

Service for June 17, 2018
Father's Day
"Thirsting for God"

Psalm 42

Water is essential for life. A person can go for a long period of time without food, but for a relatively short period without water. As living beings, we are mostly water. When scientists consider the possibility of life on other planets, they often see water as the necessary compound. Water is necessary for life - as we know it.

That is why the image of the deer panting for water is so strong. You see you don't have to teach a deer to long for water, just like you don't have to teach a person to thirst. To thirst for water is basic and biological. Thirsting is chemical. It is built into who we are on a molecular level.

I say all this to make a point about the first line of this psalm. It says as a deer pants for water, so my soul thirsts for God. Many people read that, and they think "OK, it says I should thirst for God."

No, that misses the point. It is not saying you should thirst for God. It is saying you do thirst for God. You are spiritually thirsty because God is as essential to your makeup as a spiritual person as water is to your makeup as a physical person. In the Bible a person is the dust of the earth made alive by the breath or spirit of God. God is the essential element of the chemical makeup of your soul.

You thirst for God! That is the fact. We as human beings all experience that thirst to know God and to have God living in us. God made us that way. It has been said that each of us has a God shaped hole in our hearts and only God can fill that hole and make us whole and complete. The deer does not pant for water because someone said "Oh, you should be thirsty." The deer pants for water because it is thirsty.

You are thirsty for God! The problem is that sometimes we find other things that seem like what we are thirsty for and they do not do the job. Have you even been dehydrated but instead of drinking water you drank a soft drink? It was liquid, but it did not provide what you really needed as well as plain water would have. That is why doctors tell you when you are dehydrated to stay away from soft drinks and drink either water or drinks designed to help rehydrate you. We have all heard stories of people adrift at sea who were thirsty and drank the salt water only to die quicker as the salt water drew the water out of their cells instead of putting it in. We all thirst for God, but sometimes we try to fill that need through other things.

Since today is Father's Day I want to speak especially to men. Our lives are so full, and many of those things in our lives can be fulfilling. It is easy to think that these things will fill the thirst we have. So, I want to enumerate some of those things that will not satisfy that thirst.

Your job will not satisfy your thirst. One of the things that brings men fulfillment is our jobs. And that is not necessarily a bad thing. If you find fulfillment in your job I am not suggesting that you give up your job and go find an unsatisfying one. I know I find

fulfillment in my job. I get to go to church every day and get paid for it! I get the help people and teach people about God! If you find fulfillment in your job that is probably a sign that you have found your calling.

But we should not expect that to satisfy our deepest needs. As satisfying as a calling or career can be, we are not what we do for living. Too many men lived for the job and when the job ended what did they have, a few plaques for being best employee and a pension? A job may be meaningful, but it cannot provide deep meaning. It is not that water that you thirst for.

Hobbies will not satisfy your thirst. Hobbies and activities can be good. They can be creative outlets and can be productive. Activities can be meaningful and satisfying. I know following Duke Basketball has been tremendously satisfying for me. Sometimes following Carolina football has not been as satisfying.

People often try to satisfy their longings with hobbies and activities. But all the hunting trophies or homemade furniture in the world, cannot fill the void. Even a National Championship cannot satisfy that ultimate thirst. Only God can do that.

Family cannot satisfy your thirst. Family is a good thing. It can and should be a satisfying thing especially being a father. Let me tell you about my kids... Well maybe not. We don't have all day.

The love of family can and should be a source of satisfaction and meaning. But it will not fill your longing for God. The relationships within a family are vehicles for expressing and experiencing God's love. But the family is not the source. God is the source of the living water that can satisfy your thirst.

Church cannot satisfy your thirst. "Wait a minute. Did the preacher just say that church cannot satisfy your thirst?" Yes, I said that. Church can be the place where your relationship with God is nurtured and grown. So, coming to church can be a vehicle of receiving the spiritual water we thirst for.

But church itself can also make us thirsty. There are a lot of thirsty people in church. Some are even dying of thirst. Because church is not what satisfies our thirst. God is what satisfies that thirst.

Only God can satisfy your deepest longings. Only God can quench your spiritual thirst. Only God gives your life ultimate meaning. Other things may be meaningful, but they will not bring ultimate fulfillment. But God can fulfill you.

Jesus is your connection to God. He came into this world and demonstrated God's great love for us by dying for us. He did that so that you can know God. Trust in him so that you can receive that living water that will satisfy your thirst.

Don't try to fill your life with work or hobbies or family or even church. Don't let your soul be downcast within you. Put your trust in Christ. Place your hope in God. And let God quench your thirst.

Are you thirsty? Now, that was a silly question. Of course you are! Let Jesus give you the living water you thirst for.