

REVIEW:

Over the last two weeks, we have been taken through John 1-6 by Caleb and Adam. Although we haven't had time to fully sit in the text and teach the vast richness of it, I have been encouraged by what we've been taught. Let's review before we enter into John 7-9 today.

Starting at the end, we see the purpose statement of John 20:31:

"these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

If this is the purpose statement of the book, we must filter it as such.

In John 1, we see a masterful writing about the Word being God, becoming flesh, and dwelling among us; we also see Jesus' interaction with John the Baptist and His calling of several disciples.

In John 2, Caleb highlighted Jesus work at Cana... a work of the good life Jesus offers and our prompting to follow Him. Jesus cleanses the Temple and then has an amazing encounter with Nicodemus in John 3, a religious leader who is questioning true teaching.

In John 4-6, Jesus approaches the people He encounters in specific ways, with truth filled words, and providing deep worth. He teaches a Samaritan woman about Himself, heals a nobleman's son, heals a lame man at the pool of Bethesda, and feeds 5,000 people (most likely more) near the Sea of Galilee.

We've been able to observe, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the life of Jesus so far... and it's been incredible to see. Today, we are going to be studying John 7-9 and this is a friendly reminder that if you would like to participate more fully in the message, you are invited to read John 10-12 this week in preparation for next weeks sermon!

OVERVIEW:

In John 7-9, we see Jesus primarily engaging with others around a thing called the "Feast of Booths". Before studying for this sermon, I had no idea what this feast entailed. However, this was a very important Biblically ordained tradition that the Jewish people were to adhere to and there is more weight to it than what meets the eye initially.

In John 7, we are going to see Jesus teaching at the Feast of Booths, specifically in the Temple.

In John 8, most likely during this feast, we see Jesus interceding for a woman caught in adultery and doing what Jesus does well: restoring.

In John 9, we see a culmination of the Feast of Booths be shown through Jesus' miraculous healing of a man born blind.

What if I told you that this Feast of Booths that the Israelites were to engage in yearly was one that was ultimately fulfilled by Jesus? What if I told you that Jesus claiming to be living water and the light of the world holds significantly more weight that we realize?

This sermon contains many things that I learned in preparation of this message - I pray that you learn something as well and that Jesus' words and actions in these chapters stick with you because of the significance that they held not only to the Israelites of that time, but in your very lives as well.

Today, I want to do two major things: I want to teach you about the tradition of the feast of the booths, so that you understand more of what is happening in these chapters, and I want to show you how Jesus Himself is the fulfillment of the things this feast points to... and the impact that that should hold in your life.

FEAST OF THE BOOTHS:

As we get into the teaching about this feast today, please note that while these teachings are based and anchored in Scripture, there are some additional activities that are included in the Feast of the Booths that are only recorded in the Mishnah and Talmud, which are Rabbinical writings. Therefore take what is being said as such - the feast was mandated and ordained by God in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Nehemiah, but some of the additional activities can only be found in the Rabbinical writings and must be treated as such. For our purposes today, we will use both sources.

There were three types of feasts that were ordained by the Lord: the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths. All three of these feasts required the men of Israel to congregate in Jerusalem and celebrate them.

The Feast of Passover was both to remind the Israelites of their deliverance from Egypt by God, as well as remind them of their future Messiah who would deliver them from spiritual bondage.

The Feast of Weeks reminded the Israelites of the Law that was given to them by God at Mount Sinai; it also pointed to a future, higher law that would be given.

And the Feast of Booths reminded the Israelites of their forty years of wandering in the wilderness and their entrance into the promised land by God... as well as anticipated the future coming of the Messiah. This is what we will focus on today, as it is the feast that we see Jesus and His family going to in John 7:1-10.

This feast was meant to be held for seven days, with an additional day that was referred to as "the great day of the feast." (John 7:37) The Israelites would build booths on the outside of their homes, or on the roofs, to signify their temporary living on earth, as opposed to eternity. Nehemiah 8:16 gives good showing of this:

"So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim."

