

Moments *for* You

Volume 56, Number 3

Theme: Thirst



A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but ... the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13,14).

THE NEED

To travel from Judea to Galilee, an orthodox Jew would cross the Jordan near Jericho and make his way up through Perea, and then cross back near the Sea of Galilee in the north, just to avoid the Samaritans, whom they despised. But the Lord Jesus Christ took the direct road because He was anxious to meet these poor Samaritan sinners so that He might reveal the truth to them. So He went until He came near the city of Sychar, and there by Jacob’s well He stopped. There sat the Lord, waiting to meet a thirsty soul.

We are told, “There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water” (v. 7). She knew that He was a Jew by the ribbon of blue that went around the border of His robe. At once all her being would be stirred with indignation. What business did He have sitting there on their well? But how surprised she must have been when He looked up very kindly and said, “Give me to drink” (v. 7). She knew that the ordinary Jew would have dashed the cup to the ground even if she had offered it, and here was a Jew asking drink of her. She said, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me?” (v. 9).

THE GIFT

Note the answer of our blessed Lord: “If thou knewest the *gift* of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked

of Him, and He would have given thee living water” (v. 10). What a wonderful revelation concerning the gift of God! Do you know the gift of God? Do you know that salvation—eternal life—is a gift? It is so hard for people to understand that, and so they have devised all kinds of ways whereby they hope to earn salvation and a place in God’s heaven. But you cannot do anything to earn God’s salvation. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). Have you come to Him and received His gift?

THE GIVER

Notice also the other word, “and *who* it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink.” How little she recognized who He was. Who was He? The Son of God. We read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word [became] flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1,14). There He was, God and Man in one blessed, glorious person, but she did not understand that.

She looked at Him doubtfully and said, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?” (v. 11). She was thinking only of natural water. He was thinking of spiritual water. The water that He would give was to be drawn from the depths of God’s love itself. Jesus answered and said, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again” (v. 13). How well she knew that! Had she not time after time attempted to quench her thirst from that well, only to thirst

again? And you may try everything that the world can give, but you will still be unsatisfied. The things of the world cannot satisfy a heart that has been created for eternity.

A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

“The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (v. 14). What does He mean by that? Those who receive the message of His grace, who believe the revelation that God has given of Christ in His Word, will be born anew. This fountain of living water will spring up within, and they will find a satisfaction that none have ever been able to find in the things of earth.

The woman, listening, finds her heart going to Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has won her confidence, and this is a great thing. But there is something else needed, so the Lord undertakes to grapple with her conscience. He says, “Go, call thy husband, and come hither” (v. 16). I can imagine she dropped her head, and blushed as she said, “I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband” (vv. 17-18). He drives the truth of her guilty past and sinful present home to her soul. She stands there, greatly moved, and for a moment does not know what to say.

She blurts out, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain [Mt. Gerizim]; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (v. 20). I do not suppose that this age-long difference meant much to her, but now she sees she is a sinner and wants to get right with God. Where shall she go? She wants to know God that she may worship Him and receive forgiveness from Him.

And Jesus said, “The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (vv. 21-23).

What did He mean? He was declaring that the hour had come when God is putting aside all earthly sanctuaries. Coming to God is not a question of going to a particular place. You can meet with Him anywhere and everywhere if you are ready to take your right place before Him, to confess your sin and own your guilt. Then you can lift your heart to Him in worship, recognizing Him as your Father, for the moment you confess your sins He forgives.

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

—From *Addresses on the Gospel of John* by H.A. Ironside.

The heart of man hungers and thirsts, and he must search until he finds something to satisfy. If in this life he only drinks from waters of which “he that drinks shall thirst again,” eternity shall find him thirsting still, and crying for one drop of water to cool his tongue. —F.C. Jennings

THIRSTING AGAIN

After leaving Egypt, the children of Israel were in the deserts of Sinai and had no water to drink. Day after day their thirst increased. They might make the most diligent search, and put all their energies into digging deep in all directions, but it was a barren

and thirsty land. They were perishing with thirst, but more than this they were sinners—they murmured, tempted God, and were ready to stone His servant Moses. Thus they were unworthy as well as needy.

