

## 29. Spiritual dehydration

April 10, 2011

Ever since I was diagnosed as a diabetic plus high cholesterol and high blood pressure last July, I had to watch what I eat and drink, not by choice if I may add. I could no longer munch down cheeseburgers, hot dogs, and donuts as my regular diet, nor could I drink my regular drinks, like Mountain Dew, Monster, Coca Cola, all the good sweet stuff.

I became a semi-rabbit food eater nowadays. Last July my Triglycerides was 650 which was extremely high and ripe for a stroke. But with the Lord's guidance, my doctor's yelling, medications, and my wonderful wife's foods, it now is 105. I was told that the normal Triglycerides level is 150. So I can go back to my cheeseburger and Mountain Dew. No, just kidding.

Being a diabetic, I have to drink a lot of water everyday instead of all the soda pop I used to enjoy. I drink about a gallon of water a day to dilute my blood sugar in order to keep my glucose level under control.

As all of you already know drinking the right amount of water is extremely vital for our physical well being. When we don't take enough water, our bodies can go into dehydration which can be very dangerous to one's life.

There are three stages of dehydration: Mild, Moderate, and Severe which is the loss of 10% or more of one's body weight. Severe dehydration is a serious condition and can require hospitalization.

But there is something people don't realize that is more dangerous – spiritual dehydration. Once it passes a certain stage, reverse is not possible, because the spiritually dehydrated person, by their own choice, no longer cares about the spiritual truth that comes from the Bible. But the Lord Jesus is the Living Water who is more than willing to give His life-giving water to anyone who seeks Him even to the last moment. That is what He is going to share with us this morning.

### A. WRONG INFORMATION REGARDING THE MESSIAH

*John 7:25-31 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? 26 But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? 27 However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from." 28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me." 30 Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?"*

These were the local residents who lived in Jerusalem. The word on the street was that the religious leaders in Jerusalem were trying to find Jesus because they wanted to kill Him since He was claiming to be their Messiah. But this group says, "He can't be the Messiah because we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

Question: Where did they get that idea? It sure didn't come from the Bible. It was like an old wives tale – just sort of gathered steam as it went along. Actually, it was written in the Babylonian Talmud. Talmud is the collection of ancient Rabbinic writings consisting of the Mishnah and the Gemara, constituting the basis of religious authority in Orthodox Judaism.

According to Talmud, Rabbi Zara said the Messiah will come unaware. Just show up out of nowhere and nobody will know His background, His genealogy, or where He's from.

## **B. YOU WILL SEEK ME AND NOT FIND ME**

*John 7:32-36 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. 33 Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come." 35 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? 36 What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"*

Jesus didn't have a problem with the people who do not know about Him. He is willing to show Himself to them if they only seek Him.

But He didn't hold back any verbal punch to those who pretend to know Him yet they were completely ignorant because they were busy being religious. Here is the group of the Pharisees to whom Jesus told, "*You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.*" What a judgment for them to receive from God!

We need to think about this statement by Jesus. There is going to come a time when an unbeliever is going to seek the Savior but He whom that person is now rejecting will be gone from that person and the opportunity to be saved is gone. There is such a thing as a passing opportunity. That's why the Bible always encourages us to make choices now, today. While we have the opportunity, don't let it slip by.

*2 Corinthians 6:2b Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

You remember that I use this verse often at the end of our Sunday morning services as I give an opportunity to those who are unbelievers to come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Indeed, now is the time and today is the day of salvation, not later.

## **C. THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*John 7:37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

To understand this particular portion of the Scripture, we must dig into the ceremonial background of the final day of the Feast of Tabernacle:

Each day of the festival the people came with their palm branches and their willow branches to the temple; with them they formed a kind of screen or roof and marched round the great altar.

At the same time a priest took a golden pitcher and went down to the pool of Siloam and filled it with water. Then he carried it back through the Water Gate while the people recited Isaiah 12:3:

*Isaiah 12:3 Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

The water was carried up to the temple altar and poured out as an offering to God. The whole dramatic ceremony was a vivid thanksgiving for God's good gift of water and an acted prayer for rain, and a memory of the water which sprang from the rock when they travelled through the wilderness.

