

Water Cut!

- How many of you have had to live through a water cut?
 - we got a "drought notice" through from Mark's nursery, I think, encouraging us not to use hosepipes...
 - during our time in Motherwell, they re-lined all the water mains in our area - we had our water off for several days at different times
 - its a hassle! - filling the bath; filling pots for drinking water;
 - its an annoyance - when water is off for longer than was said, or doesn't go off at all!
 - its a reminder of just how fortunate we are...!!
- Also a reminder of how dependent we are on water - the number of times we'd go to do something, without thinking about it, and realise we couldn't!
 - toilet; washing; washing up; cup of tea; water plants; clean the kitchen floor...
- In some ways this is the end of a session, as the holiday season comes upon us, as Holiday Club happens this week, as Body Builders takes a break, etc
 - a busy session... Lost for Words... Church, Community and Change... changes in our own lives and situations... people we've said farewell to... people we have welcomed into our lives and church...
 - at the end of all that, this morning and this evening, we look at two passages that reflect on where our refreshment, our vitality, our life comes from
 - this morning the picture is of the water of life flowing from God's throne through the streets of the New Jerusalem;
 - a picture penned with all the vividness that comes from a Middle Eastern/hot country attitude to water;
 - as with so many of John's pictures in Revelation, not just a picture of the future, but also a "peeling back the covers" to reveal reality, the reality that is in God!
- That "true picture" reveals 3 things that will certainly be true when we come fully into God's presence in heaven, but should also be increasingly true of our lives each day:

The River of Life: Source of Life

- First thing: God, whose throne is the source of the river, is the [source of life itself](#).
- Don't just mean in the sense that he created us - though that is true!
- Two things:
 - first, God is the source of life in the ultimate spiritual sense: if we are not Christians when our last breath is breathed, then we are dead, lost, gone from all that life is meant to be; Christ came to save us from death - that was what the resurrection was all about! Without God we die!
 - but second, our on-going, day-to-day spiritual life now dies if we are without God.
- I'm not very good with plants!
 - tend to let them dry up!
 - Helen has been known to become exasperated - has been known to "rescue" them from my study!
 - problem is I forget to water them...
 - ... and so they dry up and die.
- Same is true of our lives as Christians:
 - out of touch with God we dry up;
 - in heaven we'll be in his nearer presence, right by the banks of the river, so to speak;
 - but for now we need to consciously seek him out - by coming to worship, by spending time with him ourselves, praying, reading bible, SU notes, by Christian reading....
- So, first thing river picture reminds us is that God is the source of life:
 - and so we need to stay in close touch with him, lest we dry up.
 - (includes over the summer!!)

The River of Life: Source of Refreshment

- Second thing that this picture of the river makes clear is that the river of life, flowing from God himself, is the ultimate source of refreshment.
- Hot country holidays?
 - visited friend in south of France a few years ago;
 - always had water in the fridge - so refreshing in the heat!
- Imagine what a cool stream must seem like to those having to travel in such heat!
- Sometimes amid the routines of daily life we become jaded:
 - tired, weary with work - staff in schools desperate for the holidays!
 - worn down with lack of break - constant need to provide for family;
 - lacking freshness in relationship with God - doing it out of duty, without any of the freshness and sparkle we would desire.
- Occasionally folk even look forward to heaven and wonder whether it will be boring - sitting around on clouds all day, strumming harps, how banal!
- Reality is that, where God is there streams of sparkling, refreshing, never still water flow:
 - bringing freshness, vitality, new life, sparkle!
- I've a memory of being on holiday in Motherwell, just at home:
 - one of the really warm days of that summer;
 - one of the boys wilting in the heat;
 - we got out a little washing up basin; splashed in the cool water; **revived, giggles, laughter**
 - ...and nearby plants too, since they got extra water to drink!
- Allow God to splash your face with his fresh, sparkling water - the never still Holy Spirit, always wanting to bring fresh vitality to our lives.

The River of Life: Source of Fruitfulness

- Third thing this picture of the river flowing out from God's throne highlights is that God is the ultimate source of all fruitfulness.
 - trees on the banks of the river bearing twelve crops each year;
 - why? because their roots were in the water of life!
- I am certainly no vegetarian - more of the raging carnivore!
- Meat - beef - bar-be-ques - standing joke that I have no mother-in-law problems because she feeds me red meat!!
 - but, one thing I will confess to, I've grown to appreciate vegetables in a way I didn't before I met Helen;
 - why? because Helen has grown up with eating them fresh from her dad's garden, and properly cooked (not with all the goodness boiled out of them);
 - and why are those vegetables so good - preparation helps, but they are beautifully grown, and most especially carefully watered;
- Take away the source of water, and those vegetables would simply dry up.
- Sometimes our picture of heaven is a pretty static one - as if nothing will ever happen there.
 - God's picture is of life, growing, changing, developing, working productively and satisfyingly!
 - fruit will grow there too... rooted in God's life giving river.
- Same is true here and now:
 - any fruitfulness worth bothering about is rooted in God;
 - organisations in church, evangelistic enterprises, Holiday Club, relationships with friends that might speak of Christ, our own seeking of holiness and noble character....

... all of these are empty of power and life if they are empty of Christ.
- Implies prayer, constant striving not to do things in our own strength:

- no easy struggle - in weekly sermon preparation as hard as in consistent witness in home or office!

Conclusion

- We don't want to be those who live in a water cut, in the midst of a drought:
 - rather we desire to be given life, to be refreshed, to be made fruitful by God's living stream of water, flowing from his throne