

Got Thirst - Part 1

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[0 : 00] Again, we return to the Gospel of John, this great Gospel, amazing Gospel.

John chapter 7, verses 37 through 52, and for the sake of time, I won't make it. So, there will be a part two.

So, John chapter 7, verse 37. Father, you are our provider. You are our peace. You are the center of our joy.

You are our salvation. You are our high tower, our rock. You, you're just Father. Thank you. Thank you for Jesus who made it all possible and who keeps us in your tender care.

Now, Lord, come and speak to us through your word. We need to hear it because we are in desperate need of what you provide.

[1 : 08] So, speak, Lord Jesus. Show us your glory. Do all your holy will. May we be found sitting in our tents, listening carefully to what you say.

Use your unworthy servant to speak only your truth so that, Lord, people might hear from you and not merely from Kevin Smith. May Jesus get the glory.

Feed your flock. In the name of the living God, the Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen. John chapter 7, beginning at verse 37.

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.

Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Now, this he said about the spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive.

[2 : 16] For as yet the spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, some of the people said, this really is the prophet. Others said, this is the Christ.

But some said, is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees who said to them, Why did you not bring him?

Officers answered, No one ever spoke like this man. The Pharisees answered them, Have you also been deceived?

Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed. Nicodemus, who had gone to him before and who was one of them, said to them, Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?

[3 : 28] They replied, Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee. Wow.

That is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. A friend of mine was a tank commander in the army.

And he tells a story of being in the desert with a temperature of 130 degrees. His unit was operating far forward their own lines, which made it hard to get supplies.

On one occasion, their supply did not arrive and they had to go without water for most of the day. He attempted to radio for help, but his tongue was so swollen, his speech could not be understood. Fortunately, providentially, one of his sergeants was returning from having a vehicle repaired and heard his cry for help and was able to hitch a water buffalo.

[4 : 36] That's not an animal, by the way. A water buffalo to the back of his tank and bring water to the unit. My friend said he possibly saved their lives.

You see, you can go, I'm told now, physicians out there help me out. I'm told you can go three to five days without water. After that, it gets kind of iffy. If that's so, if there's 130 degrees out, I think it

probably drops.

Thirst is basic. It's basic to humanity. But unsatisfied thirst is dangerous and can even become deadly.

Are you allowing Jesus to satisfy your thirst? Remember, we're at the Feast of Booze where Jesus is now standing.

There were two ceremonies in this week-long festival. One was involving water and the other involving light.

[5 : 47] Way back in John 4, our Lord had offered living water to the Samaritan woman.

Remember, the woman at the well. And the Samaritans, remember, were a despised people by the Jews and were not in a good relationship with God because of their mixing the law with their practices of their different cultures.

Now, he is offering living water to the Jews at a feast, celebrating God's covenant faithfulness to them, but they have become dry of soul.

These two scenes, both these scenes, show us that all people need the living water that Jesus supplies.

Jew and Gentile, it don't matter. So I got one big point and some sub points this morning as we look at the clock. First of all, Jesus' water is only for the thirsty.

Now, I remember I said water was an important element of this feast. Here's what would happen.

During the week-long feast, each morning for seven days, it would be drawn from the Pool of Siloam, which was in Jerusalem.

[7 : 08] Be drawn in a golden pitcher by a priest. It would be carried, the pitcher would be carried through the streets, like down the aisle here, with people on both sides, trumpets blaring.

This was a high moment, okay? It happened every day for seven days. And the priest would take the pitcher and go to the altar and pour it out there at the altar.

But on the last day, now this is, remember, I said seven days, but there was an eighth day. The eighth day of the feast, which the text calls the great day, is now the priest would do a, would take what we call a Jericho lap.

He would go seven times around the altar. Some say with seven pitchers. I don't know which one it was. Seven pitchers or one pitcher. But he would go seven laps and pour out the water.

And great, great joy would erupt. This was the most joyous of the Jewish feasts. Something, they just simply called it the feast.

[8 : 19] And it's at that moment when the priest makes his Jericho lap and pours out, and the people rejoiced. I guess Jesus waited for the crowd to die down.

And then he stood up. And with a loud voice, he cries out, if anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink.

Boom! Do you see it? I mean, this must have hit like a thunderclap. The people had just seen the water poured out. They had just rejoiced in God's provision in the wilderness of water.

And now Jesus stands up and says, if you're really thirsty, come to me and drink.

