

Quencher of Thirst

Call to worship The Spirit and the bride says “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. (*Revelation 22:17*)

Hymn StF 248 I heard the voice of Jesus say

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74kyfROS4q8&ab_channel=AlexanderMcConnell

I heard the voice of Jesus say :
‘Come unto me and rest ;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast.’
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary and worn and sad,
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say :
‘Behold, I freely give
the living water ; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink and live.’

I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream ;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say :
‘I am this dark world's Light ;
look unto me, your morn shall rise,
and all your day be bright.’
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun ;
and in that light of life I'll walk,
till travelling days are done.

Horatius N. Bonar StF 248 SoF 215

Prayer Thank you Jesus, for your call upon our lives, thank you that you know everything about us yet still call us to be on your team, thank you that you not only forgive us our sins, but pour an abundance of your grace, your love into our lives. Thank you for your live giving water given to us to bless others. Amen

Gospel John 7:25-52 Jesus offers to quench thirst and sparks division

Reflection

The day this is being written is one of the hottest days in England, possibly ever. Advice says if you travel take water with you. We are being advised to stay indoors and keep the curtains drawn. People in the time of Jesus knew extreme heat and dryness, they knew what it was to be thirsty. In the UK most of the time we take water for granted. You can turn on a tap and clean, cool, fresh water comes out. In the Holy land in the time of Jesus, water had to be drawn from a well or a stream. In Zimbabwe all the water at Mission station where we lived was pumped from a bore hole. Near the last town we lived in a massive lake had been created by a dam. It was built to supply irrigation to the sugar cane estates of the Lowveld. When we arrived in Zimbabwe in 1982, the lake was 100% full and overflowing the spillway. By 1991 as we were returning to UK, the dry season had gone on for 9 months, instead of 6 months and the reservoir was down to 0.7% (or 99.3% empty!) In 1992 I did a preaching tour in UK and in Yorkshire stayed with an engineer at Yorkshire Water who was complaining that his reservoirs were down to 70% full – 100 times more than the Zimbabwe reservoir. We in the UK barely know what it is to be thirsty. Our reading has Jesus at a festival in Jerusalem. During festival times the population of Jerusalem sometimes quadrupled, and water and food supplies could be difficult. At this festival the ministry of Jesus was under question, some were trying to kill him, there was whispering a plotting, there were those who were eager to find out more and others incredulous that such a prophet could have come from Galilee. Particularly as some of them knew the Scriptures saying that the Messiah would come from David’s descendant, and David’s home town was Bethlehem. We know that Jesus was in fact born in Bethlehem, but that was 33 years earlier and it only been a matter of weeks they were in Bethlehem before his parents fled to Egypt for a few years and then returning Nazareth and Galilee. His story would not have been known by most people (Matthew and Luke’s gospels had not been written)

Jesus often used illustrations close at hand and speaks of those who are thirsty coming to him to drink. They all will have experienced real thirst and Jesus didn't offer a glass of water, but a river of water flowing from within them. John goes on to explain this meant the Holy Spirit, coming not as a one off event, but as a river flowing from within us to make a difference to the community around us. A river doesn't just fill our need but is available to others. In places of low rainfall the countryside can become dry and if you fly over it its looks brown. A river flowing through this area will produce a ribbon of green following the path of the river – there is life, and people and animals can come and drink of this water.

For your reflection.

- 1) Can you remember a time when you were really thirsty? How was that thirst quenched? What did it feel like when you were able to drink?
- 2) Have you ever felt life was purposeless and without meaning? Have you ever doubted that God loves you and has a purpose for your life? Has someone helped you overcome that doubt, but then you have found the doubts returning? You are in good company, some of Jesus's disciples and the Psalm writers, the woman at the well (John 4). Go on trusting, share with a friend or contact me.
- 3) What would it be like to have a river flowing from within you that blesses other people? Who would you like to introduce to the life giving, thirst quenching Jesus. Imagine them knowing Jesus and drinking that life giving water and the transformation that it brings.

Prayers

Loving God, we pray for those who are weary – exhausted in body, mind and soul

Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We think of those whose daily work hangs heavy upon them – those in dull, soul-destroying employment, in stressful and pressurised careers, in labour that is heavy and exhausting, or in jobs involving long unsociable hours.

Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We think of those who have no job; deprived of a sense of self-respect, unable to provide for their loved ones as they would like, their life seeming empty, frustrating

Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We pray for those who are suffering; battling against illness, wrestling with infirmity, crushed by physical disability or enduring physical or emotional pain

Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We pray for those who have lost their enthusiasm for life; the depressed and downhearted, those with fragile mental health, the sad and disillusioned, the frightened and anxious, all those for whom just getting through another day has become an effort

Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We think of those who have nothing to sustain their hope; those whose dreams have been crushed, who struggle with doubt and uncertainty, whose faith in you and the future has been battered beyond repair, their ability to bounce back finally exhausted.

Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

Loving God, draw near to all through Christ. Grant the peace of your presence the healing of your touch, the blessing of your guidance and the refreshing of your Living water, so that all who are weary may walk in hope and look forward in faith.

Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**
Amen.

Hymn StF 367 Let your living water

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2UvQlnP27c&ab_channel=ChetValleyChurches

LET YOUR LIVING WATER FLOW over my soul.

Let Your Holy Spirit come and take control
Of every situation that has troubled my mind.
All my cares and burdens on to You I roll.

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Father, Father, Father.
Spirit, Spirit, Spirit.*

Come now, Holy Spirit, and take control.
Hold me in Your loving arms and make me whole.

Wipe away all doubt and fear and take my pride,
Draw me to Your love and keep me by Your side.

Give your life to Jesus, let Him fill your soul.
Let Him take you in His arms and make you whole.
As you give your life to Him He'll set you free.
You will live and reign with Him eternally.

John Watson. SF 334 © 1986 Ampelos Music

Blessing May rivers of living water flow (the Holy Spirit) from within you transforming the world around you. **Thanks be to God. Amen**