



DROUGHT DEVOTIONAL

PSALM 63:1

“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land
where there is no water.”

EXPERIENCE

The past month has been unusually dry here in Western Pennsylvania. Apparently, much of the US is experiencing drought-like conditions. According to the US Drought Monitor, as of June 11th, 2023, 43% of the US was abnormally dry or in drought conditions.¹ Here in PA, we have had the 5th driest May on record since 1895.² Every county in the state has experienced either a moderate drought or unusually dry weather. How about where you live? Has your hometown had unusually dry weather this past month?

¹ <https://www.drought.gov/current-conditions>

² <https://www.drought.gov/states/Pennsylvania>

As I look out at our grassy fields, there are huge patches of yellow grass desperately in need of water. I have never seen our fields look so pathetic in June. I recently visited a local spot called the cascades (which literally means luxuriant amounts of water) and found only small rivulets of water. Most of the rocks which normally have water flowing over them were caked with thin layers of dried mud and dying moss. I took some time to meditate. The words that immediately came to mind were: dry, dusty, depleted, thin, brittle, struggling, dying, and dehydrated.

CONTEMPLATION

The words of Psalm 63:1, “as in a dry and weary land” hit me in a new way. A dry season was, and still is, a normal pattern of weather in Israel. Their wet season of rain and even snow in the mountains (October – April) is followed by a dry season that gets extremely dry in July through September. Most of the US does not see anything close to the dry season that the Psalmist, David, would have experienced, but I got a significant taste of dry weather this past month. Like David, pondering the physical dryness of the season quickly turned my mind to meditate upon spiritual dryness and thirst for God. Evidently, David was experiencing a faintness of spirit, a dryness of soul, and therefore, a thirst for God. Have you ever felt dry spiritually? Have you ever felt thin, brittle, depleted, or empty?

The circumstances of our spiritual dryness are different than David’s. We are not running for our life, chased by enemies in a dry wilderness. However, like David, we need fresh and renewing encounters with the Lord in prayer and meditation. We need the experience of corporate worship (v.2). We need ample infillings of

God's word. We need the rich sustenance that only God can provide. We need conviction, confession, and repentance. We need grace— grace like rain. Dry and drought-like weather serve both as a reminder and a warning. We are reminded of our desperate need for water and of God's control over this precious resource. We are also reminded on a spiritual level of our need for living water (see John 7:37-39).³ We are also warned not to neglect the Lord.

The last thing we want is for an abnormally dry season to turn into a full-fledged drought. There are a number of times in the Old Testament when God withheld the rain and brought drought upon his people. One such situation is in the book of Haggai (see Haggai 1:1-11). God told the people to give careful attention to their actions. The people had put their own desires ahead of God's commands and therefore God called for a drought. Listen to what Jeremiah says to the people of God at a different time but under similar dry circumstances: "Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water" (Jeremiah 17:13 - NIV). We must not neglect the Lord.

PRAYER

Gracious God, this abnormally dry weather reminds me of just how dependent I am upon you in every way, especially upon your grace. You are the spring of living water. You cause the rain to fall on the just and the unjust but we, who are called by your name, dare not fall into indifference or complacency. Abnormally dry weather and a spiritually dry soul prompt me to thirst for you, to repent and to seek

³ "Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." -John 7:37b-39

you, and to cling to you. Thank you that you are a good shepherd who leads his people beside still waters, restoring their souls. Let your grace cascade once again, filling my soul with gratefulness and my lips with overflowing praise of your name.

Amen.

CONFIRMATION

Time in a dry and weary land is not outside the norm. Our life will have seasons of spiritual dryness. Sometimes these seasons are of our own making, like when we neglect to seek Jesus who is our spring of living water. Other times, these dry seasons will just be a part of the natural undulations in life. The ebb and flow of life in the natural world is emblematic of the ebb and flow in our spiritual lives.

The Scriptures are clear that God controls the rain (see Psalm 104:10-16, 147:8 and Jeremiah 14:22) and that he withheld the rain in judgment over sin and idolatry (see Haggai 1:11, Deuteronomy 28:22, and Jeremiah 50:38). Drought is a biblical emblem of God's power over the provision of water and power over life and death. Drought highlights human need of water and the overall frailty of life. Drought is also an emblem of God's judgement. Drought symbolizes spiritual misery.



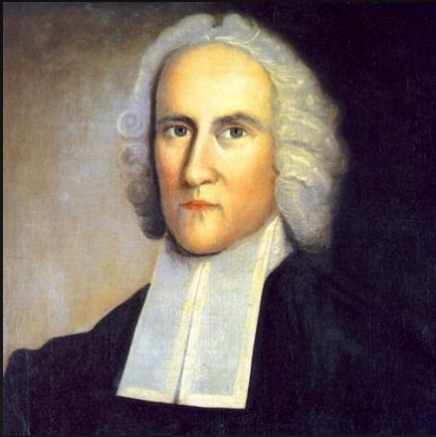
Charles Spurgeon

Sermon #2115 “The Drought of Nature, The Rain of Grace, and the Lesson Therefrom”

“Man, as a living creature, is peculiarly dependent upon God as to temporals. We see in the text [Jeremiah 14:3-4,22] that when the dews no longer fell and the rains

were withholden, then the unhappy inhabitants of Palestine suffered from drought and that drought brought with it failure of the harvest, famine, disease, and death. To quote our common saying, the people died like flies. They fell everywhere by thousands, fainting, famished, doomed. On what a feeble thread hangs human life! Water, though it be itself unstable, is needful to the establishment of human life and without it man expires. . . . We cannot produce food from the earth without the dew and the rain. However cleverly you have prepared your soil, however carefully you have selected your seed, all will fail without the rain of heaven. Even though your corn should spring up, yet will it refuse to come to the ear if the heavens be dry. Nor can you of yourself produce a single shower, or even a drop of dew. If God withhold the rain, what can the [farmer] do? Call together the Parliament! Collect a synod of scientists! Convoke a conclave of princes—what can they do? In vain their acts, theories, and commands. When the skies are brass, the earth is iron. When God is angry, then the clouds scatter no blessings over our field and earth yields not her increase to the [farmer]. Yes, and life itself would vanish as the food of life ceased.”⁴

⁴ <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs2115.pdf>



Jonathan Edwards

FROM *IMAGES OF DIVINE THINGS*. [\[WJE 11:135\]](#)

Jonathan Edwards wrote in contemplation on Psalm 107: “The chief calamities of life, such as captivity, being lost in the wilderness, suffering hunger and thirst, the sufferings of prisoners, distress in a storm at sea, distress by drought and famine, are all shadows of our spiritual misery by nature.”⁵

⁵ Jonathan Edwards, *Images of Divine Things*, WJE 11:135.