

# saying no to the water thief

## I. Preamble

### A. Song of Prayer – Breathe on Me Breath of God (OS)

Breathe on me, Breath of God, Till I am wholly Thine,  
Until this earthly part of me—glows with Thy fire divine.  
Breathe on me, Breath of God, So shall I constant be,  
And live with Thee the perfect life of ‘Thine eternity.

## II. Message

### A. Short Review

- I would like continue the conversation today in this series about being filled with the Holy Spirit—
- Where we are learning what it means to become rivers of living water
- Last week we discovered whose obedience would perfectly enable blessings to flow through us
- It was and is *Jesus’ obedience in us* by way of the Holy Spirit
- Why? Because we don’t have perfect obedience apart from his...AMEN
- So, let me share with you where I find myself as a pet owner—with my pup, Joey
- He’s nearing 9 years of age—that’s a guess, cause he’s a rescue dog
- But let me share with some lessons I am learning presently

### B. Lessons I am learning with Joey - OS

- First, I never really thought I was learning anything as a pet owner—I felt it was all about what my pet could learn from me
- But I am fast becoming a learner myself— Here are six ways...
  1. My pet is *aging* and is going through changes in what he can or cannot do. ***Am I facing realistically my life’s creeping limitations?***
  2. My time with my pet will not be endless—the clock is ticking, so with me and this journey on earth.
  3. Our walks are shorter—our moments of play less intense, but not any less meaningful. ***Who am I walking with each day that I cannot see?***
  4. His wet nose coming and nudging me means he’d like some lov’in—
  5. He follows me throughout the house and when I go outside the house he wants to be with me there too—and speaks (barks) when he hears me talking outside to someone. ***Have I come to desire my God this intensely?***
  6. He depends on what only my hands can do for him—like feed him, comb him, water him, pet him, nurse him through injury. ***What do I acknowledge that only God can do for me?***
- Wow! Or should I say, Bow-wow--wow!
- Who ever thought being a dog-owner could lead to such deep theology?

### C. TEXT: Jeremiah 2: 20-22; 25-27; 10-12 NLT (READ in our Bibles) (v.13, of Jeremiah 2 OS)

**“For my people have done two evil things: (1) They have abandoned me the fountain of living water. And (2) they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all.”**

- May I be direct with you today?
- Plain English? Spanish?
- There is one and only one problem in these two evil things we have done
- I want to share a diagram to describe our singular problem **“ME” (OS) Picture of Sheep**
- Illus: We are the top tier in the fountain of our lives
  - a. Everything the Holy Spirit desires to do, must flow through us
  - b. And according to Jeremiah 2:13—we’re cracked tiers, we can hold no water at all

**“Cisterns that leak, cisterns that are no better than sieves.” (OS)**

- c. In our humanness we are like sieves—like one of these (hold it up)
- d. You might be saying, “well, water gets through, doesn’t it?”
- e. But that’s just the point—it’s water, it’s the Holy Spirit that we need *constantly*
- f. Simply put, we are ourselves are like a thief—feeling only shame when we’re caught
- Let’s permit Jesus to help us understand ourselves better

#### **D. Setting of Jesus in John 10 (OS – Jesus and Pharisees)**

- If there’s a lesson we all are learning it is this—things are usually *not* what they appear to be
- Jesus one day is visiting with his least desirable audience—an uptight bunch known as the Pharisees
- The Pharisees were outspoken and not so subtle with their criticisms of Jesus
- And he had important words for them—and their important words for us as well

#### **E. Scripture Lesson – John 10:10 NLT**

- Let’s consider the background a bit further before reading the passage
- The Pharisees of Jesus’ day taught—
  - a. Only those who precisely follow the narrow interpretations of the Old Testament laws
  - b. Only those who held to the Jewish traditions
  - c. Could earn God’s blessings
- And, depending on how far you fell short of total perfection, God might not only withhold his favor
- He would punish you—
  - a. Causing your crops to fail
  - b. Visiting disaster, disease and misfortune
  - c. On you, your children and your grandchildren
- The idea was quite simple...
  - a. If you were rich, healthy and prosperous—God was blessing you for your good deeds

