

Soul Reset: Yet Praise



I know it seems far away or a distant memory, but we all know what it's

like to have been outside working on a hot day and just need a glass of water. Or maybe more recently, we know what it's like to be out scooping snow and need a glass of water; thirst is a universal feeling without regard of season. And while we may not always be able to find that big, cold glass of ice water, we get willing to compromise awfully fast when the thirst gets bad enough. I've been watching reruns of Survivor lately, and in one season a tribe was so desperate for water that they were making cups out of the palm branches and sucking rainwater and dirt to quench their thirst. Or we'll drink water that's been sitting there for a long time, little dusty. But it's still wet. We can get thirsty enough that that's all that matters.

I've never been that thirsty in a physical sense, but I may have been that thirsty in a spiritual sense. I've been disconnected from God and quite frankly feeling a bit like David in the scripture we just read together. It was a combination of circumstances in a previous appointment being incredibly stressful to say the least and hearing from a denominational leader that my faith isn't strong enough and that the things that I was facing were happening because I wasn't praying enough. And so my desire to continue praying went down the tubes. I was thirsty for God's presence. And then I was scorched. And it would take a long time for me to recover.



Today, we're continuing on our journey to a soul reset, a factory reset of

our souls, an intentional time of reflecting on the state of our souls and finding ways to stay close to Jesus. And we find ourselves facing the reality that we sometimes face: sadness, exhaustion, and burn out. The thing is that God doesn't want us to just settle for rain run-off or old, stale water. That's not what a soul reset means. A soul reset is remembering that God invites us to drink deeply of his presence and

experience the reality of God being with us even in those times when we are thirsty or scorched. Us feeling spiritually thirsty is inevitable. No matter what's happening around us, at our core, our souls long for God. We were created with a longing for relationship with the Creator. We long to feel God moving in our lives. We long to experience the joy and peace that comes only from God, from a relationship with Jesus. We long to feel the presence of God, where we know that we are being saturated by the love of God. A soul reset is living into that longing and drinking deeply from God's living water.



In our scripture this morning, David the Psalmist gives us the perfect

model for what it looks like when we are in need of a soul reset. He sounds like the poster child of someone who is burned out and broken down. What we read is that David has reached a place in life where he is spiritually thirsty, and even beyond thirsty to the point where he is parched. He's comparing himself to a deer who is panting for a refreshing drink. He cannot handle what he's going through. He's a mess who is fixated on what's going wrong: people are taunting him, and he is depressed.

David gets to his most desperate place when there are no more tears to cry, and that's when he remembers. He remembers how he used to go with joy into the house of God. He remembers what it feels like to have walked closely with God, dancing for joy at the greatness of God. He remembers how worship drives him back to the goodness of God time and again. He remembers worship, true worship, full of joy and celebration because he has known God's rescue and restoration. David's soul was longing for God, but at the moment his soul is dehydrated.

But he's not content to stay there; he's not content to simply drink the run off or to just settle. In the midst of his pain and abandonment, his memories of how God has

acted in the past and his memory of the pure joy in God's presence spurs him on to drink deeply.



This is what I love about this psalm (and a number of other lament

psalms): no matter what the Psalmist is facing, they always come to a

“Yet Praise” moment. It’s that moment after the psalmist names their complaint and hurt before God, and then it’s like a lightbulb goes off and there’s a shift in the focus.

David talks in the psalms about his tears being his “food day and night”; but he gets to a

“yet praise” point, because he remembers what he knew of God. He recalls God’s

goodness and faithfulness, even in the middle of grief, and he arrives at the place of the

“yet praise.” He even asks himself “Why is my soul so downtrodden? Hope in God and praise him, my help and my God!”

I mentioned this last week as we were talking about laying down our burdens, but the honest truth is that we have burdens to lay down, and sometimes those burdens become so burden-some that it starts to affect our view of the world, and others, and ourselves. And the place where we can lay these burdens down is before God, to take a deep drink of the living water and find ourselves nourished and loved in God’s sight.



So, I said last week that every week for the next few weeks, we’d be

talking about a different spiritual practice; something “nuts-and-bolts”

that you can take away from the message as we seek to learn the unforced rhythms of

grace. Last week was examen, a practice of naming where we saw God during the day as

well as the times we felt disconnected from God. This week, I want to invite you into

prayer. And I know that that might sound silly or obvious or even superfluous. We pray

at the start of worship, we pray in the middle of worship, we pray before the message,

we pray at the end of worship, and we pray at either or both 6:18s during the day. We

pray for our friends and for our church. And that's great, and that's what we're supposed to do.

What I really want to invite you to today is a level of vulnerability before God. In the psalm we read today, David has a concern that is only his; he's going through a season of darkness that is only his. He carries a pain that is only his. And rather holding it back, he brings all of it to God. He lays it all at the feet of the throne of grace. He feels every ounce of the hurt and pain he has been feeling, but he feels it before God. And yet, he comes and finds a place of praise, too. And he expresses that, too.

In the midst of the burdens you face, know that there is no limit to what you can express to God. Know that God's past actions give us insight into how God's going to act again. Beloved, hope in God and praise him, our help and our God!"