

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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Psalm 42: 2 – *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*



Dear Friends: I just got home from the hospital. The cancer has returned with a vengeance. It, along with other related issues, has created another impossible situation. The doctors have given me no chance for recovery; and, unquestionably, that's exactly where God wants me. Now He can do what only God can do – another miracle.

I fully expect to continue with this ministry. I know many of you have been praying. Thank you. God answers prayers.

GOD'S HIDDEN LOVE

Very few of us, as Christians, are fully aware of the immense love that God has for us. It is not so much that it is hidden because we can't find it, but rather because we don't believe it, and therefore, don't seek it. To know that God loves us is a foundational principle to which most of us adhere. But to recognize the enormous depth of God's love, we must

go deeper in our relationship with Him.

Mother Teresa, the Nobel Prize-winning servant to the poor of India, often spoke of the great thirst that God has for each of us. To think of God pining for us is difficult for most of us to grasp. But the Scripture clearly speaks of God's deep desire for fellowship with His creation. We are His creation and He made us in His own image. We have the capability of being perfectly conformed to the likeness of Jesus (Rom. 8:29), and God's desire is to do exactly that.

It is easier for us to comprehend God's magnificent love for Jesus; but we can be sure that His love for us is no less than that. **God thirsts for us; He thirsts for our love.** In fact, we can only quench that magnificent thirst by thirsting for Him, in return. When God sees that we are running after Him with all that we have, we satisfy His thirst for us.

THIRSTING IN ERROR

We all thirst but we thirst for the wrong things most of the time. We all have an innate desire in our hearts for God, whether we know it or not. And until we realize the truth

of that thirst, we tend to satisfy it, or attempt to, through other means. Whether it is love, money, fame, success, business, or anything else, we do so in order to satisfy this great thirst in our spirit. But that thirst can only be satisfied by God. That is why so many of us, after attempting to quench this thirst with "things", become despondent and frustrated.

This thirst for God was put in our spirit at birth. It cannot be satisfied by anything else. Many of us, Christians and non-Christians alike, spend our entire lives attempting to fulfill this desire with one thing after another, to no avail.

Only God can satisfy this thirst. And only as we truly begin to satisfy this thirst can we then fulfill the thirst that God also has for us.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, where He stopped to rest while His disciples went into the city to purchase food, He spoke to Her about this thirst that He had for her and that He wanted Her to have for Him.

First, He said to her, "Would you give me a drink?" Jesus was telling her that He thirsted for her. He didn't really need a drink of water, and as it turned out, He never did get one. He wanted her. **God is always standing at the door of our hearts, wanting us. He never leaves us, whether we serve Him or not. He never stops calling us, whether we answer Him or not.**

When the woman answered, she said, in essence, "Hey, you're a Jew and I'm a Samaritan. What are you doing asking me for anything?" But look at Jesus' answer to her: "*If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.*" Now He's getting to the crux of the situation. If she only knew the truth, if she only knew who Jesus was, she would be thirsting for Him. That would satisfy His own thirst for her, and as a result, He would give her living water.

When we, by the grace of God, become one with the Lord, the living water, the power of the Holy Spirit of God, will reside in us; and we will never again need to satisfy the void in our hearts with anything else. All the things that we ran after will drift away. This poor lady had tried to satisfy the longing in her heart with men. She had five husbands and the man she was living

with at the time was her sixth. None of them were able to fulfill the deep desire within her. But Jesus could and, ultimately, Jesus did.

When He spoke those words to her, she didn't understand at first and answered by talking about the well and how deep it was. So Jesus told her again: "*Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*"

Once again, Jesus makes His point. If you keep attempting to satisfy the deep thirst in your being with "things", you will continue to thirst. Only if you satisfy your thirst with Me will you never thirst again. You will have eternal life.

So she finally begins to get it - well, kind of - and she asks Jesus for some of this "special" water so that she won't have to keep coming to the well. Then Jesus begins telling her about herself and she realizes she is standing in the midst of a great prophet; and she says: "*I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.*" Then Jesus stated, "*I who speak to you am he.*"

The woman left her water jar there. She no longer needed that water. She went back to the city and told everyone, "I have met the

Christ." This lady had spent her entire life attempting to satisfy the deep longings in her spirit with the wrong things. One confrontation with Jesus met her needs. And she, in turn, met His need and desire, too. That is why He told his disciples, "I have food that you know nothing about."

We are no different than the Samaritan woman. Though we may confess our Christianity, we still run after "things" to satisfy the longings of our hearts. But that longing was put there by God and it can only be satisfied by Him.

It is not enough to just receive salvation. We are living at the End of the Age. This is the time that prophets spoke about in days long past. We must turn to the Lord with all of our hearts, minds, and strengths. We must realize that Jesus is the only one who matters. Everything else will pass away. Only He will remain.

