

A Spirituality Streaked With Thirstings!

I can go a full day without drinking water. Yes, I am thirsty, but am in too much haste to stop and drink. Off course I feel my lips dry, and my throat longs for the running water through them, but I only allow myself a quick coffee or a canned drink which I can grab when I am passing by some where. But I need water! I long for water! Is there time to walk to the fridge and fill a glass and sit and sip? I am thirsty, how about you?

Spirituality and living can never be told apart, they are one. Woven into each other, spirituality gives expression to a person's life of faith. It is our thirst for an authentic, fulfilled life which calls for a weaving of our Christian values and beliefs into the fabric of our lives, so that they fire our everyday lives.

IN BONDAGE TO CHRONOS

This year I desired to live differently. I did not want to be caught up running around, catching one flight to another. I did not want to be pressed down under a mountain of deadlines, with my heart beating so fast in panic. I started well by saying "no" to many things. And I took it slow and steady. Everyday began with quiet thoughts with God, and drinking in His Word. Then, unexpected things crept in : new work, new phone calls, new invitations to do this and that. Travels to three states in two weeks. And, unexpected bad news. A friend stricken with leukemia in a neighboring country. Off balance!

Yes, I was thrown off and found myself running from one thing to another. Time was ticking away. The world continued to dictate its itinerary. Twenty four hours?! It didn't seem enough. Whoever thought that twenty four hours a day was enough? I did not even have time to smell the flowers, breathe, let alone sleep. "Chronos" ~ clock time had become my bondage, my master and had left me feeling a failure. Failure to perform, failure to finish my work, failure to God (or so I felt).

DROWNING IN THE PILE

You can be no different from me too, eh? Piling work, scary deadlines, a hundred and one things to do, see and experience. Rushing pulses and rising heartbeats as the semester heats up. Service in the Christian Fellowship and church calls out. Relationships needing attention and broken messes in our lives. And right in the middle of all this, the same pulling, a crying thirst. The thirst to be still and be with God.

I see you, I see me, and I see plenty of Christians around off balance, drowning in their pile. We are losing it, and we are giving up on never coming clean with God, in peace, in quietness, without our messy lives dragging us down. But don't you see? We are nearer now to real spirituality than we have ever been before. The longing, the thirst within our heart is our heart calling out to God for something more, or maybe even vice versa, God calling out to us.

THIRSTING

The psalmist in Psalm 42 says, "Deep calls to deep." Something really too deep for words. **The authentic self calling to God in our depths.** Have you been listening to your thirsts? I mean, "paying attention" to them? Often when we feel the thirst, we quickly think of drinking in another activity, another spiritual ritual. They are alright in themselves, but they do not miraculously quench our deep thirst. The outer things are just one more thing to add to our "to do" list.

Really listening to our thirst, we can begin to hear our real questions, "Lord, why am I here?"; "Lord, am I really going to make it?"; "Do you love me, Lord?"; "Lord, please help me see ahead" and many more thirsts like these. And **these are built in thirsts that call us back to God, our source, our root of life.** The longings are beepers in our life that sound the alarm that we are going off course, and need to pay attention to the real things in life. And the real things, are not more activities or "doings", they are our calling to BE before our God. A call to simply pause within our hearts (even while doing our everyday things), to know who we are in Christ, how He calls us the "beloved", and to live out a life poured out for Christ.

'Selah' an isolated word found in certain psalms (e.g. Ps 3, 4, 62 etc) and Hab 3 has uncertain meaning. Most likely though, it is a liturgical notation that calls for a brief musical interlude or for a brief liturgical response by congregation. Therefore 'selah' may mean "stop and listen".

'Selah' is chosen as the title of this newsletter based on this understanding. Here we would like to call for a time of pause and consider on what is said here regarding our spirituality, our life as Christian.

Source: NIV Study Bible: Psalms: Authorship & Title. Zondervan. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: Selah.

THE LONG GAZE

Spirituality in the words of Joyce Hugget, is **“paying loving attention to God.”** In other words, paying attention to what He is already doing in us. The thirsts, the longings are calls from Him to give Him the long gaze. People in a deep relationship have their lives running all around them. They do not exactly put a stop to their activities, neither do they add more things to do when they are together. They learn to “pay attention” to one another ~ the messages sent, the unspoken wish, the desires within.

It is **learning to be “present” to the moment** ~ where our body and heart are fully there, face to face as it were. Being present means ‘here and now’ ~receiving from our experiences, the wonderful gift each brings. Present also means ‘gift’. Each experience, whether a loss or gain, pain or joy, holds within its clutches a gift for us to savor. That is the secret of the long gaze, paying attention to what God is telling you through your thirsts even in the midst of your running around.

SELAH!

Selah is like a time out to pause, to respond ~ **a fresh start, a refocusing, a re-presenting of ourselves.** In the midst of our hurried days, the answer to building spirituality is not more religious activities but time out. Taking the breather to become present to our thirsts and our experiences. To allow God to open our eyes to the gift in each experience. Knowing that being Christian is about allowing our Christianity to be woven into the fabric of our everyday life.



by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage.”

St Francis Assisi (1182-1226) born in Assisi, Italy is probably the most popular of saints. Born to Pietro di Bernardone, a wealthy Italian cloth-merchant, Francis renounced all for a life of poverty. His ultimate significance is surely that he, perhaps more than most saints, reflected Christ more extensively. His aim was **to simply live the gospel as closely as possible** to the life of Christ. Francis lived as a beggar spending much time in lonely places, asking God for enlightenment. He took to nursing lepers, the most repulsive victims in the lazar houses (lepers colony) near Assisi and he restored several ruined churches. How would such a man, who lived such a life do so, **without a deep hunger for God and a knowing how to be with God!**

“I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. A cute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long, in vain.”



A. W. Tozer (1897-1963), born in La Jose (now [Newburg](#)), was converted as a teenager. While on his way home from work at a tire company, he overheard a street preacher say: “If you don’t know how to be saved... just call on God” and He did. Although never received any formal theological education, Tozer authored more than 40 books. And what he wrote is very often quoted by speakers. His books impress on the reader the possibility and necessity for a deeper relationship with God. In his book, *The Pursuit of God* he says, **“We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit”.** A. W. Tozer died on Monday, May 12, 1963, almost a week after preaching his last sermon. The pursuit was over, the destination reached. A simple epitaph marks his grave in Akron, Ohio: A. W. Tozer — A Man of God.

How about you? I think I am ready for a time out ~ to pause internally and to pay attention to what God has been already speaking and doing in my life!

Questions For “Paying Attention” :

1. In this last 2 months, what has been mounting in my life (name the different things, feelings, encounters, etc.)?
2. Through each of these, what are the thirsts or longings that I can hear?
3. What is God already doing or calling me to do?
4. In living my life, how can I re-focus and re-present myself to Him? What inner decisions or changes do I need to allow to birth in my life?

Books to read:

1. Practising The Presence Of God - Brother Lawrence
2. Life Of The Beloved - Henri Nouwen
3. Here And Now - Henri Nouwen
4. Formed By The Desert - Joyce Hugget