

5-Day Devotional: Rivers of Living Water

Day 1: The Spiritual Buffet

Scripture: John 7:37-38

In a world overflowing with spiritual options—podcasts, books, influencers, and teachers—we can easily find ourselves sampling everything but satisfied by nothing. Like wandering through a buffet, we fill our plates with bits of this and that, yet leave still hungry.

Jesus stands in the middle of the crowd and cries out with authority: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." He doesn't offer another option among many. He offers himself as the only source of true satisfaction.

Reflect: What spiritual "buffets" have you been sampling? Where have you been looking for fulfillment outside of Jesus?

Prayer: Jesus, forgive me for seeking satisfaction in things that can never truly fill me. Help me come to you first, knowing you alone can quench my deepest thirst.

Day 2: Knowing Facts vs. Knowing Truth

Scripture: John 7:25-29

The crowd knew facts about Jesus—where he came from, his background, his family. Yet they missed the truth of who he really was. Knowledge about Jesus isn't the same as knowing Jesus personally.

Many of us can recite Bible verses, attend church regularly, and discuss theology. But Jesus asks a deeper question: Do you truly know me? Have you encountered me personally, or do you just know about me?

Reflect: Is your relationship with Jesus based on facts you've heard or on personal encounter? When did you last experience his presence rather than just his principles?

Prayer: Lord, I don't want to just know about you. I want to know you. Move beyond my head knowledge into my heart. Let me experience your living presence today.

Day 3: The Compelling Invitation

Scripture: John 7:37-39

On the final, most crowded day of the feast, Jesus stood and shouted his invitation. He didn't whisper. He didn't suggest. He boldly proclaimed that he is the answer to every searching heart.

This wasn't just an invitation for the spiritually mature or the religiously educated. It was for anyone who thirsts—the broken, the searching, the desperate, the curious. And it still is.

Reflect: Have you personally responded to Jesus' invitation, or are you still just listening? What's holding you back from fully surrendering to him?

Prayer: Jesus, I hear your invitation today. I come to you thirsty, tired of searching everywhere else. Fill me with your living water. I surrender all to you.

Day 4: From Stagnant to Flowing

Scripture: John 7:38-39

Jesus promises that those who believe in him will have rivers of living water flowing from within them. Not a stagnant pond, but flowing rivers. Not barely surviving, but overflowing with life that blesses others.

The question isn't whether we have the Spirit—if we believe, we do. The question is: are we allowing that river to flow? Or have we become stagnant, keeping Jesus to ourselves rather than letting his life overflow to those around us?

Reflect: Are you a stagnant pond or a flowing river? Who in your life needs to encounter the Jesus who lives in you?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, bubble up within me. Don't let me become stagnant. Make me a river of life that brings refreshment to everyone I encounter. Flow through me today.

Day 5: The Critical Choice

Scripture: John 3:16-17

The sermon reminds us that rejection of Jesus isn't about lack of evidence—it's about resistance of the heart. Some will hear about Jesus and say yes. Others will say no thanks. Still others will say "not yet."

But the invitation remains open. God so loved the world—including you—that he gave his

only Son. The question isn't whether Jesus is enough. The question is: will you receive him?

Reflect: What in your heart might be causing you to resist fully surrendering to Jesus? What are you holding onto that's weighing you down?

Prayer: Father, I don't want to resist you anymore. I release everything I've been holding onto. I choose Jesus today—fully, completely, without reservation. Thank you for your unfailing love.

Blog: Finding What Truly Satisfies

The Search for Orange Vanilla Coke Zero (and Something Better)

I'll never forget the first time I discovered orange vanilla Coke Zero at a buffet-style drink machine in Dallas. One sip and I was hooked. I went back for refill after refill. When we moved to Bedford, Virginia, I searched every store trying to find it again. Food Lion didn't have it. Walmart didn't have it. I'm still searching.

It's funny how we can become obsessed with finding that one thing that hit just right—whether it's a perfect soda flavor, the ideal podcast, or that teacher whose words seem to speak directly to our souls.

The Spiritual Buffet

Our spiritual landscape today looks a lot like that drink machine—endless options, countless flavors, infinite combinations. YouTube channels, podcasts, books, conferences, influencers. We can curate our own spiritual experience, sampling a little of this teacher and a little of that perspective.

And there's nothing inherently wrong with learning from various sources. But here's the danger: we can become spiritual buffet-goers, filling our plates with bits of everything while never being truly satisfied by anything.