Of course, he's talking spiritual thirst, right? Now, what is spiritual thirst? What does it mean to be spiritually thirsty? Let me offer some thoughts. It is our natural hunger for significance, satisfaction, and safety.

[9 : 30] Significance, satisfaction, and safety. Significance comes from being loved, from having a place and a purpose, right? Satisfaction comes from knowing success, achievement, from knowing our efforts count.

It connects us to something bigger than ourselves. Safety comes from knowing there is ultimate justice. Good will win.

And my life is safe in the hands of something greater than myself. You see, it is human to be thirsty spiritually.

God made us this way because this thirst is really a thirst for him. He alone can provide the significance you want.

He alone can provide the satisfaction that you desire. He alone can provide the safety that you hope for. But we need to own our thirst.

[10 : 37] You need to own your thirst. Denial of thirst will definitely lead to death physically, and ultimately death spiritually.

Drinking from the wrong source also leads to death. It's just slower. Now, if you want to, you can drink my favorite soda, Mountain Dew, daily all your life.

But eventually you will die from lack of water. Behold it, Rev Kev! Is it water in Mountain Dew? Let me tell you something else. Orange juice is also a major component of Mountain Dew. But it's what's added to the water that makes it unsuitable for long-term good health.

Sugar and caffeine actually dehydrate you. And studies have said, believe it or not, in this country, 75% of Americans are dehydrated.

[11 : 43] That blew me away. I kept looking. Is that right? I'm looking. I kept seeing that number. So if it's death, that's not right. It's somewhere near the truth. We're dehydrated people.

And when you're dehydrated, that causes problems. Mental fog. It causes problems. I remember my doctor, who will not be named, decided to draw blood from me one day.

He didn't tell me he was going to draw blood. But being the faithful, meticulous man that he is, he decides he's going to have to draw blood. Well, I go to see the vampire, I mean the phlebotomist, and she's tying the thing around.

She got nothing. Nothing. You know what? I was dehydrated.

All I had that morning was a tall cup of coffee. Not a, no pure water, just coffee. And it didn't do the trick. You can't even give blood if you're dehydrated.

[12 : 59] Listen, if physical dehydration is bad for your organs inside, for your blood flow, if it's bad, how bad is spiritual dehydration?

Jesus wants to give us pure spiritual water to drink. And too often we are drinking a little bit of Jesus and his word with a little bit of the culture's great wisdom.

We end up satisfying our desires in ways that harm our souls. We end up diluting his pure spiritual water and our lives and churches.

And therefore, we're looking dehydrated as God's people. COVID and his aftermath, political disputes, racial upheaval, inflation have left churches dehydrated.

Why? Because we have depended on the wrong drink to satisfy us. While we argued over politics, our souls shrunk.

[14 : 02] While we took to the internet to express our angst, crying out to be heard, our souls shriveled. While we fought one another rather than wrapping our arms around each other in love and prayer, our spiritual organs, especially our hearts, began to fail for a lack of water.

We didn't even want to come back to church to gather in the outpost of the kingdom. That's how dehydrated we've become. We need what Jesus offers, saints.

And not merely sips occasionally. He's talking about continual, strong, big gulps of living water.

Supersize it, baby. Now listen. Water comes from the rock. The living water that Jesus gives comes from the rock.

Now here we go. This is a ritual. This ritual was a commemoration of the refreshing stream that had come forth miraculously out of the rock that Moses struck.

[15 : 20] Now on the screen, Exodus chapter 17 is there. We got to look at this carefully. All the congregation, the people of Israel, moved on from the wilderness of sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim.

But there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, Give us water to drink. Moses said to them, Why don't you quarrel with me? Why don't you test the Lord?

But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst? So Moses cried to the Lord, What should I do with this people?

They are almost ready to stone me. The Lord said to Moses, Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and taking your hand the staff with which you struck denial, and go.

Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

[16 : 32] He called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, Is the Lord among us or not?

By the way, Nehemiah 8, into chapter 8, 18, and 9, 15, apply this, tie these two scenes together, the rock and the water, and the need of the people again.

Now listen, listen, listen. The people had a reasonable need, right? A reasonable expectation that water would be provided in the desert. I've been to that part of the world. I've been to Jordan, and believe me, when they, when it's rocky, it's, when I think wilderness, I think forest. That's what I think when I say, when I think wilderness in this country. Wilderness means the forest. No, wilderness there means rocks, dirt, and that's it. It's really rocky. So they're out there. I can only imagine. They're saying, where is the water?
[17 : 39] I understand. So they had a reasonable expectation. When it wasn't provided, though, their uncomfortable thirst led to a lack of faith in God.

