

Wendy's August Prayer Thought's

How many times have you sung the hymn 'All things bright and beautiful?' I guess it takes you back to childhood days, and the words are still imprinted on your mind. It was written by Cecil Frances Alexander in the 19th century, and was first printed in a collection of Hymns for little Children. It speaks of the diversity and wonders of God's creation which we so often take for granted. "He gave us eyes to see them, And lips that we might tell, How great is God Almighty, Who has made all things well." I will never forget being moved to softly sing the words "The purple headed mountain, the river running by." I was standing on the bridge at Woodhead, Derbyshire, situated in the High Peak National Park. The Pennines were a carpet of purple heather, the sunlight glistening on the flowing water. I began to take the path alongside the river aware not only of the beauty of God's creation, but of His very presence. The path became steep, and I stopped to watch the water gurgling over the rocky outcrop.

The writer of psalm 104 praised God for His greatness in creation, and for life giving water. "You make springs gush forth in the valleys, they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal, the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains, the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work." v.40-42. John in his vision of heaven described how there will be no want because a river flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Its crystal clear and pure water is a symbol of abundant life. Those who have been faithful followers of Christ on earth, living in close relationship with Him, know the supply is inexhaustible, for it gives assurance of eternal blessings and happiness. "The Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:17. Christ will be our all in all.

One of the names for God is The Fountain of Living Water. Jeremiah 2:13, and 7:13 - "O hope of Israel! O Lord! All who forsake you shall be put to shame: Those who turn away from you shall be recorded in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, the Lord." Jeremiah used the Hebrew word *maqor* related to 'digging,' so implying that the water is flowing continuously. Pray that God who knows the sincerity of our hearts will continue to be the source of our spiritual life. That we do not run on emptiness, or wilfully desert Him. Thank Him that His fountain flows freely to all who will drink and hope. Accept the promise recorded in Psalm 36:9 "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."

Christ claims He is the source of living water when he spoke with the Samaritan woman who had come to draw water in the noon day heat. "But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." John 4:14 Jesus was explaining how water from the well would daily satisfy natural thirst, but if asked He could give living water to satisfy the deepest longings of the soul.

The verb drink is in the aorist tense, so it calls for action, and a readiness to receive. Living water is a metaphor for the gifts of Christ's salvation and eternal life, for spiritual sustenance over physical sustenance. Pray thanking God for creating each of us with an inner longing to know Him the Fountain of living water. Slowly speak aloud the words of Christ's promise. "Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:35b. Then thank Him that troubles, pain, and testing times, will never drain us and leave us empty for the spring/fountain of water within us is constantly renewing us

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the power of the living water. Jesus boldly made this clear when He cried out in the Temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It was their harvest festival when they combined special thanks to God with ritual libations of water. He wanted worshippers who were experiencing spiritual dryness, to realise He was the fulfilment of the feast. "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" John added the comment, "now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive." John 7:37-39. Many Old Testament scripture verses contain a kernel of the words Jesus used such as Isaiah quoting God saying: "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit on my descendants, and my blessing on your offspring." 44:3. Returning to the words of Jesus note how He speaks of rivers in the plural to signify an abundant supply and spiritual fulfilment, also indicating that living water flows on. Believers then, become a conduit of living water through which Christ blesses others... While life giving waters flow in us we have a life giving ministry to exercise. May we take this seriously When we spend time in prayer let us consider whether anything is impeding the love of God through us to others? Are we selfishly wanting to slake our own thirst, living without a flow out? Use the prayer of St Francis of Assisi; "Make me a channel of your Love."