



THIRSTY

BRIAN HANNIGAN

During a Sunday service an elder spoke about thirst. He said that when we first feel thirst we are likely already a bit dehydrated. He expounded to us about natural and spiritual thirst. As water quenches our thirsting body, so the Living Water, Jesus Christ, is the only One who can quench our thirsting spirit.

I wonder if spiritual thirst and natural thirst are similar in every way. Natural thirst occurs without conscious effort on our part. If we fail to drink water we will end up thirsting, and the thirst intensifies until we drink.

Spiritual thirst seems different. There are times when I know that I am spiritually dry, but no craving for that Water of Life automatically ensues. In fact, the longer I ignore my need for Christ, the more the awareness of thirst diminishes. In yet another contrast, the more I drink of that One who is the Living Water, the more I want to drink and the more I can.

Growing up in my hometown, I remember a man named Frank who was like a living legend. An older man, he was kind to children, told amazing stories and did remarkable things. He would show up at our farmhouse and buy two quarts of milk. He would tip up one quart

and drink the entire bottle, and take the other bottle home with him. One day Frank was asked if he could drink an entire gallon of water at one time. He went away for a time to consider this challenge and later reported that he was certain that he could. He began to work on that gallon jug of water but just could not drink it all. He commented, "I don't understand! An hour ago I was sure I could drink a gallon of water."

Understandably there is a limit to how much water we can drink at one time, but spiritually there seems to be no such limit.

The Scriptures give a serious admonition; God speaks through the prophet that we can be kept very busy trying to satisfy our true spiritual needs with the wrong commodities and activities.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isaiah 55:1-2, KJV).

As followers of Jesus we must continually realign ourselves with

what is important to God. Our society squeezes us into emphasizing **income** while neglecting **outcome**. We are inclined, like the hamster spinning on the wheel, to keep very busy doing what we've been doing, and not lend ourselves to intelligent spiritual reflection. Jesus commands us to seek His kingdom before all other things. Are we?

This challenge requires prayer, reflection, devotion, repentance, realignment, study of the Word and change. These will reactivate our thirst for God.

What Jesus offers will not reduce our income, but will guarantee the outcome He desires and the outcome we need. If we hunger and thirst for what is righteous, He will completely satisfy.

"Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks this water will

be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I will give him will never be thirsty again. For my gift will become a spring in the man himself, welling up into eternal life'" (John 4:14, Phillips).

When we made Jesus our Saviour He put the source of Living Water right inside us. He is that source. From now on there should never be a reason to thirst again. He, the source, is always there inside.

However, if we have been neglecting to drink of the indwelling Water, let us ask Him to restore our thirst. Set aside daily time with Jesus, drinking of Him and letting Him flow in us again.

'Fill my cup, Lord; I lift it up Lord, Come and quench this thirsting of my soul! Bread of heaven, feed me 'til I want (lack) no more; Fill my cup, Fill it up and make me whole.' †



First of all, we need to know why meekness is so important. ***"Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth"*** (Matthew 5:5). Meekness is a fruit of the spirit. ***"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"*** (Galatians 5:22-23). This got me thinking, what does meekness really mean? Meekness **does not mean weakness!** As one of the brethren has said it is a misconception that meekness infers weakness. Jesus in response to defending himself in Matthew 26:53 said, *"Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than 12 legions of angels"* (Matthew 26:53). Instead, He submitted Himself to be taken, despite his power.

One of the dictionary meanings of '**Meek**' says this: (Greek) *"A warhorse prepared and bridled for battle (not weakness)"* A wild horse can be very powerful, but if trained, at the slightest touch of your leg, hand or bridle to move in a certain way, that horse can be very useful. **Meekness is strength in control.** We can be very useful if we allow ourselves to be trained by the Holy Spirit to the slightest movement of the Spirit.