So rather than trust the Lord, they grumbled and quarreled with poor Pastor Moses. Moses named their error, masa, meaning testing, because the people doubted that God was among them since they didn't see any water.

They didn't see any. Meribah means quarreling. What does Moses do? He cries out to the Lord because he realizes his people are going to stone him.

Let's think about this for a minute. Let's talk about, let's just look at that and just put ourselves there. But maybe the people, I'm going to assume, they didn't just one day say there's no water.

I'm going to assume maybe they felt like they had come to Moses about the water before and they felt he blew them off. So now they're really upset. What they chose to overlook was something very striking, that Moses and his family were thirsty too.

[18 : 53] It wasn't like Moses had all this water in his tent and was, no, he was with them in their thirst. But Moses was trusting God and he just kept following God.

Remember, the cloud of, is leading them around the dead. He just keeps walking. You could say he was seeking first the kingdom of God. He believed God would supply. He knew God had not brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness to abandon them.

Here's the thing, y'all. When people are not satisfied in Jesus, they grumble, complain, and fight.

They need water for their dry, thirsty souls, but rather than come to Jesus, we tend to blame others for our unhappiness.

Moses was it. They wanted water right now. They wanted creation to satisfy something even deeper in their spiritual thirst because the text says they doubted if God was really with them.

Hard times come and the people of God doubt if God is present. Their issue wasn't really water them. It was the presenting problem.

[20 : 12] It was the felt need, but their problem was they were not finding their satisfaction in their relationship with God by faith. They couldn't or wouldn't trust him.

So they laughed out at the ones who represented his leadership. They laughed out at Moses. They didn't understand something that you all know. God allows hard times to draw us away from the spiritual mountain dew in our lives.

We realize God's substitutes like family, friends, food, fun, wealth, and work are just not enough to satisfy a thirsty, shriveled up soul.

All those things are good, but they cannot satisfy the soul. They are gifts from God, part of his creation.

But the gifts from God that he gives you are meant to draw you to the giver of the gifts, not for you to bow down and worship the gifts.

[21 : 24] Let's be more clear. Not for you to find your significance and satisfaction and safety in the gifts. But to find, but for you in joy because of the gracious gift of God to you to turn around and say, it's you that did all of this and find he is everything that you need and want more than anything else.

You have to think about this kind of situation. They thought they were doing the right thing by opposing Moses because God couldn't have been with them if they didn't have water.

Moses must have led them the wrong way. God said, go turn left at the big tree. Moses turned right at the big tree and led them into the desert where there is no water.

Certainly God is not with us. How wrong they were. They failed to see that God led them to a place of thirst, a place of dissatisfaction so that he could satisfy them.

Not so they could fight with Moses or fight with one another. He led them to the place where they could say, we need you. This is spiritual growth, not spiritual destruction.

[22 : 49] Here's the powerful end of the story. You saw it. God hears not the cry of the people, but he responds to the cry of Moses. And God provides by having Moses lead a procession of elders.

And when they obey God, they obey God's word, that is, striking the rock, God causes a stream of water to gush forward.

Did you find this strange? church? Isn't that the most unlikely place to find water? A rock? Rocks are harder than dirt. Sand, dirt, whatever. Rocks. I mean, if you were to look, I would have thought he would have said, hey, dig in the soil until you hit something.

He didn't say that. He said, strike the rock. And God made life come from that which did not have life.

[24 : 00] It should have broken Moses' staff, but it doesn't, it didn't. This doesn't fit. It doesn't make sense to us. But it's how God works.

So again, when Jesus stands up at the feast and says, if anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink, wow. He is now identifying himself as the rock who will satisfy their true spiritual thirst. They, like us, lived in a spiritual desert. And instead of physical thirst, they had the oppressive heel of the Romans standing on their necks. They were living as an oppressed people.

They had the burden of religion that told them to keep the rules. And the rules were so numerous that only the experts knew all of them.

they needed a new rock. They needed some water to quench their physical thirst.

[25 : 03] Jesus will quench. He will satisfy theirs and ours spiritual thirst. So God, and it's like what Isaiah, God cries out to his people in Isaiah 55. He says, come everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and who has no money, come buy and eat, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.

He says, why don't you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? He says, that's not smart shopping. Listen diligent to me and eat what is good. Delight yourself in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live and I will make with you an everlasting covenant. My steadfast, sure love for David.