A Voice That Cuts Through the Noise

In John 7, we find Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles—a massive gathering where people came to remember how God provided for their ancestors in the wilderness. Water and manna. Daily provision. God's faithful presence.

The crowd is conflicted about Jesus. Some say he's the prophet. Others argue he can't be the Messiah because of where he's from. They know facts about him but miss the truth of who he is.

Then, on the final and most crowded day of the feast, Jesus does something remarkable. He stands up and shouts—literally cries out—an invitation that still echoes today:

"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.'" (John 7:37-38)

The Invitation That Changes Everything

Think about the boldness of this moment. Jesus doesn't offer himself as one option among many. He doesn't suggest people consider adding him to their spiritual buffet plate. He declares himself as the only source of true, lasting satisfaction.

This invitation has two parts:

First, for those who don't yet know him: Come and drink. Stop searching. Stop sampling. Stop trying everything else. I am what you've been looking for. I will quench your thirst forever.

Second, for those who already believe: You won't just be satisfied—you'll overflow. Rivers of living water will flow from within you. You'll become a source of life and refreshment to everyone around you.

Stagnant Pond or Flowing River?

This second part convicted me deeply. If we truly have the Spirit of God living in us, are we stagnant ponds or flowing rivers?

The sermon shared a powerful story of a couple in the community who'd been battling health issues. Their neighbors—members of the church—had been inviting them for years. Loving them. Serving them. Showing them Jesus through consistent, patient friendship.

Finally, one Sunday morning, this couple woke up and said, "We've tried everything else. Let's try church."

That's what flowing rivers look like. Not perfect people with perfect lives, but believers who let the life of Jesus overflow from them in such a way that others are drawn to the source.

Three Responses, One Choice

When Jesus issued his invitation, people responded in different ways—just as they do today:

1. **Some believed immediately.** They'd seen enough, heard enough. Yes, Jesus. I'm all in.
2. **Some rejected him outright.** No thanks. You do you, I'll do me. I'm not interested.
3. **Some were still investigating.** Like Nicodemus, they were curious but not yet convinced. They had questions. They needed time.

Here's what's crucial to understand: rejection of Jesus is never about lack of evidence. It's about resistance of the heart. As John 3:19 says, "The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light."

Questions Worth Asking

Wherever you find yourself today, consider these questions:

- **Is my view of Jesus shaped by assumptions or by his revealed truth?** Am I basing my beliefs on what I've heard others say, or on what Scripture actually reveals?
- **Have I personally responded to Jesus' invitation, or am I still just listening?** There's a difference between being interested in Jesus and surrendering to him.
- **Is there anything in my heart causing me to resist fully surrendering to Jesus?** What am I holding onto that's weighing me down?
- **Am I a stagnant pond or a flowing river?** If I claim to follow Jesus, is his life overflowing from me in ways that bless others?

Better Than Orange Vanilla Coke Zero

I'm still searching for that perfect soda flavor in Bedford stores. But I've found something infinitely better—a relationship with Jesus that satisfies in ways nothing else can.

Not because my life is perfect. Not because I don't face storms or hardships or difficult seasons. But because my perspective has changed. Because the Spirit living in me produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—even when circumstances are hard.

The spiritual buffet will always be there, offering endless options and promising satisfaction. But only Jesus can truly deliver on that promise.

The Invitation Still Stands

Maybe you walked into church (or clicked on this blog) the way that couple walked into service: "We've tried everything else. Let's just try this."

Friend, Jesus is extending the same invitation to you that he shouted to the crowd two thousand years ago: **Come to me and drink.**

You don't have to have it all figured out. You don't have to clean up your life first. You don't have to understand all the theology or resolve all your questions. You just have to come thirsty.

Or maybe you've known Jesus for years, but you've become a stagnant pond. The joy has faded. The passion has cooled. You're going through the motions but not overflowing with life.

Jesus invites you too: **Let rivers of living water flow from within you.** Ask the Holy Spirit to bubble up, to stir, to make you carbonated again. Ask him to overflow from your life in ways that draw others to him.

One Final Thought

John wrote his gospel with a clear purpose: "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Not just existence. Not just survival. Not just getting by.

Life. Abundant, overflowing, satisfying, eternal life.

That's what Jesus offers. Not as one option among many, but as the only source of what your soul truly craves.

The question is: will you come and drink?

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The invitation is open. The water is free. And Jesus is waiting.

Come thirsty. Leave satisfied. Overflow with life.

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