

Editorial: We need water

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Maybe it's just me, but it seems people are thirsty. We need water.

Ask people from Lubbock to Amarillo who endured record rainfall earlier this month and they might say, "No more water, please." Plenty of other West Texans gladly would take some more.

But I'm not referring to the chemical compound H_2O . I'm referring to a different kind of water and a different kind of thirst. Yes, I'm referring to something biblical.

People are thirsty for peace, but there is precious little peace.

We are thirsty for security, but fear propagates like zebra mussels in a Texas lake.

We thirst for economic relief, but the experts have managed only to slow inflation, not stop it.

We long for more constructive politics, but combative is the order of the day.

This is less an opinion about the issues we face than an echo of that pervasive cry: "We thirst." It is also a call to wake up to our thirst and to carry more water to thirsty people.

Temporary water

When we aren't thirsty, we can take all day to drink a glass of water. If we've been exercising or working outside in the summer heat, we can down a full glass of water in seconds without taking a breath. I'm referring to this

kind of thirst, a longing in our bones.

I see this kind of thirst just about everywhere I look these days. I see it in local and global news. I see it in our denominational conversations. I see it in the kinds of videos that go viral.

One of those [viral videos](#) is Belgian shot-put and hammer-throw champion Jolien Boumkwo running [100-meter hurdles](#) to save her team from disqualification. She took one for the team—as she put it—and provided a shot of joy in our cut-throat world. We'll take sips of that all day.

Before too long, though, this shot of joy will be buried and forgotten under millions of views of other viral moments. Their momentary relief is heavy on the “momentary,” light on the “relief.”

Biblical water

Felisi Sorgwe, associate professor of theology at Houston Christian University, in his recent book *I Will Be With You: God's Favorite Promise*, recounts the Israelites' thirst in the wilderness. This wilderness was rocky, dusty, arid and barren, and they'd been in the middle of it for days, if not weeks. They were thirsty enough to fight about it.

Moses cried—complained—to God for help, and God said: “I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock [with your staff], and water will come out of it for the people to drink.”

Moses did as he was told (Exodus 17:1-7).

Amid lament over Israel's unfaithfulness, Scripture recounts God providing water from that rock:

*He split the rocks in the wilderness
and gave them water as abundant as the seas;*

*he brought streams out of a rocky crag
and made water flow down like rivers (Psalm 78:15-16).*

While celebrating God's love for Israel, Scripture remembers God's provision of water:

*He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed like a river in the desert (Psalm 105:41).*

Paul reinterprets the literal water from the rock as spiritual water from the Rock:

They all ... drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).

Paul's description of Jesus as the source of wilderness water squares with Jesus' own self-description, as well as Old Testament prophecy.

Jeremiah called God the fountain of living water (Jeremiah 17:13).

Jesus told the Samaritan woman during their conversation at Jacob's well:
"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:13-14).

When we're in a desert wilderness surrounded by miles and miles of sand and rock, we'll settle for a momentary stream. All too often, that's where we are, and that's what we do.

Everlasting water

What causes you to long for God? Maybe a better way to ask that is: What causes you to be aware of your longing for God?

Sometimes, busyness gets in the way of our awareness. Sometimes, fear or anger, bitterness or worry does. Often, satiation with lesser things gets in the way.

But then, I read a book like A.W. Tozer's *Knowledge of the Holy* or listen to beautiful songs of worship such as Fernando Ortega's albums *The Shadow of Your Wings* or *Come Down O Love Divine*, and I am reminded what I most want and need—what I long for most profoundly—is God.

In those moments, I can't help but turn to God to find fulfilment in God's completeness—Father, Son, Spirit; Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. And God meets my longing.

Do I have to continually return to God for this fulfilling water? Yes. But I've not found the bottom of the well yet, though I've quickly found the bottom of so many other promises.

The world needs us to be fully awake to our longing for this everlasting water, for us to know full well its source, and for us to be satisfied by it. Because when we are, we become directional signs pointing other thirsty souls straight to who will quench their deepest thirst.

The world is enduring a summer drought of the soul. The world is thirsty and grabbing for a glass of water, sometimes finding momentary satisfaction, often meeting a mirage.

May we be made awake to what we really long for, may we turn directly to God to be made complete in God's completeness, and may we carry this water to a thirsty world.

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