

Thirsty for God

Rich Nathan

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Worship: Worship as a Lifestyle

Psalm 42:1-2

Have you ever been thirsty? Maybe you jog and you've just finished a long run on a hot summer's day. The sweat is pouring off of you, or maybe you've been at the gym and just had a really great workout, or you have been working out in the garden spreading a truckload of mulch, or preparing flower beds.

Or for you sedentary types who can't identify with going out for a run or working in the garden, you are sitting, watching TV, and you've just finished eating the party-size bag of Lay's Potato Chips, which they say has 28 servings and you've eaten all 28 servings.

Have you ever been really thirsty? Well, no matter how thirsty you've ever been in your life, I guarantee you've not been as thirsty as Amir Shannon, who decided with his friend Hamada to follow a road rally in the desert. Amir and Hamada were staying at a hotel in North Africa and there was a road rally going through the town. They decided they would follow the road rally out into the desert, but they didn't take any water or any food. They had just finished a big breakfast and drove out a ways. When they turned around to drive back, their car overheated and stopped dead. They thought they would be taking a nice short ride and then they were stuck instead in the desert.

Fortunately, the evening sun was setting. Hamada slept in the backseat of the car and Amir slept on the hood. The beginning of the second day, they tried to lick condensation off of the car. They were literally licking the car. They searched for dew covered plants with no success. They dug under plants in the hope of finding a source of moisture. Failing all of these attempts, they resorted to chewing the plants to extract any liquid they might contain.

Amir said though he had been in the desert many times, he never imagined that the sun at 8:00 a.m. could be so hot. As it rose, it became even hotter and they began playing a game of hide and seek moving around the car to sit in the car's shadow. There was no escape from the intensity of the heat. At midday, they tried to climb under the car to escape the heat, but it was blazing hot even under the car and they were driven almost mad with thirst.

They searched the horizon for any car or any plane. At night they dug a hole in the ground and lined it with a plastic bag, hoping that it would collect some condensation. But on the third morning, all they had was a dry and dusty plastic bag. Their mouths were too dry even for conversation. Amir writes, "Close to sunset on the third day, as I was sitting in the car listlessly contemplating our

next strategy, my eye caught the remains of a Mars Bar between the car seats. Being a chocoholic, I reached for it and called Hamada and we shared the morsel. Automatically, thoughtlessly, I threw the small chocolate piece in my mouth. The chocolate stuck hopelessly on the walls of my throat acting more like a razor than nourishment."

He finally gagged the chocolate up, relieve by the thought that at least he was not going to die an ignominious death by chocolate.

That night on the horizon, he saw some car lights. He began trying to run after the car, but realized that he was seeing the taillights and that they were driving away.

On the fourth morning, Amir decided that he would leave the car and set out on the desert road looking for someone to help. He wrote out a little will and pinned it to his chest. The will read, "No funeral. No mourning days. No black mourning clothes. If you should choose, simply recite verses from the Koran."

Much later in the day, during their fourth day without water, a jeep slowly approached him on the desert road. Amir, although in a state of sheer exhaustion, jumped up and ran towards the jeep. Four military men emerged from the jeep. He hugged the first one. The other men mumbled that he needed to be restrained as he ran towards their water. Otherwise, he might have gotten sick and died from over indulgence.

Amir lay down on the ground and they first massaged his face with water and rubbed liniment on his lips. They were gradually preparing his body to accept water. They put him in the car and drove to Hamada. And then very slowly, the soldiers made sugar-laden tea, very hot, to keep them from gulping it down. Slowly they began to hydrate themselves. After a meal of vegetables, a little rest, and some more water, they finally drove back to town.

There is no more fundamental drive than the drive that extreme thirst produces. Some of you have fasted for 40 days following the pattern of Jesus and many, many Christians in history. But 3-4 days is the limit of human endurance without water. The person who is severely dehydrated will start having a rapid weak pulse, blue lips, confusion, and lethargy.

When the Bible describes an extreme longing for God and for God's presence, the Bible uses the image of thirst, the most fundamental of human drives and needs. In the text that we are going to be looking at today, we read in Psalm 42:

As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Now as background to Psalm 42, it is likely that the psalmist was in exile from the Promised Land. It could have been written during the Babylonian captivity, where the psalmist is longing for the days when he used to be able to worship in the Temple. Some people feel that verse 6 gives us our geography for the psalmist where it says, "My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar." We don't exactly know where Mount Mizar is, but we know where the mountains of Hermon are. We are talking about way up north: those mountains that are the source of the Jordan River, where there are some waterfalls as the winter snows melt.