SMITE THE ROCK

The question was: could God, and would God, give this thirsty, sinful, perishing people water to drink? Yes, and by smiting another instead of them, His justice would be satisfied, and His mercy could freely flow. The Lord said unto Moses, “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt **smite the rock**, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink” (Exodus 17:6).

This is a fine example of God’s grace, and pictures for us the way of salvation offered to sinful, helpless man in the cross of Christ. We are saved by grace: “By grace are ye saved, through faith” (Ephesians 2:8), but grace is misunderstood by many. It is said by some that grace means that God will do His part, if we will do ours. Others say that it means unmerited love, but it means more than this: it brings favor and blessing to those who only deserve punishment and destruction.

Grace flows freely to us through the smitten Son of God, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The death of Christ is typified by the smitten rock. The stripes that we deserved were laid upon Him, and as a result the water of life flows freely.

SPEAK TO THE ROCK

After the people of Israel had drunk the water from the rock, they continued through the desert, and fought the battles of the Lord. But after a while they thirsted again, as we find in Numbers 20. This is another

picture for us, and serves to show that after we have received the Lord Jesus—after we have obtained life and peace through faith in His name—we shall again feel barren and thirsty if we cease to live upon Christ and lose the taste and comfort of His love.

On this occasion, Moses was told to “**speak ye unto the rock** before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water” (Numbers 20:8). From this we can learn that the rock, once smitten, did not need to be smitten again. How blessed it is to know Jesus in resurrection glory as the Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4) once smitten to save His people from death, but now waiting to hear the cry of His people and send forth His blessings with abundant refreshment (Hebrews 4:16).

Oh, dear child of God, are you cast down by the trials of the way? Are you oppressed and fainting under a sense of your many needs, many sorrows, and many achings of heart? Speak to the Rock! Go and tell the Lord Jesus all your sorrows, pour out your heart before Him. He will refresh your spirit, sustain your confidence, give you wisdom, and show you that He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). You may have proved it a blessed thing to speak to Him in times past; oh, speak to Him now! Cast all your care on Him, cast every burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you (Psalm 55:22).

You do not need to fear any sorrow, if it only leads you to the Lord Jesus. Every need will be a blessing, if it only serves to bring you to the mercy-seat. Fellow Christian, the Rock still gives forth His water, and refreshing streams still flow freely to us from our Lord Jesus if we simply call upon Him! “Call unto Me, and I will answer thee” (Jeremiah 33:3).

—Condensed from *Streams of Refreshing from the Fountain of Life* by H.H. Snell.

THE OUTPOURING

“Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand... In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (John 7:2,37).

The Feast of Tabernacles was divinely established as a seven-day commemoration followed by a one-day “convocation” or Sabbath (Leviticus 23:34,36). One of the most intriguing acts of worship witnessed by the assembled masses was an outpouring of water at the Temple. The water libation was of such significance that the Feast of Tabernacles was termed the “House of Outpouring.” In addition to the element of thanksgiving and expectation of rain for the harvest, the Jerusalem Talmud ascribes special significance to the ceremony, and explains its meaning in this way: “Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: ‘With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation’” (Isaiah 12:3).

A priest was dispatched daily to lead a procession from the Temple to the pool of Siloam. He carried a golden pitcher and walked to the accompaniment of music until he reached the pool and there filled the vessel with water. The return to the Temple was timed to correspond with the placing of the burnt-offering on the altar. Priests trumpeted his arrival and entrance through the Water Gate into the Court of the Priests. There he was met by another priest, one who was designated to carry the wine (drink) offering. Together they walked up the rise to the altar. Water and wine were poured into two silver funnels.

When the ceremony had been completed, the singing of the Hallel began. Priests chanted lines from the Psalms, as the people lifted up

voices in responsive phrases. Flutes accentuated the swelling Hallelu-Yahs (praise ye the Lord) raised by the multitude at specific intervals. Upon reaching the closing lines of Psalm 118, worshipers joined the euphonious entreaty that marked the grand climax of the service. “Save now ... O Lord! O Lord, send now prosperity!” This exclamation was followed by the words “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord,” and “O give thanks unto the Lord” (Psalm 118:26,29).

Sounds of the exultant refrains slowly died in the Temple courts and the valleys of Jerusalem, and a momentary hush descended upon the Sanctuary. This, it is believed, was the precise moment when “Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his [heart] shall flow rivers of living water.”