There were two special aspects of the Feast of the Booths that are pointed out in an article written by "The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry": the water drawing ceremony and the lighting ceremony.

WATER DRAWING CEREMONY:

In Jerusalem, there was a normal aspect of a daily morning burnt offering. However, the Feast of the Booth held a special, daily procession with water.

During the preparation of the burnt offering, a procession of priests wound their way from the temple down to the Pool of Siloam where a priest filled a golden flask with water while a choir repeated Isaiah 12:3:

"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."

The Pool of Siloam was a collecting pool for the spring Gihon, the major water supply for Jerusalem. The Jews referred to water from springs or streams fit for drinking as "living water." Living water was considered the most superior form of water for ritual purification. So living water was not something that the Jews were unfamiliar with.

In fact, when I was in Israel, I learned a lot about Mikvehs. These were structures that the Israelites would have to go into, fully submerging themselves, in order to be considered "holy" again and not just common. They would walk down a "common" side, go under the living water, and walk up the "holy" side to be purified. As you can imagine, they had to do this often. There's a reason why surrounding Jerusalem, especially surrounding the Temple area, archeologists have discovered hundreds of Mikvehs. Living water was essential to their worship.

And this pulling of living water would continue daily through the Feast of the Booths, until the eighth day, the "great day of the feast", where it wouldn't be performed. It was on this day that the Israelites would fully turn their eyes to God and fully submit their posture in dependence to the Messiah that would come. And it was on this eighth day that Jesus spoke in John 7:37-39:

"On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as ^[a] the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ 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."

On the day where the people would've stopped bringing the living water to the Temple and turned their eyes fully towards dependence on God, Jesus cries out "I AM THE LIVING WATER!" Can you imagine being there? After arguably hundreds of years of doing this ritual, suddenly a man is standing up among you and saying "come to me if you're thirsty." Their jaws must have dropped. They must have stood in awe. They must have been drawn in, just like we are right now to this story. This idea of living water that Jesus has built up to this point: from John 1, to the water at the wedding, the water that Nicodemus in John 3 must be reborn in, the living water spoken of at the well, the water that Jesus would walk on... all points to Him. And as we look at Him, He moves our eyes towards the Holy Spirit that would be given to all who believe in Him.

Like these Israelites in John, Jesus does this for us. He looks us in the eyes and says:

Are you thirsty?

Do you need a drink?

Are you tired of constantly needing to refill yourself with the world?

I remember when I was growing up as a kid and finally realized that I had a need for the living water that Jesus was offering. I would attend Sunday school in the morning at church and one day, as I was coming out of class as a kindergartener, I was fuming. After my parents asked me what was wrong, I gave very direct answer: Thomas Step knew an answer that I didn't know about the Bible. And that drove me to pursue knowledge. I grew to know the answers, but at the age of 12, I realized that I did not have a personal relationship with the Savior, Jesus Christ... just knowledge of Him. After knowing Him as my

Lord and Savior, my thirst was quenched and I received the Holy Spirit that Jesus referenced. I still struggle with a pursuit of knowledge and have to kill that self-righteousness in myself daily, but now I have the Holy Spirit to lead me to greater love of God. Have you stepped into a relationship with Jesus today? Have you come to know Him personally, and not just by knowledge? Are you thirsty and in need of living water, to purify you and draw you into a personal relationship with Jesus?

Jesus promises this fulfillment of a permanently quenched thirst through the Holy Spirit. But Jesus doesn't just stop at living water - He also expressed Himself as the light of the world.

LIGHTING CEREMONY:

On the first day of the Feast of the Booths, the gates of the Temple would be left open after the afternoon burnt offering so that all could participate in what was considered the lighting ceremony. It is described that four large oil lamps were illuminated from the Court of the Women. "The light from these lamps was so bright it penetrated every courtyard in Jerusalem." The light symbolized two realities from the Temple lamps.

