

Are You Thirsty For God?

Berry Kercheville

Jesus and other inspired writers offered invitations based on hungering and thirsting on dozens of occasions. We often pay little attention to the metaphors, being more interested in the message of the surrounding text than in the question of our own thirst.

Consider Jesus' opening statement: "*If anyone thirsts...*" So, are you thirsty? I am persuaded that everyone is thirsty for something, though most understand neither the nature of their thirst nor how to quench it. Everyone recognizes thirsts for basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. But our thirsts go far beyond these basic needs. We don't just thirst for food; we thirst for fine dining. We are not simply interested in clothes to wear; we want the latest fashions. We are typically not content with a place to live; we want a nice house in a nice neighborhood with nice schools.

Our lives are filled with desires. Somehow a \$30,000 SUV, truck, or sports car will provide far greater fulfillment than a 1995 Ford Taurus that will just as easily get us to the desired destination. The material world dazzles our eyes and makes grand promises of joy, laughter, and comfort if only we owned the newest and the latest.

These desires indicate that we are thirsty. John summarized these thirsts by placing them in three categories: "*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*" (1 John 2:16). Satan tells us that by fulfilling these desires our thirsts will be quenched. When we find that we are still thirsty, Satan argues that the problem is we need to "drink" more. People lost at sea die of thirst even though there is water everywhere. That's because it's the wrong kind of water. That water will not only make people thirstier, it will kill them. In the same way, trying to quench our thirst by fulfilling material desires is like drinking salt water to quench physical thirst.

Prophecies of Living Water

First century Jews had a keen awareness of the coming of a second "Moses/Deliverer" who would provide an abundance of life-giving water. Isaiah said, "*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation*" (12:3). Ezekiel revealed an elaborate vision of water flowing from the threshold of the messiah's temple that eventually became a mighty river causing all the desert areas to flourish and giving life to all the nations (Ezek. 47:1-12). Zechariah offers a similar vision of living water flowing from Jerusalem, God becoming King of all the earth, and the righteous going up to Jerusalem to worship during the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:1-19).

With this as a background we are better able to understand Jesus' cry on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles: "*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water'*" (John 7:37-38). Jesus is the one offering life-giving water. Jesus is the source for thirst-quenching, so much so that an abundance of living water ("rivers") would flow from one's innermost being.

Satisfying the Thirst

Let's get down to it. What dazzles your eyes? What gives you that adrenaline rush? What activity sounds wonderful and promises an out-of-this-world experience? Your answer to these questions will determine your level of maturity and give you an idea of where you are on the "growth-scale".

There is certainly nothing wrong with enjoying the fruit of one's labor, but that must not be one's highest goal or greatest joy. Isaiah calls out to a world that endlessly spends their paychecks and their energies for "*that which is not bread*" and labors for "*that which does not satisfy*" (Is. 55:1-2). But at the same time, the Lord is offering wine, milk, and rich food that do not require any of this world's goods to purchase. Only His food will satisfy.

Paul said, "*I count everything as loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*" What will fill us and quench our thirst is knowing the Lord, giving up our life for Him, and becoming like Him in His death (Phil. 3:10). Jesus said, "*For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it*" (Matt. 16:25). A sure way to never quench your thirst is to try to save your life.

So, are you still growing? If you are, you are thirstier than ever for God. Possessions are nice, but you know they will not last or bring joy. Fun activities are just that – activities that are fun for a while, but they aren't what really puts a smile on your face. This world's knowledge is interesting and stimulates a curiosity, but nothing compares to drinking in the very words of the Creator. A faithful husband or wife, children and grandchildren are precious relationships, but only when they are centered on the One through whom all relationships are meaningful and will endure. Sin holds a promise of a fleeting pleasure for a season, but truly righteous living is as pure and refreshing as the cold water in a mountain stream.

Indeed, "*As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God*" (Ps. 42:1-2).