

5-22-19 Thirsting for God

© T. Hardenbrook

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Christ is Risen. Indeed, He is risen.

Christ is risen. Indeed, He is risen.

Christ is risen. Indeed, He is risen.

What an incredible story we have. If you were paying attention in the reading, from the Book of Acts this morning, one of my favorites. We are reading the Book of Acts at this time, after Posca, to see what the undeniable visible reality was of the early church, responding to Christ's resurrection. And as we will see, how they responded to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as well. Today is the wonderful little quiet beautiful feast of mid-Pentecost, we're right in the middle between Posca and Pentecost. We're in the middle of the Pentecost season. So it's called mid-Pentecost.

And we have this reading from Acts where we see the apostles going around, and quiet simply they are so filled with the Holy Spirit and working such incredible miracles and teaching in ways that are so far beyond their education, as we hear about Christ himself in the gospel reading, that they are thought to be gods. Think about that for a minute. You grow up in the Greco-Roman tradition of the pantheon of gods, you've told all of these stories all of your life about Zeus and Hermes and all these other gods. And they come down once in a while, sometimes they appear to be human beings and they work miracles, or bear semi-deity children all kinds of strange things.

And you're in town one day and it's near the temple where you go to worship, and two men come through the town. And they are speaking a way you've never heard anyone speak before. And they're healing people. And they come up ultimately to a young boy who has been crippled from birth. He was born without being able to walk. And the apostles look at him and they have compassion in him. They see that he is willing to be faithful, the condition that we're all trying to get into, faithfulness. And he heals him.

Christ healed a man who was born without eyes. Now the apostles heal a person who was born crippled, born crippled, never having walked again. I love that the anatomy behind all of that. Because if you've never walked before your bones are not formed correctly, your muscles are not developed correctly. It's not that you're just paralyzed, you don't have the structure or the strength, or the muscular coordination or the neurology to walk. It's an amazing miracle.

And the people who see it happen are so amazed they think the apostles are their gods. They think they're Zeus and Hermes. And they are so excited, if you listen to that last line from the reading of the Acts, the apostles themselves can hardly restrain the people from sacrificing in the temple to them, to them. They're literally jumping in the way of the crowd, the crowd has brought animals to be sacrificed. And they're literally stopping the parade so to speak, and telling them, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. You cannot do this. We are not God. We can tell you about God, we've been empowered by God, we know God. He is dwelling within us. But we are not gods."

5-22-19 Thirsting for God

© T. Hardenbrook

What a wonderful juxtaposition with Adam and Eve in the garden, remember. And the serpent says to them, "Oh you won't die. You'll become gods." That's the part of the truth of what the serpent said. They didn't fall over dead. And they did come into the knowledge of everything from good to evil that is the knowledge of God. But spiritual death came into the world.

And now we have the holy apostles, men living in a world that is corrupt and full of death, accepting and being obedient to God, submitting to him and keeping his commandments. And the result is they are thought to be gods. That desire inside of us to be like God is fulfilled. It's a wonderful, wonderful story.

We also, I have a big word today that you want all the students to listen to very carefully, I want you to remember this word. It's pretty hard, you might not have ever said, I don't know you'll have to tell me. Okay, are you ready? Is everyone ready? I want you to think really hard about this word, and the word is thirsty. Do you guys know that word?

Yes.

You do? Oh wonderful. How many of you have ever been thirsty? What do you do when you get thirsty?

Get a drink.

You just get a drink of water. Isn't it easy? It's so simple. Did any of you have to be taught to drink? Like did someone have to explain what that weird feeling was on the inside of you?

No.

You just knew to drink, right? I need a drink. It may have been some of the first words you said as a little baby. "Momma, Daddy, drink. Ba-ba probably."

But as we get older, it's funny, this is real. As people get older they start forgetting what that feeling is. You can ask your doctors. After a while instead of drinking we take a snack. So like my body says I'm thirsty, but I see some chocolate on the table. It just looks better than a glass of water, so I eat that. And after a while your brain starts getting confused and it thinks that when you're thirsty, you're actually hungry. This is the truth. Isn't that silly? Adults are very silly. Don't become an adult.

Father Alexander Schmemmen would say the worst thing that happens to us is we become adults over time. Don't become an adult. Adults are silly. And after a while they can't even remember for sure really what it means to be thirsty. Doctors will tell you that 75% of the time, three out of four times that a person is thirsty they think they're hungry. And that the majority of backaches are caused by dehydration, not drinking enough drinks. What does this have to do with mid-Pentecost?

We are silly beings and things like getting a drink of water even become complex in our life later on and we forget how to do it right. And Jesus today is telling the people the very same thing

5-22-19 Thirsting for God

© T. Hardenbrook

about their soul. In your body you know you're thirsty so you get a drink of water. Well in paradise before the fall, our soul knew, knew, just like your body knows it needs a drink of water, our soul knew it needed a drink of God. It had thirst inside the soul that was only quenched by being with God. The soul had a funny feeling inside, like your body does when it's thirsty. But the only thing that made that funny feeling go away was being with God, being next to him, listening to him, talking to him.

But one of the results of the fall is that after a while we can't recognize that feeling in our soul that is thirsting for God. And we start trying to fill that thirstiness with all kinds of weird adult things, power, money, make up, the clothes we wear, being famous, watching the right TV show. And the whole time we're just thirsty, that's all. We're just thirsty.

And so we're reminded in the middle of this time between Posca and Pentecost, that God has given us the ability to be thirsty for him. We actually practiced a lot in Lent, right? To be thirsty for God. We stopped eating and we got hungry to remind ourselves that we needed to be hungry for God. In the beginning of Lent and in Holy Week there were days where people went for a long time without even water, so that they would thirst and remember what it feels like to thirst for God.

And Jesus, today we hear the reading where he stands up in the middle of the crowd where he has been teaching. And he says, "If you thirst, come to me and drink." He doesn't say, "Come to me and I'll give you a glass of water." He doesn't say, "When your body thirsts come to me and I'll give you something to drink." He's talking about our soul. "For those of you who thirst, come to me and drink."

So remember always, we talk about, remember in Catechism, the I want power, a lot. I want, I want, I want your pencil, I want your candy, I want part of your lunch. I don't want to take out the garbage, I don't want to put on my uniform, I don't want to do my homework, right? When you feel that thing on the inside that wants stuff, or that thirsts or hungers for things, remember the thing that you are hungry for and thirsty for the most is God. And if you don't remember that, then one of these days you're going to be an adult and you're going to be thirsty, and you'll have forgotten what it means.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen. Christ is Risen!

Indeed, He is Risen!