This is a man who, whether in exile or not, finds himself far away from the central place of worship.

Now again, by way of background, I just want to point out that this psalm has been extremely helpful for those who are experiencing what Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, the English preacher, used to call "spiritual depression." Two times in Psalm 42 and once in Psalm 43, which, by the way, is intimately linked to Psalm 42, three times overall we read the refrain, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God." We read that in verse 5, we read it in verse 11, and then in Psalm 43:5 we read the same refrain, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God..."

Dr. Lloyd-Jones makes the wonderful point that people who struggle with depression must learn how to talk to themselves rather than have themselves talk to them. That sounds a little bit paradoxical, perhaps like one of those Eastern Religion conundrums – "what do you mean talk to myself, rather than have myself talk to me?" But Lloyd-Jones points out that very often, for the person who is depressed, for the person who is feeling low, that person is rather passive in what floats through their mind, and all day long the person listens to their mind generating negative thoughts and condemning accusations. Instead of listening to the tape of your mind beating you down all day like a sledge hammer, Lloyd-Jones suggests that you take the reins of your mind and you start talking to your mind: "Why are you downcast? Why are you so disturbed? Renew your hope in God. Remember who God is. God is faithful. God is in control. God is the one who hears prayer. God can be trusted with this particular problem." Remember what Christ said, "If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him?"

This psalm yields wonderful benefits for anyone of you who is struggling right now with depression. And you may want to pick up Dr. Lloyd-Jones' book called *Spiritual Depression*. It is an excellent exposition of several of the phrases in the Psalms.

Today, as I continue in a series on worship, I want to concentrate primarily on the first two verses: "As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

Psalm 42:1-2 is really the cry of every human heart – every man, woman, teenager, child, Christian or non-Christian - every person on the face of the earth prays Psalm 42:1-2 all the time. For some, the cry is a conscious cry. "I am aware, I have allowed myself to be aware that my deepest need and longing is for the living God and so I vocalize this prayer aloud. My soul is thirsty for the living God. I recognize consciously that that is my need and so I speak it out."

For much of the world, this is an unconscious prayer. Their heart is praying this, but their minds are only dimly aware of the real thirst that is below all the other thirsts. A person may be aware of the fact that they are thirsting for love, thirsting for relationships. They are longing for justice, for an unfair situation to be righted. People are thirsty for real change in their lives. They are thirsty for help and intervention, for resource that goes beyond themselves.

Most people aren't conscious of the fact that they are thirsty for God. But I tell you every person, every one of you, all the time, with virtually every beat of your heart, is praying Psalm 42:1-2. "As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

The great Augustine expressed this longing in the opening words of his famous Confessions back at the end of the Fourth Century when he said to the Lord, "You have made us and drawn us to yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee."

See, everyone on earth has a restless heart. We have been created for God. Or as the great mathematician and philosopher, Pascal, said, "Everyone on earth has a God-shaped vacuum inside, a hole that can only be satisfied by God." So, friend, everywhere you look on earth, you are looking at people who are thirsty for God. And it doesn't matter how much self an individual is filled with – how self-actualized you are; how enamored with yourself you are; how self-fulfilled you are; how often you express yourself and have a need to express yourself. No individual has within them the fountain that will satisfy this thirst, this restlessness, this hunger that was put in us by our Creator.

We can't satisfy ourselves and our heart hunger. Our spiritual emptiness cannot be satisfied by things. People all over the world are panting after things in this world. You see men panting after sex, after drugs. People pant after relationships and money and clothes and cars. But things in this world will never satisfy our thirst. Note the psalmist says in verse 1, "My soul pants for you." And in verse 2, "My soul thirsts." The psalmist recognizes that he is more than

material stuff; therefore, material stuff will never meet the need. He is a person. My soul thirsts. As a personal being, the longing can only be satisfied by another personal being.

What we really crave, friends, is not ever going to be met by more clothes, more food, another piece of furniture, another chachka, or a better body. You are a person and the thirst inside of you can only be met by another person. See, your thirst is for love – to love, to be loved, to be touched by a person.

