

**Christianity is a life of song and story.**

Have you ever been thirsty? Like really thirsty. Not the dry moment of “oh I will take a drink!” but so thirsty that you can’t think of anything other than having your thirst quenched with the refreshing flow of cool water? Deathly thirsty.

This week Stacy got the bug and as she lay suffering she begged for ice chips to slake her thirst... Sick, aching, thirsty. Thirst like this, physical thirst, can be an overriding sensation and “soul” thirst is not all that different, we just don’t always realize it.

But that is why so much of Scripture talks of thirst, physical and spiritual, and the need for refreshment, life from water and its source.

You are here today because you are thirsty - or maybe because you like someone who is - we may not always use the word to describe why we are here - but under it all, we are looking for something... (reminder, fresh perspective, one voice of hope in the sea of despair...)

And it is in what we rally around in this place that the deepest of thirst is met. We drink of it by singing and telling the story.

**Isaiah 12:1-6**

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We have reached the end of a section of Isaiah, the next chapter moves the story and the word spoken to Babylon. But at the conclusion of warning for Judah and judgment for Israel, we have seen the glory of the messianic kingdom.

The promised person (Anointed One) that will bring a peace undecipherable, through the pathway of himself... he is the highway to it all.

It is less important when it unfolds, or the timeline of it happening, but the anchor that it is happening right before our eyes and one day permanently.

In Christ, this dream is arriving. He is the person and the path bringing peace now and forevermore.

What is before us is the glorious worshipful response to the redemption of the Lord. It is actually our roadmap for life “in Christ.” A life of song and story. This is who we are supposed to be, this is what we are supposed to sound like as we flourish in union with our Savior. This is our best life always and forever.

But before we celebrate it and gear up for it, we need to recognize that is posture comes at the solution of something. Because the kingdom of God must be better than everything else not just one option among the multitude.

First, we have to see the poisoned wells before we drink of the refreshing water.

## **1) Poisoned Wells**

Isaiah is full of warnings away from the poisoned wells the people drank from and held as most valuable.

These are all the “less than” places we tend to look for life, purpose, and hope. Less than God himself and what he says to us.

Judah looked to other nations for future assurance. They trusted in strawmen leaders making promises but keeping none. They ignored God. “We will find our fulfillment, our identity in looking away from the Lord...”

Israel did much the same but added the worship of other gods. Idolatry, syncretism (the mixing of pagan worship and real worship), running away from God and his plan, his authority over the people.

Even with these promises and warnings, the ball keeps rolling and the people keep drinking from poisoned spiritual wells that bring nothing but death. 100 years later they are in the same spot.

**Jeremiah 2:11–13** “Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. [12] Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD,

[13] for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” (ESV)

Humanity, especially those set apart for God, forsake him and draw spiritual water from reservoirs they have constructed that are broken and hold nothing that gives life. Instead of living waters, they gulp down sewage in its place... “hmm nice vintage!”

The point is that there is a fountain worth drawing from. There is a pure source yet we run to the fly-infested streams...

Are you thinking of your broken cisterns? We come equipped with the exact same human condition as Judah and Israel. We are prone to look to other things for purpose, fulfillment, for

life-giving refreshment and all we get when we do that is unquenched thirst, vapidness (that is your word for the day - lifelessness.)

What are they for you - success? Likes on your socials? Politics? Pleasure? Benjamins? Even just assuming God over pursuing Him?

For one semester of college I was a nutrition science major (don't ask why). But you don't have to be a dietician to know the ramifications of food choice on life. And every time I talk to someone about life - spiritual life that impacts all aspects - I think of what they are "consuming," what they are drinking of. And most often their drinks are toxic.

If I drink exclusively Mountain dew life will look awful. Need more sugar, and caffeine. Diabetes "Oh Lawd Not the Sugar!" But if I drink water as my sustaining drink - life, vibrancy.

And that is probably a bad example because when we draw from wells other than God it is not like drinking soda but like swigging arsenic. I stand here this morning with the hints of arsenic on my tongue!

All these other things, common and unique to you, they leave you dry and dead.

But there is better! Like truly better. We hear it from the prophet. That we will sing of drawing water from the wells of salvation. The pure living water.

## **2) Our song**

Giving thanks to the Lord, for he was angry with me but he turned his anger away. Angered by sin and forsaking him, he makes a way to satisfy wrath by his own blood.

"The anger that overhung Israel is at last turned away, and the song celebrates the end of estrangement, fear, and want." DA Carson

In the kingdom, on the coming day, we will glorify and enjoy God with unrestrained song. And even now we are meant to do so united with Jesus in faith.

At the arrival of the Messiah, the person of the branch of Jesse, salvation has come. Those belonging to him are comforted, brought in, given rest and grace. And with giddy hearts, they sing.

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and song, and he has become my salvation." Resilient, bold, trusting, worshipful.

On that day - when the Messiah comes - so now and onward - With joy, you will draw water from the wells of salvation - an endless supply for life now and eternity.

He has come. His work, his grace, his glory is why we gather in this place and it is why we have life - real life that is only found in him.

Jesus interacting with a woman by a well who had been imbibing poison invites her, and us to drink of something worthwhile.

**John 4:10–14** “Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” [11] The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? [12] Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” [13] Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, [14] but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (ESV)

He uses this imagery again when Jerusalem is commemorating the gift of water in the wilderness.