It actually takes courage and strength to be meek. I know of three people, in different circumstances, who spoke up to ask a question in a large meeting where everyone was afraid to speak up and express a different view. One must always be led of the Spirit to do that. One was a father, one was a wife, and one was a Christian Iraqi general who gave opposing counsel to Saddam Hussein who killed anyone who disagreed with him. Yet, this general was respected and lived. *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds"* (2 Corinthians 10:4). *"...as for me, I am in your hand..."* (Jeremiah 26:1-14).

Other dictionary meanings of MEEK are:

- Enduring injury with patience and without resentment. *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots"* (Luke 23:34).
- Having or showing a quiet and gentle nature: not wanting to fight or argue with other people. *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy"* (James 3:17).

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29). The "yoke" that Jesus talks about, and as we have been taught, means the ministry that God has given to each one of us. We must be faithful in that. It will often mean making sacrifices - whether they are great or small, many or few. Further, when Jesus says, *"learn of me,"* He means we need to spend much time getting to know Him. That is, commune with Him throughout the day, letting Him control everything we think, say, and do. We need to continually ask the Spirit of God to actually help us put what we have learned into practice. To *"learn"* includes considering seriously what other truly spirit-filled people say and do when they share with us. We can always learn from other people if we are humble and meek enough. Sometimes, we may learn what not to do! We need to have the attitude of children who truly want *"to learn."* Jesus teaches us *"... Except ye be converted as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 18:3-4). Children are teachable, simple, and humble. *"... whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein"* (Mark 10:15). This teaches us

that children are accepting of God's truths. True wisdom comes from God's Word as we let the Spirit reveal it to us!

As I was seeking God about what made certain people in the Bible referred to as meek, His Holy Spirit seemed to show me that it was because they were really seeking God and His ways and then putting them into practice. Seek meekness. Seek God. Zephaniah 2:3 says, *"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment: seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."* There are three very important interacting teaching resources we must seek in order to learn meekness. **They are the word of God, the Spirit of God and the practice of what we have been taught in our daily lives.** The word of God has three parts - the Bible (the written Word), Jesus (the living Word), and creation (the created Word).

In order to understand and model meekness, one needs to think of examples of people in the Bible who exhibited meekness. The King James Version will be used other than where specified differently.

1. **Jesus:** He was a perfect example of non-retaliation and non-resistance: *"And he that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also..."* (Luke 6:29-31)
2. A. Jesus shows by example: *"And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?"* (John 18:22). Jesus did not retaliate or resist.
3. B. Jesus forgives: *"Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..."* (Luke 23:34). It takes a very meek person to forgive and say such gracious words when Jesus, the perfect person without committing any sin, was treated so cruelly by the death on the cross!
4. C. Jesus shows non-retaliation: *"...Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."* (Matthew 26:52).
5. D. Matthew 5:38-42: In verse 40, Jesus teaches us if someone sues us at the law to take away our coat, we are to give him our cloak as well. Jesus teaches us in verse 41 that if someone asks us to go a mile, we are to go the extra mile. Give more than people ask. In verse 42, Jesus teaches us that if someone wants to borrow something, give it to him.
6. **Moses:** Read Numbers 12:1-16 for context. Verse 3: *"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."* What made Moses so meek? I believe it was because he would seek God, and His ways, and put them into practice. This can help all of us and can help solve any of our problems. **We emphatically need to read and understand what the Bible is telling us, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, get counsel from the order we have been taught - parents, elders and deacons, and the travelling ministries (5 fold ministry).**

7. **David:** *"And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him"* (2 Samuel 16:11). In this instance David demonstrated meekness. He returned good for evil.
8. **Jeremiah:** *"As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you"* (Jeremiah 26:14). What made Jeremiah meek? Although he was threatened with his life, he said no matter what they did to him, he was going to tell them the truth of what the Lord had told him to speak. This is an example of strength in control.
9. **Stephen:** *"And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge..."* (Acts 7:60). What made Stephen meek? He **forgave with such gracious words to the Judge of the whole earth and the heavens** despite being stoned to death.
10. **Paul:** *"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."* (2 Timothy 4:16). What made Paul meek? He was ready to suffer for Jesus' sake, and he was ready to speak for what was right even if he was the only one. Others may have had the same feelings or questions but were afraid to ask. Paul was patient.