And to go back to our original thought, it is God who draws us to this place of neediness. **It is God who, by His grace, if we allow Him to do so, will draw us to this place where we want only Him and nothing else.** And He does so because of His great thirst for us, His great desire, His great unfailing love for us. When we are totally yielded to Him; when we run after Him with everything that is within us; when we recognize that

nothing else matters except Him, and when we live our lives accordingly, we, by those actions, will satisfy the longing in God's heart for us. That is what He wants; He wants our love.

THE ART OF LOVING GOD

It is not so much that it is an art to love God; rather, it is not natural to love God. It is not easy; it is somewhat awkward. Why is this? It is because we live in a world that despises God. We become anti-ordinary when we profess a deep love for God, a love that should surpass all other loves. The world doesn't operate that way. The devil will do everything in his power to keep us from serving God on His terms, from loving God the way He wants us to love Him.

We love in the natural because we receive love from those whom we love. When we have children, we can even love when we do not receive love in return, though it is not easy. We can do this because those children came from us. We bore them. They are part of us. That love is almost like a supernatural love. And, if we think about it, we will then realize how easy it is for God to love us. He bore us. We are part of Him. He is our creator; and He created us in His own image. We are His children,

even more so than if He had carried us through pregnancy. He has carried us throughout eternity. He knew us eons before we were born. Psalm 139:15-16 says: *"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."*

So, this great God of creation; this incomprehensible God of infinity; this God who has complete control over everything in the universe, has created each of us with a hand-crafted love far surpassing anything that we can imagine. And when He made us, He put within us a desire to return that love to Him; a longing for Him: a longing that only He can fulfill.

If we can get hold of this phenomenal truth, that God loves us far more than we know; that He wants our love far more than we can know, we can then begin to walk a path that will take us into eternity, a path that will fill us with "living water", a path that will satisfy the longing in our soul. We will, by the grace of God, begin to serve God in the manner in which He wants us to serve Him. How does He want us to serve Him? With love! He wants us to love Him, all day, every day. **He wants us to love Him through every-**

thing that we do, including even the most mundane of tasks. And He wants us to allow Him, then, to love through us.

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

It really isn't all about us, is it? We know that, and we even say it, but, in reality, we don't live it. We're still number one. And that isn't going to change until we begin to serve the Lord on His terms instead of on our terms. And a good place to start is to understand that God wants to shower us with His love; and He will do so as we shower Him with our love. It really is all about Jesus.

If we could see, from Heaven's viewpoint, where we are in history, we would see that we are in the final seconds of the fourth quarter. We are the final generation. **We are about to see the unleashing of a power move of God unseen before in the history of the world; and, at the same time, a relentless spewing forth of evil unlike any ever known or recorded.**

God hasn't hidden this from us. The word of God states over and over that this is the case and that now is the time. And the word tells us clearly that many will fall away at this time. Why? Because many will not heed the Lord. God is stating,

clearly, that we must turn to Him like we never have before. There is no such thing as “business as usual”. The current economic situation that we face today is not a cyclical thing. It is a spiritual thing. It has been prophesied in Scripture. It is now taking place.

God is saying through all of this: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light . (Matt. 11:28-30).”*

Many of us are operating under the yoke of the world in which we find ourselves. We need to get out from under that burdensome, strangling yoke. And now, with the economic difficulties that we are encountering, many of us are allowing the world to tighten that yoke around our necks. And we feel that pressure. That pressure is not coming from God. It is coming from the devil. Get out from under it now! Allow the Lord to put His yoke on you. Live under His yoke; it is not burdensome; it is easy.

God loves you, friend, more than you’ll ever know. And He wants you to experience that love. He is telling you to run to Him, yield to Him, spend time with Him, sit quietly before Him and wait for Him. God will

not forsake you. Enter His rest. Put aside all of your own things. Put on God’s things. Oh, how He loves you and wants you to experience that love. Allow Him to. It is the only way to have assurance that you can walk through this egregious world, and walk through it in victory.

When God created the world, He knew we would be here at this time, under these conditions. His plan is unfolding exactly as it was intended. And we are the biggest part of that plan. We are not inconsequential. We are more important to God than anything else. Believe it, friend, because it is true. God made us in His own image. We are like Him. He loves us with an unfailing love. And if we allow Him to control our lives, that unfailing love will keep us from failing. We can count on God. He is perfectly faithful; and He loves us. He loves you, friend. Oh, wrap yourself in His love. It is a place of safety, of protection, of healing, and of nurturing.

God thirsts for you. Look deep into your spirit, where God resides, and be still. In that stillness, allow Him to minister to you. Be patient. He will.

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