Our Need for Refreshing

First in the Lenten/Easter Series Winds of Refreshing

# Texts: Matt 5:6; Psalm 63

# Key Thought: The Bible teaches us many reasons why we need spiritual refreshing, but we are either in denial or searching elsewhere. If we will admit our need and hunger and thirst for God we will be refreshed.

# Intro idea:

## Winds of Nature

Here in CNY in March winds mean lots of things. Both cold fronts and warm fronts come with winds and both bring changes in our weather. Yesterday and today strong winds have brought us rain, lots of rain, melting snow and warmer temperatures. But the weatherman says that will end and the winds will usher in a cold front with snow sometime today. I like winds from the South in March because they bring back the birds. I have seen one robin in my backyard so far. Sue Troast told me Llewellyn Troast has seen bluebirds and red-wing blackbirds as well as robins down by the canal. Those are the kind of sightings I cheer for.

But winds can be dangerous too. All of us remember the Labor Day microburst just a few years ago with its dangerous wind sheer and the tree snapping results. Fayetteville was cleaning up for weeks. The great wind farms springing up in various places now seek to harness the power of the wind.

Did you ever stop to think about what would happen if there were no wind? If it was sunny it would stay sunny -- forever -- well. It sounds good at first doesn't it. We'd cheer for awhile until the place started to look like the Sahara without the dunes, of course. If it were sultry and humid, it would stay that way too-- no refreshing front to come through and ease the situation. No rain or snow either since there would be no wind to bring it in. It's not a pleasant picture is it!

If it were up to most of us, the only people I know who would ever choose for the day to be stormy are the gardeners and farmers. And even they would keep delaying the rainy day so they could get more done while the sun shines. All the rest of us always want sunny weather on whatever we do. But, when we think it over, we realize that need those refreshing winds of change that blow through. Even though a few of them may be bitter and hard to deal with, many more of them are just plain rejuvenating.

In Psalm 63, the Psalmist compares his situation to a parched land where there has been no wind that brought refreshing rain. My guess is that many of our lives are in a similar situation spiritually, though some of us are not really aware of the truly dire straits we are in.

# Why do we need refreshing?

1. Where we live – 63:1
   1. dry and weary land – no water – culture that does not honor God -- that keeps us ignorant of God; that even now disses the whole idea of being a devoted Christ follower.
   2. Do not practice Sabbath – Ps 63:2
      1. In our culture we have nearly forgotten that the other purpose besides worship for which God created and set aside the 7th day as a Sabbath was rest.   Because of the resurrection of Jesus, most Christians relate to Sunday rather than Saturday as their Sabbath, but unfortunately, they do not treat it as such; rather they treat it as any other day of the week.   I have found that the number one reason for burnout-type feelings in my life and in the lives of others occurs when we try to work or keep up a work-type schedule 7 days a week.   God did not make our bodies or our relationships to do that!  Rather he created us so that we thrive with a day of rest, a refreshing change of pace, each week.
2. How our body works. -- We get tired Ps. 63:1 my body longs for you
   1. Interconnectedness of body and soul
      1. All three OT passages I have chosen include both soul and physical pictures

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| --- | --- | --- |
| ref | physical | spiritual |
| Ps 42:1,2 | **Deer pants** | **Soul thirsts** |
| Ps 63:1 | **Body longs** | **Souls thirsts** |
| Ps 84:2 | **Heart and flesh cry out** | **Soul yearns, even faints** |

* 1. Tiredness can come from over commitment of time.
     1. Maximizing time rather than energy
     2. Three, four or more jobs in one home
  2. Tiredness can come simply from long term faithful committed work for God and others
     1. A plant uses water
     2. A body uses food
     3. A spiritual worker uses up spiritual resources
  3. Tiredness can come from physical health issues.
     1. Faith attitude affects your health
     2. Prayer brings healing strength
     3. Positive mindset affects your health positively
     4. Laughter is good for you
     5. A loving social network is good for you

1. Who is opposing us – those who seek my life – Ps 63:9
   1. Peter – Satan like a roaring lion going about seeking whom he can devour – 1 Pe. 5:8
      1. Jesus had warned Peter that the enemy wanted to “sift him like wheat (Lu. 22:31) He instructed Peter to seek a time of refreshing --- a time of prayer. Peter did not heed the warning and fell in the hour of temptation. Now he warns us not to fall in the same way.
   2. Effects of pressure from others – David was fleeing from Absalom. (not when fleeing Saul because he calls himself king in v. 11)
      1. Other people put pressure on us too. – Some just have difficult personalities to get along with. Others do not like our testimony and actively oppose us. Some may just be jealous of us at work or in the family. Some may want to take advantage of us for their own benefit. We know what it is like to have pressure from others.
      2. The Bible tells us to “bear with one another..” Where are we going to keep getting the spiritual resources—the patience, the gentleness to do that?
   3. Overcoming brokenness of the past
      1. Sometimes the problem is not so much the current situation as it is the results of the past. We are in the desert because the bill has come due for the way we lived before. We are struggling to recover. The fight is draining and we desperately need God’s winds of refreshing to blow through our lives.
2. What our soul needs – “my soul thirsts”
   1. We have spiritual struggles
      1. My mother used to warn her boys by quoting, “The way of transgressors is hard (Pr. 13:15 KJV).”   Serious spiritual issues such as:  burdens of guilt, harboring bitterness, or being distracted by greed, lust or pride will rob our vitality and continue to do so until we find spiritual renewal through confession, repentance and faith for forgiveness and a new beginning.    Spiritual imbalance can also produce burn-out— continual giving out without taking time for Christian nourishment.
   2. One of them is disappointment with the circumstances we are in.
      1. Sometimes our lives stagnate as a result of the slow simmering of bitter disappointment generated by the lack of good results after protracted hard work.    Sometimes, it is in the nature of the job we have.  In some lines of work, the results are not always obvious.   Pastoring a church is frequently like that.   More often it is simply because something on which we worked hard did not turn out as we thought it should have.  Maybe it was even misunderstood.  Maybe circumstances over which we had no control caused the distress.   Whatever the scenario, disappointment is real, the inner sadness or even anger that it may hide are also real. It leaves our soul thirsty.
   3. We do not go to the source of refreshment
      1. David says “I have seen you in the sanctuary.” He leaves no doubt as to where he is going for spiritual renewal.
      2. But unfortunately, I find that is not often our habit. Frequently, we seek to drown the problem is pleasures and/or busyness. We figure that if we just find more fun things to do or more useful things to do, the problem will go away. Some seek to drown the pain by chemical dependence or even by overeating.
      3. The things we hate most are downtime, silence, and solitude. They expose us. They remind us of the pain inside that won’t go away, that we don’t know how to fix.

# What can we do about it?

1. Recognize our parched condition – our spiritual need
2. Hunger and Thirst
   1. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Mt 5:6 NIV
   2. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isa 40:31 KJV
3. Expect God to meet our need!

(Give moments for today’s response – then anticipate the them for coming weeks with the ideas below)

For the next several weeks we will be the theme “Winds of Refreshing” together.

We will discover exciting connections in God’s Word. We will learn for example, that one word refer to breath, wind and spirit. And that is true both in Hebrew, that is in the OT and in Greek, that is in the NT.

We’ll discover the connection between Jesus breathing on his disciples in the upper room and the wind that blew through the room at Pentecost.