Saints, God is inviting us to his grocery store. The heavenly grocery store. Forget Publix. He's inviting you to the heavenly grocery store so that you and I can buy that which we really need for satisfaction, for significance, and for safety.

But listen, your money no good there. Your American dollar don't spend there. The only currency of heaven is the blood of Jesus, the sacrifice of Christ.

[26 : 23] That's the only currency that you can bring to the heavenly grocery store. Jesus died for you, child of God, so that you would have what you need to shop.

Listen, here's the beauty of this passage. The Exodus passage. Here's the beauty. Do you see it? God's grace is greater than our sin of dissatisfaction.

He supplies them with water even after they were rebellious and hateful toward Moses and more, he gave them water even after they fail to find satisfaction in him.

it was a failure of faith, a failure of trust in the living God and yet God in his mercy and grace still meets their need.

Aren't you happy about that? Because if you're honest with yourself and with me, you know and I know because I know me that we tend to find our satisfaction in the mountain dew and cupcakes of this world.

[27 : 35] Orange soda, Dr. Pepper, Pepsi. You know we're drinking, we're loving that spiritual sludge. And our souls are so dehydrated.

I'm so glad Jesus gave the blood we need. I'm so glad we find our satisfaction in him. There's more to say about this but we got to close off for now.

Listen, can you put your finger, just go home and think about this. The top three, maybe, it might not be three but maybe the top three.

Where are you most dissatisfied right now? Just look, think about that. Where are you most dissatisfied with your life right now? Maybe the top three, rank them in order. And if you think about it then ask yourself some questions.

I mean, come on, you know you got to have some questions about what's really going on here. Why are you so unhappy? Why do you find like you want to fight?

[28 : 46] Why are you angry? Why are you sad? I'm asking myself these questions. How have you tried, here's a go, how have you tried to deal with them?

Those dissatisfaction, how have you tried to deal with them? That's always the first question. What have I been doing to deal with this dissatisfaction in my life? What are you seeking?

Two, what are you really seeking after? Three, are you asking creation to give you only what Jesus can supply? Let's be honest.

And what happens if you actually get what you want? Four questions. How have you tried to deal with it? What are you seeking? Are you seeking creation to give you what only Christ can supply? What happens if you get what you want? I think you'll find that an interesting exercise. But here's the truth.

[29 : 47] Let me end you with this wonderful, I love Narnia. Don't y'all love Narnia? Somebody say amen, please. Don't leave me alone up here. I gotta read this quick, but it's the silver chair, okay? The silver chair, y'all know the heroine is Jill.

She sees a lion, so she flees into the deep forest. She's soon worn out and becomes so thirsty that she thinks of herself about to die. And just then she hears the gurgling of a brook in the distance and staggers towards it because she's dizzy with dehydration.

As she draws near to the water, she sees the lion crouch before it. The lion says, if you are thirsty, come and drink. Jill's like, that's a lion.

I am not, she didn't move. The lion asks her, are you not thirsty? She says, I'm dying of thirst. Then drink, says the lion. She says, may I, could I, would you mind going away while I do?

The lion answers with a low growl. And Jill realizes he's not going to move away. She says, will you promise not to do anything to me if I do come?

[31 : 07] The lion says, I make no promise. Jill's thirsty now. Without noticing it, she has come a step nearer. She's kind of inching. She's hoping he's going to give in.

She says, I dare come and drink. Then you will die of thirst, said the lion. Oh, dear. Said, Jill, I suppose I must go and look for another stream then.

Then the lion says, there is no other stream. Saints, Jesus will only be had by you on his terms. You don't get to dictate terms.

The lion of the tribe of Judah will satisfy your thirst, but he says you must come to him on his terms. You must trust him. You must surrender to him.

You must give yourself to him. He is loving and though he is fierce and he will not make any promises to you other than what he's already said. Yes, things will happen to you.

[32 : 09] Life in a fallen world means things will happen, but he is love. He is loving and will see you through. you are safe in the hands of Aslan.

Finally, Jill did drink. She realized he was loving and good. She was still scared. When she drank, she found it was the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted.

if you will drink by faith Jesus, you will find him even in the midst of the desert, in the midst of the wilderness, in the midst of all kinds of nasty things going on.

You will still find him to be the coolest, most refreshing that you've ever experienced. He satisfies our significance, our satisfaction, and our safety.

He is everything. Brothers and sisters, drink! Father in heaven, help us. Help us. We are drunk on the world's wine, and we need the living water.

[33 : 37] Help us, Lord. Help us to drink. in Jesus' name. Amen.