Priests and pilgrims alike were frozen by the words ringing through the chambers and echoing off the facade of the Holy Place. Jesus stood before them, with words of affirmation flowing from His lips. Jehovah had remembered His promises; the Lord would “save now”; this was, in a way never before realized, “the house of outpouring”—the Messiah of Israel had appeared, and the Spirit would soon be poured out; the hour had come for them to drink of His living water.

—Condensed from *The Outpouring* by Elwood McQuaid, © 1990 by The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.

Christ thirsted on the cross, and there removed the stone from the well of living water so that today everyone who will, may stoop, and drink, and live. —A. Van Ryn

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive)" (John 7:37-39).

Do you know what it is to be satisfied? We are conscious of almost infinite needs; we thirst and pine for happiness, for rest, for peace, for that indefinable satisfaction which seems so perfectly set forth in the sweet, deep word, "love." We turn from side to side for an answer. For a moment we think we have found it, as we see not far away some rock-hewn cistern, and make for it, only to find that it is broken and will hold no water. Human love fails to quench our thirst, though we drink deeply and widely of its stores. But Jesus is all-sufficient.

"If any thirst." *"Any!"* Those who are grimed with sin. *"Any!"* Those who have no claim but their exceeding need. *"Any!"* Those whom all the world and the Church reject. *"Any!"* Publicans and sinners, outcasts and dying malefactors, persecutors and procrastinators. The one and only qualification is *thirst*.

Coming to Him is believing on Him. It is the touch of the soul and the Savior. It is contact; clinging to Him as the drowning sailor to the outstretched hand. You do not need emotion, or effort at self-improvement, or a change in the circumstances of your outward life to come to Christ. All you need to do is feel your need of Him, lift your eyes from this page to Him, and say "O Lamb of God, I come!" He will receive all who come to Him in faith. Jesus has said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

When weary, thirsty souls go to Jesus, He gives them instant relief. In addition to washing them clean by virtue of His shed blood, He also gives them His Spirit. The born-again believer is literally indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's influence may be stunted, dwarfed, or repressed, like streams choked with debris, but He can never again be lost. Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you *for ever*" (John 14:16).

In that most blessed of all gifts, Jesus Himself is the supply of our spirits, through the Holy Ghost, whom He gives to be within us and with us for ever. When we are strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and we are filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:16-20).

Here are some practical suggestions for those who are longing for the Holy Spirit's fullness:

Remember that, if you believe, you have received the Spirit. You could not believe on or call Jesus "Lord" but by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3), and ever since you did these things He has been within you (Ephesians 1:13). Do not then ask for a new blessing, but for more enjoyment of that which you already have. Remove the silt and rubbish which have occupied His place. Put away the sins which have grieved Him (Ephesians 4:30). Deny self which has hindered His flow in your life. Keep your soul in an eager, believing attitude toward Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will be able to fill you, providing for blessings which will flow out to others.

Let the Lord Jesus occupy the place where God has set Him—the throne. Do not concentrate your thoughts on the Blessed Comforter, but on the Lord Jesus, who was exalt-

ed to bestow Him. The glory of Jesus is always connected in Scripture with the reign of Jesus. All things must be put under His feet. When we glorify Jesus in our hearts and lives, setting Him on the throne, then the Spirit fills us with successive waves of power.

Do you, my reader, know anything of this? Is your life comparable to a river, much less to many rivers of holy influence? That is exactly what Christ pictured when He spoke of “rivers of living water.” It is much more than simply being satisfied, though that is included. We receive the Holy Spirit not merely for our own benefit, but also that we may minister the things of God to others, and show forth His fruit to all around.

The world would quickly cease to be a thirsty place if only each believer were to become like one of the ancient rivers of Eden, which was parted into four heads, flowing out for blessing in all directions.

—Adapted from *Gospel of John* by F.B. Meyer.

Jesus says, “Come to Me, and I will meet the thirst of your own soul first, and then you shall be made a channel through which the rivers of God shall roll to the thirsty and weary all around.”

—W.T.P. Wolston

SAVED AND SATISFIED

“O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Psalm 63:1).

