

# koinonia

September 2023

## Are You Thirsty? From Pastor Brandon

The human body is an incredible thing. God has designed it in a way in which it grows and takes care of itself through fighting disease and external conditions. Blood cells function on a level we struggle to comprehend to keep the body in its healthy state. Muscles contract and stretch to protect the body when one part is damaged. There is so much our body can do on its own. One thing it cannot do is nourish itself. By design, we must always be looking outside of ourselves for the nourishment that enables our bodies to heal according to their design. The body needs food to provide vitamins, minerals, fats, proteins, etc. to fuel its work. This is what we think of the most. Great work goes into preparing meals. Some have even made professions of preparing this most basic need of the human body with style and artistry. Some have taken to making sustenance available as quickly as possible for the sake of convenience. Food has become an industry – for better or for worse – that is thriving because of its target. Food has become a hobby for many because of this, and for some, it even becomes a god. In a world that constantly has us thinking about our next meal, I want to ask the question, “Are you thirsty?” To provide some context to this question, read the first couple of verses of Psalm 63:

“God, you are my God; I eagerly seek you. I thirst for you; my body faints for you in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water. So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory.” Psalm 63:1–2, CSB

Our current state and culture often make certain passages of Scripture difficult to understand. As I read Psalm 63, I began to ask myself, “What does it mean to thirst for God?” As I began to break down this passage, I saw what thirsting for God was not. David begins the psalm with “God, you are my God.” David was already following after God. He had already acknowledged that God was his God. Thirsting after God is not the lost seeking salvation. David continues by saying, “I eagerly seek you.” David was seeking God, looking for him with anticipation. David knew God and had submitted to Him. Thirsting for God is not the believer simply seeking to know Him or His ways more. It is something different altogether.

When David describes his thirst for the Lord, he describes it as more than spiritual wonder. He says, “...my body faints for you.”

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Was David making full use of artistic license here or was He revealing a spiritual truth? I believe that David was taking this time in the wilderness to pen a spiritual reality made known to him through physical revelation. He says, “My body faints for you in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water.” David was likely thirsty. He likely noticed his current state of thirst as He was in the wilderness and realized that this physical feeling was akin to another feeling he had experienced.

While this is not a campaign encouraging you to drink more water, I would like to point out a couple of things. The human body can go many, many more days without food than it can without water. Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness, a feat that many of us cannot

## **Upcoming Events:**

**Family Life Event  
– September 17th**

**Monthly Elder Meeting  
– September 24th**

**Pastor Brandon’s India Trip  
– Sept 28th – Oct 11th**

**New Member Welcome –  
October 15th**

begin to fathom. We may hear often that we need to drink water, but what are we seeing marketed to us by the minute? If the hours of food commercials weren’t enough, we have entire networks dedicated to reminding us of how hungry we are. The question is never really, “Are you hungry?” We are. If we aren’t, we’ll get that way soon. We have become so driven by food that we even drink according to our hunger. Today it seems that so many would prefer to try to leech out hydration through food and appetite-driven beverages instead of drinking water. What has led us to live like this?

In short, it is much easier to follow our desires than our needs. When David speaks of his body fainting for God, he does not speak of a desire to satiate an appetite, but a deep need within him to be refreshed by the presence

of God. The odd thing is many times our experience of “hunger” is the body’s way of telling us that we are thirsty. As our body “faints” for water, we “satisfy” it with food. For some, it is a simple matter of choice and taste. Many have become so enthralled with food, that they no longer even like water. Because of this, every time they feel thirst, they go to food instead. They actually reject what their body is crying out for because they prefer the taste and experience that food brings.

Have we done so with our thirst for the Lord? Have we served our appetites instead of seeking the Lord? Have we chosen what pleases us over who created us? The better question is this, “Are you thirsty?” Are you experiencing a desire for more of the Lord? If so, what are you filling that with? Ear-tickling self-help messages can be much more appetizing than the water of the Word to the carnal mind. Hours of music in the style that you prefer may “taste” better than songs speaking the truths of God. Hours in the woods or on the lake attempting to feed the physical body may make more sense in the natural than dedicating time to the Word but none of those satisfy the deep need you have for the Lord. There is no appetite we can serve that will truly quench our thirst for the Lord. So, what do we do? David’s answer was this:

“So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory.”

Are you thirsty? Look to the Lord! Look upon His strength and glory. Find the secret place, the sanctuary. This can happen at church, but it is most certainly not limited to this physical place! Find a place in your home, at your work, in your car, in the woods, or on the lake even where you seek the Lord. Take the time to reject serving your appetite for food, en-

tertainment, work, stuff, and things and to look for the Lord in the sanctuary. Only He can satisfy. Are you thirsty?

## A Word on Worship

### From Pastor Scott

This month's Word on Worship come from Shane Barnard, author of the song You've Already Won. This devotional reminds us of the truths that inspired that song.

Things I often forget: I am in the middle of a war. I am a foreigner, an exile, a citizen of a much better Country. I am not at home here.