And the psalmist recognizes that the hole inside himself is so big and wide and deep that it can only be filled by an infinite person. “My soul thirsts for you, O God.” “Yes, I need a person, but not just any person on the earth.” You watch people trying to suck the life out of another individual in one of those really unhealthy, addictive relationships – the kind of relationship that Larry Crabbe describes in marriages as two ticks and no dog.

The wife says, “You aren’t meeting my needs.”
The husband says, “Well, you aren’t meeting my needs.”

”Well, what about my needs?”
“What about my needs?”

The thirst in the soul can only be met by a person, and that person must be an infinite person. He must be a sufficient person. He must be a fountain that never runs dry, a fountain that dispenses the justice that we seek for every wrong and unfairness, every hurt and every evil. We need someone who is infinitely great and infinitely just to give us justice. We need someone who is eternal to meet our thirst for ongoing life, for eternity. We need someone who is infinitely merciful.

Friends, I tell you, whether you are conscious of praying Psalm 42:1-2 or whether you aren’t conscious of it at all, with every beat of your heart, your soul is panting for God. Your soul is crying out, “When can I go and meet with God?”

Now, I want to switch gears here and say that because God is your real need, because you and I have been made by our Creator, who has shaped us with a hole inside that can only be filled by him, because God is our real need, becoming aware of your thirst is a good thing.

Thirst is a good thing. You know, I’ve noticed something fundamental about the way people meet Jesus and the way that the Kingdom of God is extended in this world. Jesus generally doesn’t approach us with thunder and lightning. Most of us are not Moses and most of us don’t meet Jesus in a burning bush experience. Most people do not meet God on top of a mountain that is quaking and shaking and is on fire. Most people in the world don’t get to be Gideon, who in the Old

Testament had an angelic visitation, or even the apostle Paul who was knocked down and blinded by a physical appearance of the resurrected Christ.

Let me tell you how most people meet Christ. Here's the way that the Kingdom of God is expanded in this world generally. Most people meet Christ during times of failure, frustration, emptiness, and thirst. It is an amazing thing, because we human beings generally run from failure. We hate moments of frustration, emptiness, and thirst. We hate the times in our lives where we have blown up everything, where we've made an absolute mess of things, or where someone else has blown up our lives. We do everything in our power to avoid facing failure.

Yet, friend, here is something you can take to the bank. Moments of frustration, failure, and extreme thirst are the main moments that Jesus is going to use to extend the Kingdom of God, his reign and rule in your life. It is during moments of great thirst and unrest and upset that are the moments - the kairos moments, the ripe moments - for the extension of the kingdom in your life or in someone else's life. Friends, I see this over and over again. It's when people come to the place where their soul is crying out, where they become so unhappy with their own lives - nothing is working, maybe they've done something totally stupid, maybe they've had an affair or messed up in school and have to repeat a year, or they get charged with drunk driving, or get pregnant before they're married, or they cause a pregnancy, or you've gone through something that is totally beyond your control - a miscarriage, the death of one of your parents, divorce, rebellion. You go through some kind of pain and failure. Maybe it is a financial setback. You are laid off. You are going through bankruptcy.

In counseling, I've told people, "You know, it's not a bad thing that you've totally failed. I know it doesn't feel this way, but it is actually a good thing that you are desperate, that you are thirsty. Because if you are not desperate, friend, no amount of counseling will ever help you because you are not in enough pain right now to motivate you to change."

I've actually said this to individuals, "You know the particular problem you are going through right now, this failure, this embarrassment, this thing that you've done that blew up your life, this could be the best thing that ever happened to you - this unwanted pregnancy. Believe it, if you use this time in your life when your life is blown apart to discover a genuine relationship with Jesus; if you finally get to the bottom of yourself, you get to the root of your self-will and your self-life, you will discover how real Jesus can be for you."

Jesus is not just someone that other people talk about. When your life is at rock bottom, you can discover that Jesus is real for you, that Jesus really does quench the thirst of your soul. See, this pain that you experience could be the best possible thing that's happened to you, because right now, you are in a place

where you have nothing to lose. Friend, playing church and playing at Christianity is no longer going to help you.

