water. Presently the student began to struggle.*

The master held him under still. A moment passed and the student was thrashing and beating the water and air with his arms. Still, the master held him under the water. Finally, the student was released and shot up from the water, lungs aching and gasping for air. The teacher waited for a few moments and then said, "When you desire God as truly as you desired to breathe the air you just breathed -- then you shall find God."