

## Avoiding Spiritual Heat Stroke

*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God (Psalm 42:1-2a NKJV).*

It has been a very hot summer. In fact, many are saying this is the hottest summer on record. Since yard maintenance needs to be done no matter what the weather, it has been necessary to protect against heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Hints for prevention include drinking plenty of fluids, taking rest breaks and avoiding the midday sun. In other words, use common sense in extreme heat.

Even the ancients knew the wisdom of these precautions. In Biblical days, women usually went as a group early in the morning to gather water from the town's wells. There was an instance, however, when John tells us that Jesus met a woman who was drawing water alone in the heat of the day (John 4). From His conversation with her, we might conclude she preferred exposure to the midday heat to the scorn of others. However, on that particular day, she found a more important source of water than Jacob's well. She had come to quench her physical thirst for perhaps a day, but after meeting Jesus, she realized her greatest need was for Living Water.

If she was truly an outcast in her city, her discovery immediately changed her. She forgot herself and thought of others. Leaving her water jar at the well, she rushed into the city to announce that she had found the Christ. She felt an urgency to introduce them to the Man who knew all about her and loved her anyway, offering her the gift of Living Water that lasts for eternity. She wanted to share her Good News in the hopes that others would also recognize Him. And that is what happened. As a result of her testimony and her introducing them to Jesus, many in her town believed in Him. The Living Water is *indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world* (John 4:42).

Dehydration and heat stroke are similar to the spiritual dryness of life without Christ. Confusion and fatigue are symptoms of both dehydration and heat stroke. A dehydrated person cannot sweat enough to cool down and if his internal temperature rises to a dangerous level, he may have a heat stroke. Heat stroke is a medical emergency and if not properly treated, can be fatal.

The prevention for spiritual heat stroke is accepting the gift of Living Water. Living Water cleanses from sin and enables you to see things more clearly, dispersing confusion. Attempting to work your way into God's kingdom is very exhausting, but trusting in the Living Water, who is *the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6), refreshes your spirit, ridding you of spiritual fatigue. Living Water gives eternal life. If you never partake of the Living Water, it is eternally fatal. Those who do not accept Him experience what the Bible calls "the second death" (Revelation 2:11, 20:14, 21:8).

Death from heat stroke is preventable. So is “the second death.” Jesus said, “*whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life*” (John 4:14). Although sin separates us from God, He has made a way for us to come to Him through Jesus Christ, the Living Water. *Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water’* (John 4:10).

The body can exist much longer without food than without water. There is no substitute for water. Our bodies must have it in order to survive. There is also no spiritual substitute for Christ, the Living Water. *For My people . . . have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns- broken cisterns that can hold no water* (Jeremiah 2:13). Satan will offer us substitutes, but they are like broken cisterns that cannot hold water. The only way to God and eternal life is through Jesus.

Spiritual dehydration and heat stroke do not exist in the eternity of a believer. The reality is:

*. . . And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes* (Revelation 7:15-17).

The opposite is true in hell, however. Jesus told the story of a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus. They both died. In Hades, the rich man was able to see Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom. He cried out for Father Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue, for he was tormented in the flame (Luke 16:24). Abraham responded that the rich man was asking the impossible. The great gulf between the two could not be crossed.

Jesus describes hell as a place where the *fire is not quenched* (Mark 9:44, 46, 48). John tells us that *Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire* (Revelation 20:14-15). Once there, there is no chance for a sip of the Living Water.

If this summer heat has made you uncomfortable, reflect on the status of those who reject Christ and what they will experience for eternity. If you are a believer, thank Him for His cool, cleansing, refreshing Water. Like the woman at the well, lose your inhibitions and share the Living Water with those who need to drink. If you are not yet a believer in Jesus, repent of your sin, trust Him, and take the gift of Living Water He offers. You will never thirst again.