Listen to me, friends, pain is not all bad. Pain is good. Thirst is good. Being empty and out of resources is good. Didn't Jesus say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God?" In other words, blessed are those who are completely out of their own resources, who have run out of answers, who have tried a million ways to make themselves happy and nothing is working. Their gas tanks are completely dry. No more self will; they are at the end of their rope – blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who possess nothing. Blessed are those who are empty.

It's when your heart is broken that Christ can come in. He enters the broken places in your heart and he uses the broken places in other people's hearts to extend the kingdom of God through you. When you encounter someone who is thirsty, who is empty, who is frustrated and in pain, who's had the rug pulled out from under them, those are kingdom moments, friends.

See, dryness, dissatisfaction – these are not bad things. These are the desperate warning lights of our souls telling us that we don't have enough of Christ in our tanks; that our engines are burning up because we don't have enough of Christ.

Let me put it slightly different. The fundamental issue of life is what will move you and me from a place of self dependence and self reliance into a place of Christ dependence and Christ reliance. Faith is all about becoming conscious of your thirst for God and then running to him with your thirst.

You know, there is a reason why Jesus says that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. He didn't say that because there is something wrong with money. Money can be good. Money can be used to promote the kingdom. There's nothing wrong with money. There's nothing wrong with lots of money. Money was used to build this building and in this new year I want to urge you – those of you who do not have the habit and discipline in your life of tithing 10% of your income, to begin to establish that discipline. Money is good. We use money to plant new churches.

The reason Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom is because when you have lots of money, it is difficult to feel thirst. Wealthy people are not often thirsty people. Or rather, they are thirsty people, but they have a thousand ways to attempt to quench their thirst with a thousand diversions and a thousand activities and a thousand projects, and a thousand new purchases and they are not able to slow down long enough to really feel thirsty for God.

See, when you secretly know that when everything breaks down, you have a dozen back up systems, then the door to having to go to God to quench your

thirst is shut. Friends, its when your back up systems just keep failing; its when something in your life is out of control; its in the out of control stuff – failure, frustration, trials, dryness – that you are going to be inclined to cry out to Jesus.

It's when you have all the things that should quench your thirst and you are still dying inside, I've watched this in the lives of the successful. There may not be any external failures, but there is this dryness, this emptiness, this internal feeling of dissatisfaction – is that all there is – that makes a person conscious of the cry of Psalm 42: "As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

And you know, everyone of us has several dramatic points in our lives and have to choose to be thirsty. To choose the desert so that we can find more of God. Most of the illustrations I've been going through have been referring to a desert that is unchosen. You go through a painful divorce. Your spouse leaves. A parent dies. You are laid off. You have another disappointing relationship with yet another man or woman. All those things are unchosen thirsts.

But friends, several times in life, not just once, but at several points in your life God is going to require you to choose the desert, to make a decision in favor of being thirsty for a period of time, in order to recapture your relationship with him. The issue becomes crystal clear in your mind. You either choose the desert, and in the desert rediscover God, or there is no desert, and there is no God either.

You say, "Rich, when will God require me to choose the desert?"

When there has been for a long period of time some significant idol in your life – what in modern therapeutic language, we call an addiction that you have been using and using to quench your thirst. Perhaps the best book I've ever read on the issue of addiction is one titled *Addiction and Grace* by Gerald May. Dr. May actually uses the picture of the desert to describe what an individual has to go through in order to become free of an addiction.

See, an addiction nails your will to something. If you've become attached – you having to be thin, to chocolate, to coffee, drinking, drugs, gambling, or twisting your hair, or pulling your eyelashes out, or biting your nails, or pornography, or seductiveness, or the TV, or work – you become attached. And the process of becoming detached, of prying your will free of what its been nailed to for so long, of having your will become empowered again and free, Gerald May describes that as the desert. Listen to what he says:

Any struggle with addiction is a desert because it involves depravation. But if my motives are primarily utilitarian, this depravation may consist only of the denial of one specific object of attachment. Trying to do without so much food. Trying to give up tobacco. With major addictions, or more

conscious spiritual motivations, the desert can grow to encompass the whole of your life – every habit may be exposed to the searing, purifying sun. Every false prop is vulnerable to the relinquishment. So that in the end, one can be left truly dependent upon the grace of God for sustenance. Most of our deserts lie somewhere between these extremes. And most of the time we do little more than dance around our edges. All the same, deserts enrich our lives immeasurably. Each desert holds seeds of repentance. The possibility of recognizing who we really are. And with the rain of grace, each desert holds the possibility of reclaiming our heart's true desire. Even if we only touch their edges, our deserts teach us about the limits of our personal power and the only place where our dignity is going to be found again – in dependence upon God.