- b. If you were poor, sick and facing hardship—it was because you or a relation had upset God somehow
- o You know, it’s astounding how many people sincerely live trying to follow Christ’s teaching—yet unconsciously conduct their lives today along the lines of these Pharisee teachings
- o Or a common Hindu philosophy—good and bad *karma*
- o Jesus’ teaching gets lost sight of...
- o We owe it to ourselves to read what Jesus said and taught here
- o TEXT: John 10:10a NLT (OS)

**“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy.”**

- o So, if you’ve lived your life and assumed that everything that’s wrong with your life is—
  - a. Your own fault
  - b. Society’s fault
  - c. Your parent’s fault
  - d. Your ex-spouses fault
- o Or, if you assume that in order to receive God’s blessings, you have to be perfect
- o It’s safe to say you’re missing Jesus’ point here in John 10:10
- o Point: Jesus is saying there’s more to it... (OS)

**→ There’s an unseen thief doing everything he can think to destroy God’s blessings designed for you**

- o Whether you realize it or not—you know this thief
- o He’s been around since the earliest days of childhood for each of us—
  - a. Stealing words of encouragement
  - b. Leaving blame, criticism, and suspicion instead
- o His snaky, shady voice had always been lurking in the background, whispering
- o Let’s see if you can recognize any of the phrases— (OS)

**a. You don’t fit or belong...**

**b. If you were like so and so, you’d be successful...**

**c. That co-worker is out to get you...**

**d. Nobody appreciates you...**

- o This thief is subtle, a deviant, and brutalizing in his endless quest to rob you and me—
- o Of every drop of—notice I said “drop” of
  - a. Whatever is true
  - b. Whatever is honorable
  - c. Whatever is right
  - d. Whatever is pure
  - f. Whatever is admirable
  - g. Whatever is excellent
  - h. Whatever is worthy of praise (in our lives) (Phil. 4:8)

e. Whatever is lovely

- Our Bibles compare him to a “roaring lion pursuing someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8)
- I believe it’s safe to say, that unfortunately that someone is *you*, it’s *me*
- But Jesus has an answer for how we can fight and win against this relentless thief
- It’s the second half of John 10:10—let’s read it

**F. TEXT: John 10:10b NLT (OS)**

**“My purpose (Jesus) is to give them a rich (abundant) and satisfying life.”**

- The author, Henry David Thoreau, of Walden Pond, described the lot of mankind as a “quiet desperation”
- Jesus disagrees--He came to provide you and me *abundant* living
- **There’s only One who qualifies to bring about the undoing of the thief—the One who enters through the gate--Jesus**

**G. TEXT: John 10:1-3 NLT (READ from our Bibles)**

- Jesus unmasks the thief as one who scales the wall or fence of the sheepfold
- (OS) John 10:5—“*They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t know his voice.*”
- Let me ask: In your journey have you been trying to grow accustomed to someone other than the true Shepherd? Jesus?
- If so, you need to flee from him as John 10:5 says, and draw near to Jesus
- Believe me, when you do, you will immediately realize the “abundant” peace and calm that will settle over you--AMEN

**H. Look at the word – Abundant (OS)**

- Let’s take a moment and see what synonyms or similar words there are to the word *abundant*
  - a. **Abounding**
  - b. **Ample**
  - c. **Crawling with**
  - d. **Generous**
  - e. **Lavish**
  - f. **Mucho**
  - g. **Plate is full of**
  - h. **Teeming**
- Q: So, with Jesus being the means of busting and defeating the thief—how do we as individuals become channels in which God’s blessings flow?

**I. Pastor Steve’s Norwegian word for “Abundant Life”**

- A fellow pastor, Pastor Steve, from Norway, says the word for “abundant life” in Norwegian is “overflod”
- **(pronounced ‘oover-floood’) (OS)**
- I like the sound of it, don’t you?
- “Over-floood”
- That is exactly what we’re talking about—teeming, mucho, lavish

**J. Imagine—Overflowing with the fullness of God**

- Can you imagine being filled with all the “fullness of God”?