I wouldn't be one bit surprised if Jesus shouted out loud these three verses to the people in the temple while the water was pouring out onto the temple altar.

At the feast, the Jews were reenacting a tradition that could never satisfy the heart because it only remained as a religious ritual. Jesus offered them living water and eternal satisfaction.

'Water for drinking' is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. However, 'water for washing' is a symbol of the Word of God.

*John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

*Ephesians 5:26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

Just as water satisfies thirst and produces fruitfulness, so the Spirit of God satisfies the inner person and enables us to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

#### **D. EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION ABOUT JESUS**

*John 7:40-44 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" 43 So there was a division among the people because of Him. 44 Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.*

Everyone in the temple had an opinion about Jesus like people around the world have now. One person can claim that Jesus is one's Savior and Lord; the others might mention His name when they want to sprinkle their conversation as a profanity.

Notice that there was a division among people. There is a real sense in which Jesus is a divider of men. Because we cannot be of two opinions about Jesus, some will be for Him and others will be against Him. One can not be confronted with Jesus and remain neutral; feigned neutrality is rejection, the same as open hostility.

*Matthew 10:34-36 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'*

#### **E. REJECTED BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

*John 7:45-53 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" 46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" 47 Then the Pharisees answered them,*

*"Are you also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? 49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." 50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, 51 "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" 52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." 53 And everyone went to his own house.*

Knowing the reputation of the Pharisees, their religion was far more important than seeking the truth. Here was the Man who claimed to be a God. Anybody could do that. If He stopped there, I don't blame them for ignoring Jesus as a mad man. But as He said His miracles testified Him as who He claimed to be. No one could have done these miracles unless He was from God.

At this point, as the spiritual authority of Israel and the guardians of Israel faith in one true God, should they not have some serious investigations about this Man from Galilee and interviews His family members? Where was He born? How did He know so much about Scripture without going their formal rabbinic schools? What other evidences could He present to them as the Messiah of Israel?

None of these happened. Because in their own minds, they knew better than anyone on the face of the earth, so why bother to ask anyone else? It sounds much like the majority of the politicians in Washington, D.C., don't you think?

Religion and knowledge can stop you from knowing Jesus. I am not only talking to unbelievers but also to believers as well. Our faith in Jesus Christ can easily turn into a religion of our own kind. It may have all the shapes and forms of Christianity, our hearts can be far away from our Savior and Lord, but only hanging onto what we do and what we know.

In 1739, Methodist developed in England as a result of the teachings of John Wesley. While studying at Oxford, John Wesley, his brother Charles, and several other students formed a group devoted to study of the Bible, prayer and helping the underprivileged. They were labeled "Methodist" by their fellow students because of the way they used "rule" and "method" to go about their spiritual affairs. They were strong in the Lord at the beginning. Now it became difficult to find methodist churches which are diligent in the Word of God without a compromise.

You might think that it will never happen in our church. Don't bet your life on it. One thing I have a great deal of concern for Calvary Chapel in general. You see, Calvary Chapel is known for staying in the Word of God faithfully. So did the church of Ephesus. But when you read the second chapter of the Book of Revelation, this church lost its first love – the love for our Lord Jesus.

*Revelation 2:2-6 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

Whenever we lose our love for Jesus, our faith in Jesus turns into a cold religion instead of relationship with Him. That is what I am afraid might happen in the future Calvary Chapels.

Author Max Lucado said it so well in his book "The applause of heaven": "False fountains pacify our cravings with sugary swallows of pleasure. But there comes a time when pleasure doesn't satisfy."

The people who try to quench their thirst from the well of religion which is a broken cistern have to fight over each drop and they will go into dehydration stage. But those who receive the Living Water will be satisfied, because the Lord gives us rest and hope and satisfaction in Him.

*Jeremiah 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

## **F. APPLICATIONS**

1) Just as water satisfies thirst and produces fruitfulness, so the Spirit of God satisfies the inner person and enables us to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

2) One can not be confronted with Jesus and remain neutral; feigned neutrality is rejection, the same as open hostility.

3) When we lose our first love for Jesus, our relationship with Him will start to become a religion which He despises.