Great stuff, isn't it? Everyone thirsts for God. Thirst is good. Being brought into the desert sovereignly as God drives your life out and you realize you've been trying to quench your thirst in other places, or as an act of your own choice where you say, "I will go into the desert so that I can find freedom and reclaim my relationship with God." Thirst is good.

And here's the third thing – true worship arises out of our thirst for God. I believe Psalm 42:1-2 is the mainspring of Christian worship. It is this intense agony, this desperation, this utter desert dryness that prompts us to cry out to God and to draw near to God. It is a longing for God. Where in C.S. Lewis' words you stop being satisfied in playing in mud puddles and you start believing that a beach with an ocean actually exists for you. It is a longing for God that is the mainspring for Christian worship.

The Vineyard Movement as a whole movement was birthed in the late 1970's from a group of people who were desperate for more of God. John and Carol Wimber, along with a group of young and some middle-aged adults, began getting together and crying out for God. They were all evangelicals; all people who were doctrinally sound; people who knew their bibles forwards and back; but, they felt dried up. They felt in their own spirits Psalm 42:1-2. And if you ever hear Carol Wimber, who is the wife of the founder of the Vineyard, speak she will frequently refer to those early days when a group of people were just desperate for God and decided to just go hard after God.

That's where worship is born. People get tired of playing church. They are tired of having all the right answers and just experiencing dead orthodoxy – there's nothing inside, no spiritual reality.

See, friends, many of you have been taught that the Christian life consists in little more than accepting Christ, getting your ticket stamped. There are lots and lots of people who are supposedly saved, but they don't know anything about being hungry for God and thirsty for God. There are so many Christians in America who are satisfied with so little of God. If you go through the lives of all the great saints

of the past, you will see this one continual characteristic in all of them. Every one of them was discontented with their present experience of God and cried out for more.

You see it all through the Psalms, not just here in Psalm 42. But in Psalm 27: “One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. My heart says of you, “Seek his face.” Your face, Lord, I will seek.”

Or Psalm 63: “O God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I’ve seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.”

Or how about Psalm 94: “How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty? My soul yearns even faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”

You see this heart cry for more of God in the life of Moses. He already had a deep relationship with God. God would meet with him and talk with him. But in Exodus 33 you see this thirst for God played out in the life of Moses where Moses said to God, “More Lord, show me your glory. I’m not going to be satisfied with anything less than all of you.”

This was the heart’s cry of the apostle Paul. Philippians 3: “O that I might know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.”

The Christian life is so much more than accepting Jesus and be satisfied with that. Worship, real worship, springs from a desperation for more of God. And you see in the history of Christian hymns how often we hear this recurring theme of longing for God.

There is a wonderful old hymn that was based on Psalm 42. It is called “As Pants the Hart for Cooling Streams.” It’s HART heart – one of those archaic words for a deer. But the words of the hymn go this way:

As pants the hart for cooling streams
When heated in the chase,
So longs my soul, O God, for thee
And thy refreshing grace.

For thee my God the living God,
My thirsty soul doth pine:
O when shall I behold thy face,
Thou Majesty Divine?

Or how about Bernard of Clairvaux's 12th century hymn, "Jesus Thou Joy of Loving Hearts" that reads:

Jesus thou joy of loving hearts
Thou fount of life, thou light of men
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn and fill to thee again
We taste thee, O thou Living Bread
And long to feast upon thee still
We drink of thee the fountainhead
And thirst our souls from thee to fill.
Our restless spirits yearn for thee
Where our changeful lot is cast
Glad when thy gracious smile we see
Blest when our faith can hold thee fast.

In the Vineyard we have the same kind of songs – songs of yearning, longing, of desperation. One of the songs we often sing is called "Hungry."

Hungry I come to you for I know you satisfy.
I am empty, but I know your love does not run dry.
And so I wait for you. So I wait for you.
I'm falling on my knees, offering all of me.
Jesus, you're all this heart of mine is living for.
Broken I run to you, for your arms are open wide.
I am weary, but I know your touch restores my life.
And so I wait for you. So I wait for you.