- If you've been running bath water for one of your children's baths and forgot to stop the water and it "oover-floood"
- Or if you're toilet became stopped up and began to "oover-floood"
- I realize that second one is not the best illustration—but it helps to describe what should be happening in our first tier of our fountain
- We're to "oover-floood" with so much love, so much joy, so much power that you could never, ever contain it
- And guess what? You aren't meant to contain it
- ➔ **You are designed to be constantly filled up with and constantly pouring out God's love and blessing.**
- Wait a minute—are you telling me God is only filling me up so I can turn around and give it all away?
- That doesn't make any sense at all!
- And, if you listen to the Thief, it won't ever.
- But if you listen to God, you'll discover why it's the best way

#### **K. TEXT: 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 NLT (OS)**

**"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father, the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ."**

- There it is—it's that "oover-floood" thing again
- There's an inexhaustible supply of mercy, comfort and blessing in our God
- Here's where the water thief tries to hone in
- Let's return to the "ME" diagram
- The water thief tries to get us to hold back and think of ourselves—to reverse and reserve
- Here around the circle of our first tier are the temptations: Serve Me! Listen to Me! Love Me! Share with Me!
- The thief's deception is very plain—When you dance to the thief's tune, your life begins to simply suck instead of flow

### **III. Application**

#### **A. Bob's Story**

- Reminds me of Bob—who was born to Jewish parents during the Nazi occupation of Poland
- As an infant his family fled Poland for the United States
- But when they arrived their immigration visas were denied and they were forced to travel south to Cuba
- They settled in Cuba during the turbulent years preceding Castro's revolution
- By the time Bob was a teenager, he and his family were refugees again, this time they immigrated to the US
- During all these tribulations, the thief was working overtime in Bob's heart—convincing Bob that he didn't fit anywhere
- He was that "foreign boy" in Cuba, and an "outsider" in America
- The result of these lies was a nearly insatiable drive to prove himself—teach everyone who looked down on him a lesson
  - a. He earned a coveted spot at John Hopkins Medical School

b. He completed his residency as Chief of Pediatrics at Yale

- Although his academic and professional success surpassed most of his classmates—Bob still wasn't satisfied
- His thriving practice, fine reputation, beautiful family, and large home were not enough
- He was obsessed with proving himself through wealth, expensive things, high-powered friends and beautiful women
- His first marriage crumbled, and he threw himself into the singles scene with a vengeance
- The more it looked like Dr. Bob had it all, the emptier he was inside
- You see, the thief had fostered his insatiable hunger for success specifically to steal away every good relationship Bob had ever had
- Someone met Bob the other day though and remarked, "He's so different from the man I remember from 25 years ago. I don't think I've ever seen anyone so completely transformed."
- You see, as Bob's second marriage was heading for the rocks, he and his new wife, Janis decided to try something neither had done since childhood
- They went to church—where they discovered the true Gate
- They signed up for a class called *Renewing the Mind*
- And this course showed Bob and Janis how to expose and overcome the lies of the thief
- What steps can you and I take to do just that ourselves?

#### **B. Saying no to the water thief**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> – be beautifully broken (OS)**

- The water thief will try to bring up your being ugly broken
- Pointing to every tear shed, every lingering doubt, and every time you've fallen down
- In Jesus you're not—you're beautifully broken
- And you can be whole once again
- Countless scars don't change whose you are

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> – let the Advocate (Holy Spirit) lead you (OS)**

- Strangers, even workers, along with thieves and robbers come posing as the Shepherd
- There's only One Shepherd
- Tenth Avenue North, a Christian music group writes in their song, You are more: (OS)

**a. You are more than the choices that you've made**

**b. You are more than the sum of your past mistakes**

**c. You are more than the problems you create**

**d. You've been remade**

**e. Cause this is not about what you've done**

**f. But what's been done for you**

**g. This is not about where you've been**

**h. But where your brokenness brings you to**

**i. This is not about what you feel**

**j. But what He felt to forgive you**

**k. And what He felt to make you loved**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – just be held**

- Can I offer you one vital piece of information?
- Admit you're a sheep and *just be held*
- You're not alone, stop holding on, just be held
- Hear Jesus say, "I am on the throne, stop clamoring, striving... just be held
- And the "ME" changes to "HIM" --it's Him who is Served, Listened to, Loved and Shared

IV. **Prayer** – Lord God, your hands are outstretched, your arms are so strong and able to carry us, and like sheep we've strayed, we lost our way, we've wandered far from the safety of your fold. Beautifully broken are we when we surrender! Will you enter us completely? Our emphatic "no" to the water thief is you inside of us. Our noses may be wet from our own tears—in any case we're fixing our gaze on you, Lord. Please, be at the center and flow outward from us. AMEN