



God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship
with Pastor Steve

The Fountain of Satisfaction

All of us at some point in time have been really thirsty. You probably don't have any problem recalling how a cold drink of water feels going down your dry throat. I can remember as a child my brother and me spending some time with our Pop and Granny Coker during the summer when school was out. We would run and play outside, get hot, the sweat just pouring off us and work up a big thirst.

Pop and Granny had an old well in their yard. The well had a crank that was used to lower a bucket which was attached to a rope into the water. Once the bucket was full we would crank it up and then use a long handled pitcher that looked like a huge spoon to dip the water. We would drink the water right out of the pitcher. I can remember thinking that was the best water in the world. It wasn't uncommon for us to draw from that well several times during our summer visits. We couldn't get this good of water at our house. The only place we could get it was at Pop and Granny's house.

The prophet Jeremiah records these words spoken to him by God for the nation of Israel.

Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be very desolate, says the Lord. 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.

Jeremiah 2:12-13

During the dry summer months in Palestine the people were forced to build cisterns to collect the rain water or water from small streams. This was particularly necessary in places where there were no large streams or springs. Most of the cisterns were dug in the earth or cut out of soft limestone. They varied in size and shape. With proper care the water could be kept in good condition for a while, but often it became dirty. Sometimes the cisterns would break and the water would leak out.

In our text God is describing the spiritual condition of a people that have turned away from him. In the process he has given us a definition of evil. He states that evil is forsaking the fountain of living waters and getting water from somewhere else. How did these people get in this condition? How did they forsake the fountain of living waters?

Earlier in Jeremiah 2 God says that Israel worshiped foolish idols and did not seek after him. In fact they exchanged him for the idols of other countries which he called "broken cisterns that hold no water." Israel sought to be satisfied by something other than God. They exchanged eternal satisfaction found only in relationship with God for a temporary satisfaction which, in reality, did not satisfy them at all. God spoke this message through other prophets as well.

You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.

Ezekiel 16:28-29

So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord.

Amos 4:8

It's easy to look and see that as a nation we have sought to satisfy ourselves with things other than God. We have indulged in all types of debauchery and whet our appetites with fleshly desires; none of which have filled us. Super stars and super models sit on the thrones of our adulation. This is to be expected from a world that doesn't know God, but the sad reality is that so many in the church have played the harlot with the world.

Many in the church have worshiped the idols of self-gratification such as prosperity, power, popularity and prestige. Others have worshiped the institutional church loving the traditions, doctrines and programs of man more than a fresh anointing of God's presence. In many churches ritual has taken the place of repentance and righteousness; works have taken the place of true worship. Man-pleasing has replaced God-pleasing. To quote Tommy Tenny, "We have become more concerned with preserving our dignity that we have with praising our Deity. Some have even tried to satisfy their spiritual thirst with the stale water from visitations of days gone bye; all in hopes that God will move that way again."

Though we shrink back at the thought of this being evil, that is exactly what God calls it. He compares our worldly indulgences and religious toys to broken cisterns that hold no water. We can pamper our flesh thinking that will meet the needs of our heart. However, once we have indulged we find it is not enough. Even the water held by the cisterns became dirty in time. The only pure water came from fountains of flowing, living water. To be truly satisfied we must be obsessed with God alone and addicted to his presence.

King David had everything a person could possibly desire, but he knew that he could only be satisfied by the person and presence of God. He wrote the following verses.

How precious is your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your pleasures. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Psalm 36:7-9

Blessed is the man you choose, and cause to approach you, that he may dwell in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, of your holy temple.

Psalm 65:4

Our thirst is only quenched in Jesus. He said, *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.* (John 7:37-38) In the conversation with the woman at the well in Sychar, after asking her for a drink of water, Jesus said, *People soon become thirsty again after drinking this water. But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.* (John 4:13 NLT) Later in that conversation Jesus reveals to the woman that God is looking for people who will worship him in spirit and truth.

Believing on and clinging to Jesus purges our old wells from the muck that has wrought defilement. In turn, faith in Christ produces in us fountains of living water that give eternal satisfaction. Worshiping in spirit and truth moves God to invade our world with his presence bringing with him refreshing waters from his throne.

King David longed for the presence of God. He wrote, *O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.* (Psalm 63:1 NLT)

Where do you turn for satisfaction? What are you looking toward to quench your thirst? Have you forsaken the fountain of living waters and dug out cisterns that hold no water? Are you thirsty for God alone? Can you cry with the psalmist, *As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and stand before him.* (Psalm 42:1-2 NLT) All you have to do to experience God's river of delight is speak to the Rock. *He also said, It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega-the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give the springs of the water of life freely without charge!* (Revelation 21:6 NLT)