The author, John Piper, frequently says that the problem in our lives is not that we want too much out of life. It's that we are satisfied with so little. Regularly we are trying to quench our thirst with stuff that only increases our sense of emptiness. Worship is God's invitation to you and me to drink. To come to the waters and drink.

But you know, to drink you have to come to Jesus. The streams of God are channeled through Jesus. Not through another person. Not through a relationship. Not through stuff. It is through Jesus.

I want to close by reading to you a couple of pages from a children's book by C.S. Lewis. It is part of his famous *Narnia Chronicles*. It's from the fourth book in the *Narnia Chronicles* called *The Silver Chair*. In the *Narnia Chronicles*, C.S. Lewis portrays Jesus as being a lion named Aslan. And the story I am going to pick up talks about a little girl named Jill, who is thirsty. Here's what Lewis writes:

Crying is all right in its way, while it lasts. But you still have to stop sooner or later and then you still have to decide what to do. When Jill stopped, she found that she was dreadfully thirsty. She had been laying face downward and now she sat up. The birds had ceased singing and there was perfect silence except for one small persistent sound, which seemed to come a good distance away. She listened carefully and felt almost sure it was the sound of running water.

Jill got up and looked around very carefully. There was no sign of the lion; but there was so many trees about that it may easily be quite close without her seeing it. For all she knew, there might be several lions. But her thirst was very bad now and she plucked up her courage to go and look for that running water. She went on tiptoes stealing cautiously from tree to tree, stopping to peer around it at every step. She finally came to the site of the water that made her feel ten times thirstier than before. But she didn't rush forward and drink. She stood as still as if she had been turned into stone with her mouth wide open. And she had a very good reason: just on this side of the stream lay the lion.

It lay with its head raised and its two forepaws out in front of it like the lions in Trafalgar Square. She knew at once that it had seen her. Its eyes looked straight into hers for a moment and then turned away as if it knew her quite well and didn't think much of her.

"If I run away, it will be after me" thought Jill. "And if I go on, I shall run straight into its mouth." Anyway, she couldn't have moved, if she had tried and she couldn't take her eyes off the lion. How long this lasted she could not be sure. It seemed like hours and the thirst became so bad she almost felt she would not mind being eaten by the lion, if only she could be sure of getting a mouthful of water first.

"If you're thirsty, you may drink." The voice was not like a man's. It was deeper, wilder and stronger, a sort of heavy golden voice, that did not make her any less frightened than she had been before, but it made her frightened in rather a different way.

"Are you not thirsty?" said the lion

"I'm dying of thirst." said Jill.

"Then drink." said the lion.

"May I, could I, would you mind going away while I do?" said Jill.

The lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. As Jill gazed at its motionless bulk she realized she might as well asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic.

“Will you promise not to do anything to me, if I do come?” said Jill.
“I make no promise.” said the lion.

Jill was so thirsty now that without noticing it, she had come a step nearer.

“Do you eat girls?” she said
“I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms.” said the lion.

He didn’t say this as if he were boasting or as if he were sorry. Nor as if he was angry. He just said it.

“I daren’t come and drink.” said Jill.
“Then you will die of thirst.” said the lion.
“O dear.” said Jill, coming a step nearer. “I suppose I must go and look for another stream then.”
“There is no other stream.” said the lion.

It never occurred to Jill to just believe the lion. No one who had seen his stern face could do that. And her mind suddenly made itself up. It was the worst thing she ever had to do, but she went forward to the stream, knelt down, and began scooping up water in her hand. It was the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted. You didn’t need to drink much of it, for it quenched your thirst at once.

Friends, there is no other stream that will quench your thirst other than the one that runs through the lion of Judah, Jesus. If you’re thirsty today, this very moment, come to him and drink. Let’s pray.

Thirsty for God

Rich Nathan

January 26-27, 2002

Worship: Worship as a Lifestyle

Psalm 42:1-2

I. Everyone Thirsts for God

II. It Is Good To Be Thirsty

A. Unchosen Thirst

B. Chosen Thirst

III. Worship Is Born Out Of Thirst

A. The Testimony Of The Saints (Psalm 27:4; 8, 9; 63:1; 84:1, 2; Exodus 33:18)

B. The Testimony Of The Hymn-writers

C. The Testimony Of Our Lives