

“CALL TO THE THIRSTY”

(Isaiah 55:1-9)

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**[NEED PROP: Large Pitcher of Lemonade w/Ice Cubes  
AND Large Empty Glass to be filled later]**

[East Cobb U.M.C.; 7-19-09]

–I–

1. [Traditional Service ONLY:] Read NRSV Text: Isaiah 55:1-9 and Pray.

2. I want us all to take just a moment to picture ourselves *outside* on a hot, sunny day in the middle of summer.

A–It's one of those typical Georgia “dog-days” of summer in which the temperature is near 100° and the humidity is up about as high as it can go.

B–You've been working hard outside for at least 3-4 hours solid *without a break*.

1--Maybe you're cutting grass, or working in the garden, or digging holes for planting

2--You're hot, you're tired, you're sweaty.

C–Finally, your body says “*No More! I've got to have a break!!!*” and so you stop and sit down on a bench near your back door.

1–That's when the heat *really* hits you, and you realize how hot your body really *is!*

2–And as you sit, you sweat even more, and lose even more body fluid.

3. And after you've been taking a break for a few minutes, the back door opens, and out comes someone you love – maybe your spouse, or son or daughter, a sister or brother, or maybe even your Mom or Dad.

A–At that moment, you really don't care *who* it is, because you've got your eyes focused on what they're carrying in their hands, which is something like this...

**[HOLD UP BIG PITCHER OF LEMONADE WITH ICE CUBES IN IT]**

B–It's just *then* that you notice how *thirsty* you are – all that work and heat has made your body crave something very cold and very wet to drink!

1--Your loved one shakes the pitcher just a little, and you hear the jingle of ice cubes.  
**[JINGLE ICE...]**

2--Your mouth starts to water, and your lips start smacking in anticipation.  
**[SMACK LIPS TOGETHER...]**

C--And you thought they'd never ask, but they finally do, “*Do ya' want some?*”

1–“*Yes, Pleeeeease!!!*” So they pour you a big glass [**POUR SOME IN GLASS**], and you gulp it down like it was the last drink on earth [**DRINK IT DOWN**].

2--And when you're satisfied, you say, “*Thanks! That was great!*”

--II--

4. Now, I don't know if you've ever experienced thirst quite like *that* before, but I bet that every one of us here *has* experienced being thirsty at some point in our lives.

A--What our body is *really* thirsty for is water – Oh, we can add lemons and sugar and make it into lemonade, or it can take the form of Powerade, or a soft-drink, or some other form of drink, but all of these are essentially nothing more than variations of good-ole' H<sub>2</sub>O.

B--Now, science tells us that humans can live without FOOD for up to a week or more, but that we can only survive without WATER *a day or two*,...

1--...because physical life is dependant upon water not only to survive, but also to grow and flourish.

2--And *thirst* is our body's way of telling us that we're not getting enough of that life-giving fluid that it so desperately needs.

--III--

5. But have you ever thought about the fact that just as our *PHYSICAL LIFE* is dependant upon *physical* water, so our *SPIRITUAL LIVES* are dependant upon Jesus, who the Bible calls the “*living water*”?

A--In John 4:13-14, we find Jesus talking with a woman at a well, telling her that...

(MSG) “*Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. [But] anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst – not ever.... [It] will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life.*”

(NRSV) “*Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. ...[It] will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.*”

B--In other words, Jesus is saying that just as *PHYSICAL THIRST* is the *body's* way of telling us that we're not getting enough of the water that IT needs,...

C--...so *SPIRITUAL THIRST* is the *soul's* way of telling us that IT'S not getting enough of the “*living water*” of Jesus himself that IT needs.

6. Now, whether or not we recognized it as such at the time, most of us have experienced this “spiritual thirst” at one time in our lives or another:

A–It can take the form of a feeling that something is missing in life – that we're somehow incomplete in some way, even in our faith or spirituality.

B–It can feel like a general lack of purpose or meaning or identity: “*Why am I here? What difference can I make?*” “*Would the world be better off without me?*”

C–It can feel like a sense of frustration about our life’s direction, or even the way things are going within life.

D–And these are all indicators/symptoms of “spiritual thirst” of the soul.

7. But whatever form this “thirst” takes, today’s scripture from Isaiah 55 gives us the solution to this feeling. Listen to the words of Verses 1, 6 & 7...

A–(MSG) “*Hey there! All who are thirsty, come to the water!... seek God while he’s here to be found... come back to God, who is merciful. Come back to our God, who is lavish with forgiveness.*”

(NRSV)... “*Ho, everyone who thirsts; Come to the waters!... seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near... return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on [you], [and grant you] abundant pardon.*”

B–You see, today’s scripture is an invitation (a call from God) to come back home to Him.

1–It’s a call in which God says, “*If you're thirsty for meaning and purpose in your life,... then come to me!*”

2–“*If you’re thirsty for more out of your faith or spiritual life,... then come to me!*”

3–“*If you're tired and weary of the world and the way life is treating you, then come to me!*”

4–“*Whatever your soul is thirsty for, if you’ll come to me, I’ll give you living water to drink and be satisfied!*”

C–300 years after Jesus said these words, the early church leader Augustine wrote, “*We are made for you, O God, and our souls are restless until they rest in you.*”

8. And yet, how often do you and I go through the problems, trials, and challenges of life, thirsting for only what God can provide, but never reaching out and *accepting* the “living water” that He constantly offers?

A–[STORY OF SAILORS ON AMAZON RIVER]

The story is told that in the heyday of wind-powered sailing 2-300 years ago, many ships would often get caught in the mouth of the great Amazon River in South America. The Amazon is so large and so powerful that the fresh water in its currents is pushed out into the Atlantic Ocean for many miles.

But these ancient ships would get caught in the cross-winds of the area and not be able to break free. Eventually, their crews would die of thirst, not ever knowing that all the time, all they had to do was lower their buckets to drink the fresh water of the Amazon that had pushed out into the ocean.

B–You know, far too often you and I are just like those sailors... dead or dying of spiritual thirst either because we *don't know about* or don't *take time* to “drop our buckets” and receive God's “living water.”

C–Well, God's Word today tells us that he has “living water” that he offers to us to drink from to satisfy ALL the “thirsts” of our lives

1–Verse 1 even says it's offered “*without price*” (i.e., it's *free*=a *gift*) --See Rev. 22:17

2–And all we have to do is “let our buckets down” and receive it!

–IV–

9. Friends, what are the things that YOU are thirsty for today? Meaning? Purpose? Acceptance? Love? Direction?

A--[**FILL EMPTY GLASS WITH WATER FROM PITCHER AND OFFER IT WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS, SAYING...**]

B–Whatever they are, God is saying to us today... “*Everyone who thirsts; Come to the waters [and receive life from me!]*”

10. [PRAYER, then invite congregants to receive a tangible reminder of Jesus' “living water” by receiving a cup of “Lemonade On The Lawn” outside in breezeway after service today]