**John 7:37–39** “On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. [38] Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” [39] Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive...” (ESV)

“When Christ came, he announced that he himself is the one who gives the “living water” that God has repeatedly provided and promised to his people (cf. Jer. 17:13; Exodus 17; Numbers 20; John 4:11–12; 1 Cor. 10:4). So for the one who believes in him, “out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”

“Abiding in him, believers today discover the true “fountain of living waters” the only solid and lasting joy. Only in him is spiritual thirst satisfied and the arid wilderness of sin and death replaced by eternal life with God.”

When the believer comes to Christ and drinks he not only slakes his thirst but receives such an abundant supply that veritable rivers flow from him. This stresses the outgoing nature of the Spirit-filled life...

Do you get this? We are jacked up and wandering toward our demise apart from God. And Jesus comes, lives a life of perfection, dies a death our sin, our missing the mark deserves, and walks out of the grave that attempted to cage him in. Doing so he invites us to drink of him. To find hope, the solution, salvation in him.

It is corporate and personal in Isaiah 12 and in our lives. We own it.

“Grace enriches us with a strong sense of personal possession in God himself. The text literally reads “Yah, Yahweh, is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” In the triumph of grace we stop standing outside the store, looking in wistfully at the treasures in the window; we walk right in and receive more than we could ask or imagine because this Owner refuses to do business upon the basis of our payment. Everything is free. And we will share him together.” RO

At the gift of the branch, at the experienced and coming peace, what do we say. This is what Isaiah asks and answers in these six verses.

Paul asked the same question in his letter to the believers in Rome. The well from which we draw life.

**Romans 8** “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5] For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. [6] For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. [7] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. [8] Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

[9] You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. [10] But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

[12] So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [13] For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

[18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. [19] For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. [20] For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope [21] that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to

corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. [22] For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. [23] And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. [24] For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? [25] But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

[26] Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. [27] And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. [28] And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. [29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

[31] **What then shall we say to these things?** If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (ESV)

This is not just propositional truth - this is LIFE! And this is our song!!

Like dying of thirst and standing under a waterfall of grace - what do we say? “Glub Glub... glory!”

This “is the key to a spirit of praise flooding our hearts. It is out of our delight in God that we find our prophetic voices. True Christianity isn’t primarily a matter of control; primarily it’s overflowing fullness.” RO

And the second we step into this, we can’t help but sing of it. Like boxers blaring their songs before a fight - this is our Ring entrance song for all of life.

“The prospect of thirsty, weary, dirty people pulling up bucket after bucket of fresh, cool water in endless supply - drinking deeply, pouring it over their heads, dunking their faces into it, splashing one another - that is a vision of God’s gifts of salvation widely shared. Joyfully drawing water from the wells of salvation is the very life of God, openly accessible to us all, entering into our actual experience. And the deeper we drink, the greater our praise.” RO

And our song isn’t a solo - it is sung by all of us so that others will hear. It is the story we tell.

### **3) Our story**

“Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted... let this be made known in all the earth!”

The song of grace and joy motivates us outward to glorify God, to make much of Jesus that the whole earth will believe!

God has always chosen a people to reflect him to all nations, Israel set apart for this reason and now the church, called, claimed and empowered to be witnesses. To let our song be so loud that others catch the tune. Some have tried to taint the well saying it is only personal and individual, not meant to touch others, interact beyond my heart alone... hogwash. You can’t navigate the New Testament without seeing repeated called to tell this story to others.

**2 Corinthians 1:3–4** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (ESV)

My comfort at the turning away of God’s anger is a grace that I can comfort others with.

Jesus in his priestly prayer before the cross has you in mind...

**John 17:13–19** “But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. [14] I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [15] I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. [16] They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. [18] As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. [19] And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” (ESV)

**John 17:20–21** “I do not ask for these only, **but also for those who will believe in me through their word**, [21] that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (ESV)

God making his appeal through us. Not a duty or a drudgery. But a joy because of what we have been given.

I know I have sipped from poisoned wells when I am more of an evangelist for “The Greatest Showman” than for Jesus. But oh man, when we drink of Christ... it spills out, sprays around us. That’s the point. That our Christianity would be infectious. The story of the grace of Christ would go forth with power by the Spirit.

It becomes our longing, to fill out the choir! Sing praises to the Lord for he has done gloriously!

We are adding to the worship of our Savior - bringing others in. Oh Lord may we do it more and more!

“Shout, and sing for joy, O people of Christ, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel!”

**Christianity is a life of song and story.**

**Give up the poisoned wells** - There is a better way. There is life. Believe in Jesus. Turn away from the tainted water of lesser things and drink of him. “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.”

Believers, we know better! Let’s resolve to drink of the pure drink alone.

“What is the greatest wonder in all of your salvation?” Isaiah’s answer would be, “God is your former enemy. Now he comes to comfort you.” Have you transitioned from being frustrated with a reluctant God who isn’t cooperating with your agenda to being comforted by a God who is lavishing you with grace upon grace? How does anyone turn that corner? By going back to the gospel that made us Christians in the first place.” RO

Drink of Jesus, the gracious King, the resurrected Savior.

**Sing** - Be comforted, with joy draw water from the wells of salvation. Make this the posture of your life and ask the Holy Spirit to work it in you.

**Tell the Story** - In Christ, you have been empowered by the very Spirit of God to be his witness. Sing a little louder, tell someone. Go somewhere. Raise the name of Christ in the church and by sending new churches out. We have the best story, the way of life. Let’s shout it for all to hear.

Just one drop from the fountain of life that is Jesus is enough to quench the most ravaging thirst. One drop is enough to bring abundant life. But he doesn't just want you to have one drop. He wants you to be awash in his grace and glory.

May he fill the reservoirs of our hearts, and our church so that it is Christ that flows out of us like rivers of gushing water.