What's hard to forget—and easy to admit—is that I am easily discouraged and, at times, would rather pretend the war isn't going on. Then, I could zone out and coast through these heavy and sometimes impossible days.

Are you like me? Do you feel like this broken world beats you into submission? Are you having difficulty pushing through the dark clouds of discouragement today? Here's some good news: if you have received the free gift of God's love in His Son Jesus Christ, Who loved you and gave Himself for you—if you are a daughter or a son of the Most High... YOUR FUTURE IS REALLY BRIGHT! You may say, "Lord! What are you doing? I don't like it! It doesn't feel right; I don't understand it! God, I don't know what you are doing, but... I know what you've done. And that's enough." Take a minute right in the middle of your circumstance and ponder anew all He has done for you. Say with me:

"You have purchased me. You pulled me out of the domain of darkness into the Kingdom of Your beloved Son. You adopted me into the family of God. You redeemed me by the blood of the Lamb, and by that blood, forgave me of all my sin and reconciled me to God. But you didn't just forgive my sin; You became sin on my behalf so that I might now have Your life, Jesus! Your perfect record is now my perfect record, and I am free to live for You. You have given me Your Holy Spirit as a Helper, a guide, and a seal of Your work of saving me. You made me an heir of God, a co-heir with Christ Jesus, and everything in Him is mine!" He has done SO much more for us, but before this turns into a novel, let's look to the future: Brothers, Sisters--We know how the story ends! There is future grace available for us today. Jesus is coming back soon to make it all right and to usher us into forever, where we will see John's revelation:

"a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:1-4

So I say again: your future is bright. Our future is bright. And Jesus promises to be everything you need today in the in-between. But make no mistake; here in the in-between, we ARE in a battle! Jesus defeated sin, hell, and Satan on the cross when He said, "It is finished," but He has left us here to fight in the strength of what He has done and the assur-

ance of what He is coming to do. So, let's go! Father, help us fight well and be free in the strength that you provide!

## **Update to Church Bylaws**

Every so often, our elders look over the documents that define our church to ensure that they reflect where the Lord has led us and is leading us as a body. At our elder's retreat in June, we combed through our bylaws and discussed potential changes to them. We wanted to make you aware of these changes. While nothing changed that would make how we do church look differently, we did elect to change how some things were presented in order to better communicate where we stand on certain issues. These changes were voted on at our August meeting.

Specifically, a change was made to our Statement of Faith. To be clear, we have not changed what we believe as a church. Rather, we reorganized this section of our bylaws for a better flow of communication of what our core beliefs are. In addition, we have added a section of doctrine that we adhere to as a church. Many of these doctrines were previously attached to our Statement of Faith. Some points of our Statement of Faith were combined and moved to the Doctrines section. The purpose for moving these to a new section is manifold. Primarily, members are required to be in agreement with our statement of faith. We realize that not everyone may immediately understand certain doctrines we hold to, such as the laying on of hands or how spiritual fruit and gifts work in the life of the believer. To this end, we did not feel it necessary for someone to agree with a doctrine that is not foundational to salvation before committing to membership at Northside. Therefore, there are now separate sections for our Statement of Faith and Doctrines we adhere to as a church.

Our bylaws are open to all members and potential members. We encourage each of you to read through this document to better understand our church organization. We have printed copies of this on the information tables and will provide a link to a digital copy of this document on our website and app. As always, please feel free to ask any questions you may have!

## **NCA Update**

The new school year is off to a great start. We have 69 students and 10 homeschool students from 53 families representing 24 churches. We praise God for new beginnings and we are excited to see our students' growth spiritually, academically, emotionally, and physically. Please pray for our students that they would grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Also, pray for our staff that they would make the most of every ministry opportunity that is presented to them this school year. Finally, please pray with us for God's provision for every aspect of this ministry.

## **Welcoming New Members!**

On Sunday, October 15th, we will welcome new members into our body and affirm the church membership covenant together. This is a great time of celebration as a family. We will enjoy a potluck meal after our service. Plan to stay and fellowship with your church family on this day! If you are interested in becoming a member, please speak with one of

our elders this month.

## Giving Update

We cannot boast enough about the Lord, His loving kindness to us, and His faithful provision through your giving! What a joy it is to serve alongside believers who give as generously and faithfully as you do. We continue to trust the Lord to provide for our every need as He has never failed us. Be encouraged that the Lord is working through you to accomplish His purposes for Northside Christian Center. Giving is an important part of the life of the believer and goes beyond monetary gifts. As we continue to grow in ministry, let's also continue to grow in how we give to the Lord, trusting Him to multiply and stretch our giving to meet the needs of the church.

To date, we have had enough! Our bills have been taken care of and financial obligations to staff have been met. Pray that we can continue in this manner, receiving the provision of the Lord with thankful and faithful hearts!

-Pastor Brandon

The chart below reflects giving through the month of August. If you have any questions about giving or finances, feel free to call the church office and we'll make time to discuss any thoughts or concerns you may have. (903) 693-6366

