

*O LORD. We join together in asking that truth would be free
to make her sorties upon us all, which way You please.
Guide our minds for your designs. We ask that,
nothing smothers truth's golden beams. (Spurgeon)*

👉 According to my Bible software, the word *thirst, thirsty or thirsted* appears over 55 times, sometimes as a *physical instinct*, and sometimes as *something spiritual*. Thirst is so intertwined into the human fabric, that no one can escape it. The slave and the free, the wealthy and the poor, the sick and the well; it knows no national or ethnic boundaries; it rules all living things. It drives a herd of elephants across hundreds of miles in bitter quest for water. Thirst causes the wildebeest to risk death in the jaws of a crocodile. It is an unstoppable engine, a force, **an instinct, Divinely created within** all living things in order to preserve life. Thirst is so vital that we pipe water into our homes and restaurants. It's what the hiker and the astronaut pre-plan for.

👉 It is noteworthy that Christ, in speaking about *spiritual thirst*, by making use of the word that is used for the physical kind, draws the listener to take a new look at *physical thirst*. Because of this, perhaps by asking ourselves the following question we will be sensitized to what I perceive is the Biblical understanding of what our Lord and Isaiah preach. That question is, *What can I learn from physical thirst that will properly set my sail to understand what is said about spiritual thirst?*

! Just as *natural thirsting*, *spiritual thirsting* is Divinely designed to live side by side with the natural in each believer.

👉 Let's begin first with our Lord's street sermon in John.
John/ヨハネ 7.37: On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me¹ and drink²."

- Q Assuming that we are all in agreement that Christ's red letters are speaking of *spiritual thirst*, what is Christ declaring here?
- Q In order to answer the above question, let's first take a look at *natural thirsting* by asking and answering a second question. What simple yet often unconsidered characteristic about this *kind of thirsting* strikingly stands out?
- A1 As we learned above, *thirst* is a **created instinct** for the continuance of all life. It is something natural. None can by their

will cause hunger or thirsting. The little boy or girl does not say, "I've just decided to get thirsty. May I have a drink?" If it were left to those elephants they would probably choose to reject the agony of thirst and what it takes them through.

A2 Just as the God Who created man to *naturally* sense hunger and thirsting, that same God must create hungering and thirsting within the heart of a sinner. In my perception, it is in THIS sense that we must understand this and the following verses. Based on what we know about the physical kind of thirsting, wasn't Christ declaring, *If anyone finds himself in a state of spiritual thirst, let him come to me and drink?* The Bible does not teach that spiritual hungering or thirsting can be caused by the human. In fact, in my perception, it teaches quite the opposite. It's what I will call a **gracious instinct**.

👉 While the Old Testament gives reports of the Israelites thirsting along the way, Christ and Isaiah introduce an entirely new and different perspective when they interject, *Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness*. Thirsting is never something comfortable. Yet Christ calls it *blessed*. The hungry baby cries to be fed because his tummy hurts.

👉 Now let's see what we can learn further from Isaiah.
Isa/イザヤ 55.1: "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Q According to Isaiah what qualification must one have, who would approach Christ?

A *Come, everyone who thirsts*.

👉 Does this verse insinuate that it is up to us to conjure up thirst? If it is not possible in the physical world, how can it be possible in the spiritual? **(Harmony ... or ... out of tune?)**

👉 Doesn't it rather point to a **gracious state** of thirst?

👉 Isaiah says the same thing as our Lord. *If anyone finds himself in a state of spiritual thirst, let him come to me and drink*.

! Dear soul, I cannot know in what condition you've come this morning. But I do know two things about you if you're here accompanied by a *spiritual thirst* to drink Christ.

- 1 Your thirst is a **gracious instinct** created within you, dimly mirrored by your *physical thirst*. Both are instincts created by God, one *physical* the other *spiritual*. You have not far to look to see they are both created instincts.
- 2 The invitation to *come to the waters*, is for you.

 In Matthew 16.15 Peter was made aware of similar **gracious state**, when Christ said, *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."*

 Now finally, let's look at the words of Christ in His sermon on the mount.

Matt/マタイ 5.6: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

 Dear saint, what of those sleepless nights upon your tear-stained pillow, when you poured out your heart for such *hungering and thirsting*? Your failures thus far have taught you well that this can only be a **gracious instinct**. Do not let the flame of this holy desire cause you to overlook that a **gracious instinct** has caused such bleedings.

 If you find yourself in such a state, the Bible calls you *blessed*, **NOT for what you were able to perform, but rather what the Holy Spirit has performed within you.** You are blessed if you suffer thirst and hunger pangs.

 Your blessing exists in your **gracious state**. That is, in spite of your inability, God caused you to hunger and thirst. Just as a newborn cannot cause thirst within its little frame, child of God, you have no instinctive ability to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

 Let's be sure not to confuse ability with responsibility. (explain- *You have the responsibility to hunger and thirst after righteousness. But that does not mean you have the ability to do so.*)

 Our churches have become broken down incubators of human sovereignty, when instead they should be bastions of gracious Divine sovereignty. What do I mean by *bastion*? - *a place or system in which something continues to survive.*

 In conclusion, how then should we react when we find ourselves in a **gracious cognizant state** of hungering and thirsting? I would suggest four.

A1 It is to **rejoice** in the Holy Spirit, and, repeat with Christ, *I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth¹, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will².* (Luke 10.21)

A2 Embodied in the words of Christ, *let him come*, is **approaching** Christ with the perfect mixture of fearlessness and fearfulness.

A3 It is to be **graciously cognizant** of living water effervescing from two sources, and making one pool. (Use analogy of two effervescing sources in a spring in Oita Prefecture)
Spring 1: *to me* (John 7.37 above)= It is to be **graciously cognizant** that Only Christ **HAS** the water.
Spring 2: *and drink* (John 7.37 above)= It is to be **graciously cognizant** that Only Christ **IS** the water.

A4 It is to quench your **spiritual instinct** by **graciously** drinking of Him in faith.

 The reality to which each of us can attest is this. Behind the skirt of gracious repose lurks and enemy so tenacious and unrelenting as to draw us once again away from the **Divine Spring** with enticing words to "rejoin Egypt." Lord willing, this evening, we'll expose the enemy of **Mortal Nostalgia.**