Meekness is essential in teaching. *"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth"* (2 Timothy 2:25). *"And the Lord's servant must not be a man of strife: he must be kind to all, ready and able to teach: he must have patience and the ability gently to correct those that oppose his message. He must also bear in mind the possibility that God will give them a different outlook, and that they may come to know the truth"* (2 Timothy 2:24-25, Phillips). Speaking and acting in meekness can help people change their mind.

Meekness is essential in hearing. *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls"* (James 1:21).

Meekness is related to gentleness. *"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men"* (Titus 3:2). The Phillips translation says, *"They are not to speak evil of any man, they must not be argumentative but gentle, showing themselves agreeable to everybody."* In other words, we should try hard to get along with people.

Meekness is related to being humble. *"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls"* (Matthew 11:29).

Meekness is precious in God's sight and is related to quietness. *"But let it be the hidden manna of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"* (1 Peter 3:4). Although this

was spoken to women, it is good for all of us. Read 1 Peter 3: 1-8 to get the full context.

Meekness must be spirit led. *"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Thus you will prove in practice that the will of God is good, acceptable to him and perfect"* (Romans 12:2, Phillips). *"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"* (John 15:2,7). *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering"* (Colossians 3:12).

The balance to understand meekness is to be wise and sensitive to the Spirit so as to know what to do. Meekness does not mean weakness, to be stepped on like a doormat. The balance is James 3:13, which says, *"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."* The Scriptures are always balanced! My prayer for us all is that we will have a great love of the Scriptures, a great love of the Spirit, and be able to put the Word of God into practice in our lives more and more, little by little.

As the song title 'How Many Kings?' goes:
 'How many kings step down from their thrones?
 How many lords have abandoned their homes?
 How many fathers gave up their sons for me?
 Only one!' ✝

A TRIBUTE TO BRO. EWALD WANAGAS

We all feel a sense of sadness and loss in the passing of Bro. Wanagas on January 16, 2017 at Edmonton, Alberta. He was a friend, colleague and brother in Christ; a person we could look to in times of need for wise counsel. He not only ministered the Word of God throughout the churches, but he practiced what he taught. His ministry in teaching and in song touched countless lives far beyond the borders of his home in Canada.

As a young man, Bro. Wanagas attended the Bible School in North Battleford at the time of the 1948 revival. Throughout his life he walked faithfully in the light of the spiritual awakening that began at that time, and ministered these truths, which established and strengthened the church.

After serving as an elder in both the local church in North Battleford and later in the local church in Edmonton, Alberta, he served the universal church for many years as an apostolic ministry. The field of ministry was extensive as he traveled to many of the churches in North America and overseas. God had called him to serve and to bring the gospel of the kingdom of God to many people. He did this with faithfulness, humility and great love for God's people wherever he went. Indeed he fulfilled the great commission of Christ in Mark 16: 15, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."*

His dear wife, Zelma, predeceased him in 2012 after 62 years of marriage. The love and devotion evident in their marriage was an example to us all. The loving care he provided in the latter years of her life revealed the depth of his affection for her and is reminiscent of what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13: 7, *"Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen"* (Phillips).

Bro. Wanagas has joined that great cloud of witness spoken of in Hebrews chapter 12, knowing that he has fought the good fight, has finished the race, and has kept the faith (2 Timothy 4: 7).

We will recall his kind and encouraging words and now mourn his passing, but rejoice that he has passed from death unto life eternal, a realm where death no longer has dominion.

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Headquarters:
 802 Airport Road
 North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Mailing Address:
 P.O. Box 934
 North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Telephone:
 (306) 445-2733

Email:
info@globalmissionsinc.org

Online:
www.globalmissionsinc.org

Traveling Ministry Contact List:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/about

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The Sharon Star is a monthly publication and mailed as a free-will offering plan. The articles within are intended for inspiration and information to those who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by:
 Global Missions Inc. in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The Sharon Star is found online at:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/sharon-star

Publications Mail Agreement 40012206

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