

52. Spiritual dehydration

October 30, 2016

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, reversing it 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 teach 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 the 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 the 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. In other words, their idea was unbiblical.

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 did not know about Him. He was willing to show Himself to them if they only sought Him. But He didn't hold back any verbal punch to those who pretended to know Him, yet they were prideful, completely ignorant, and 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 what Jesus said in these 5 verses. 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 as well. 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, we shouldn't let it slip by.

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

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 canopy 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 their ancestors 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 the reenactment only remained as a religious ritual. Jesus offered them the spiritual living water for their 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 which is love.

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 with 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, either we are for Him, or against Him. One cannot 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 to them 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 madman. 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's 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 to 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 pride can stop us from knowing Jesus. I am not only talking to unbelievers, but also to believers as well. Without humility and submissiveness to the Lord, our faith in Jesus Christ can be easily turned 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 just going through the motions to satisfy our own religious feeling.

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 the 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. HOW CAN WE REMAIN IN THE FLOW OF THE LIVING WATER

1) Stop comparing yourself with other people's spiritual condition.

Don't compare the depth of your spirituality to someone else's. Everyone is on their own spiritual journey, and the reality is that none of us are going to be on the exact same page or chapter. We're all going through different things, experiencing God in different ways and trying to wrestle through different questions.

2) Stop trying to do things on your own.

The beauty of God is that not only is He a spiritual Companion, but He is the Creator of companionship itself. Humble yourself completely, drop the facade of perfection and allow God to intervene in every facet of your life. By doing so, the Holy Spirit will completely revolutionize your heart, soul, and spiritual awareness.

3) Stop allowing your spiritual routine to become mundane.

There is nothing wrong with having a routine of prayer, reading your Bible, and experiencing times of worship. What you don't want to do is allow these things to become a mundane routine, something you do just for the sake of doing them. Prayer must be done with intention, studying your Bible must be done with tenacity, and worship must be done with passion.

4) Stop giving prayer a last resort. Keep your prayer in the first priority.

Prayer is spiritual dehydration's biggest enemy. Make prayer a priority, a part of your life and something that is interwoven into the inner-being of your character. Share your feelings, your burdens, pains, frustrations, your joy, and your discontent with the Lord. Our Father in heaven always listens to us very patiently.

5) Stop isolating yourself. Keep yourself accountable to fellow believers.

It's always a good idea to have people in your life to whom you've given permission to keep you accountable, call you out when you do something idiotic and keep you on track with your spiritual journey.

G. 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 cannot 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.