When David wrote this Psalm he was in the wilderness of Judah, which he calls, “a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.” It was a place of no resources, utterly barren of the most fundamental necessities of life. Yet he was not crying out for

food or water, and much less for any of the luxuries of life, but thirsting for God—His power, His glory, and His lovingkindness. David’s experiences, as related in the previous Psalm, had led him to say, “In God is my *salvation* and my *glory*” (Psalm 62:7), and this brought him to a point where God also became all his *desire*.

Are our desires at all equal to David’s? We, too, are in the wilderness, for that is what the world becomes to those who have been saved out of it by the cross of Christ. There is nothing in it to feed the soul or satisfy spiritual cravings. We, too, have known God in His sanctuary, not now in the Tabernacle, wherein David sought the Lord; nor in the gorgeous temple that Solomon built; but in that far more wonderful sanctuary to which our Lord referred when “He spake of the temple of His body” (John 2:21). We have seen God, revealed in Jesus, through His Word. Having begun to know Him thus, we thirst to know Him better.

Thirst such as this is bound to be fully met. Therefore we find David saying with confidence: “My soul shall be *satisfied* as with marrow and fatness” (Psalm 63:5). This signifies satisfaction of a very full and abundant order. Though in a dry and thirsty land without water, David was in the enjoyment of marrow and fatness.

We, too, may be filled with satisfaction in the midst of an empty and dissatisfied world—this is the desire and purpose of God for us all. I am certain that if every Christian shared David’s passion for God, and was characterized by a deep and abiding satisfaction, the men of the world would be more deeply impressed by it than by all the gospel sermons that ever could be preached.

—F.B. Hole, from *Scripture Truth*

THE SILENCE OF GOD

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalm 42:1,2).

Here is the heart cry of a true believer in “the living God” (v. 2) who had faithfully worshiped and served and loved God, but who has seemingly been forgotten by God. Many others, before and since, have had similar experiences. The verses of this Psalm almost seem to come from the lips of the ancient patriarch Job, the most righteous man on earth in his day, yet suddenly forsaken by God and soon ridiculed and berated by friends and enemies alike. Like the Psalmist, he also cried out for an opportunity to “come and appear before God” (see Job 23:3-9).

Or one might think of the future martyrs under the altar, crying out to God, “How long, O Lord” (Revelation 6:10). There were also all the great “heroes of faith” whose testimonies are enshrined in Hebrews 11, who “all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise” (Hebrews 11:39).

Indeed, most true Christians over the centuries have experienced, like Job, such trials of faith, when—for reasons not known—God seems to have forgotten them, while sinners mocked. Like the hart, thirsty for water, who finds the brook all dried up, for reasons he didn’t cause and doesn’t understand, such a saint might be tempted to complain as he searched for the water of life to soothe the thirst of his soul.

But like Job, if he is genuine, he will never lose his faith. He may cry out: “Why?” But his cry should not be one that questions God. He should not ask God why he is being treated unfairly. Rather, he must question his own doubts: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” (v. 5). God has reasons which we, like Job, may not be able to understand now, but we can always trust Him to do right by those for whom He sacrificed His own Son.

When the “why” questions intrude and God remains strangely silent, we must simply say with the Psalmist: “Hope thou in God” (v. 5). In His own good time, “I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance” (v. 5).

—From *Treasures in the Psalms* by Henry Morris, © 1999 Master Books.

VICTORY AND WEAKNESS

“[Samson] slew a thousand men ... and he was sore athirst” (Judges 15:15,18).

It is quite common for God’s people, when they have enjoyed a great deliverance, to find a little trouble too much for them. Samson slays a thousand Philistines, and then faints for a little water! Jacob wrestles with God and overcomes Omnipotence itself, and then goes “halting on his thigh!”

Is it strange that there must be a reminder of weakness whenever we win the day? It is as if the Lord must teach us our littleness, our nothingness, in order to keep us within bounds. Samson boasted right loudly when he said, “I have slain a thousand men.” But his boastful throat soon grew hoarse with thirst, and he resigned himself to prayer. When David had mounted the throne of Israel, he said, “I am this day weak, though anointed king” (2 Samuel 3:39).

If God has worked a great deliverance for you, your present difficulty is only like Samson’s thirst, and the Lord will not let you faint. —C.H. Spurgeon