"The first was the reality of the "Light of all Lights"— the Shekinah Glory—the visible presence of God that filled the first Temple, which Solomon built ([1 Ki. 8:10–11](#)). The second was *Ha'or Gadol* (the Great Light) who would soon come and bring light to those who were spiritually dead and dwelling in darkness ([Isa. 9:2](#))."

There was no courtyard in Jerusalem that wasn't lit with the light. Everywhere that the people looked, they were reminded of the light that purely comes from God Himself. This light can't be defiled and is available to touch all. Then, on the day following Jesus' proclamation of being the living water, we see Him again say something profound. John 8:12 shows Jesus saying,

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Having the light from the feast fresh on their minds, the people would've no doubtably heard Jesus clearly... "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!" Jesus isn't doing something random - He is fulfilling the very thing that the people have been looking for.

He is the light that illuminates darkness.

He is the perfection that opposes sin.

He is pure, in the middle of the defilement of the world.

He is the savior that was waited for.

I remember several years ago when I had to get some lab work done. As I was sitting in the chair and having my blood drawn, things turned bad. I began to feel hot and dizzy. Next thing I know, I can hear these voices speaking around me, but I can't see anything. I remember the panic in my mind. It was like my eyes were closed and I couldn't open them up even if I tried. And as my vision slowly started to come back, the panic dissipated as I realized that I had just passed out and that I could indeed see and hear. But that moment of blindness was scary.

John 7-9; Zechariah 14

How many in the world we live in are currently walking around blind? If light is the very thing that allows us to see, how many of us in this room and in Dallas, TX truly do not see because our eyes are darkened by the world around us? If Jesus is the light of the world, then only He can truly make us see.

To make us see past the traditions that have blinded us, much like the traditions surrounding the feast of booths. To make us see clearly past the promptings of culture and into the call of Christ. To make us see the love and goodness that He offers us, as opposed to the false love and goodness of the media we consume, the American dream, and our favorite, non-essential hobbies. How long had the people of Israel been living in the dark while believing they were in the light? Are we, much like some of the Israelites even in these chapters, missing the anticipation of Christ simply because we are wrapped up in the traditions that we think make us holy?

Jesus' literal representation of the symbolic light from the feast extends to us as well. He invites us to follow Him, to truly see Him as the light of the world, as the light of OUR world. Only He can make our blind eyes see.

The last part of this feast, which is Messianic in nature, is seen and culminated in John 9 with a man having his sight restored. That's where we will end today.

MESSIANIC NATURE:

As an article of the Gospel Collation points out, Zechariah 14 was also associated prophetically with the Feast of the Booths. Some scholars believe this chapter of Zechariah was read aloud to the people of Israel during this feast. This chapter starts off "Behold, a day is coming for the LORD..." (Zechariah 14:1a). As you continue on in this chapter and this reading...

Zechariah 14:7 states,

"⁷And there shall be a unique^[c] day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light."

A verse later, Zechariah writes,

"On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea^[d] and half of them to the western sea.^[e] It shall continue in summer as in winter."

The day of the LORD shall contain perpetual light and living water. Jesus makes this literal in John 9. In this chapter, we see Jesus encounter a man who has lived his life blind. Jesus executes a miracle in verse 6-7,

"Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing."

Quite literally, Jesus produces living water for this man and brings light to his eyes. He cleanses him, restores his vision, and proves yet again His divinity.

Weren't we all at some point the blind man? Speaking for myself, I once was blind, but now I see; I once was thirsty, but now I'm satisfied; I once strove to fulfill the Law, but now I love from the new Law that Jesus calls us to... to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and my neighbor as myself.

Church, Jesus is our living water. He is the only one who can save us and provide living water for our lives. We can't get it from the world around us... we will simply be thirsty again.

Jesus is the light of the world. We don't work hard enough to see again, we don't gain enough knowledge to restore our sight, Jesus is the one who grants it to us! The traditions of our world and church must be sacrificed if they are preventing us from engaging in the truth that Jesus offers and the light that He extends to our eyes.

GOSPEL CALL:

We have two options... two options that we have seen all throughout the book of John so far. We can either find ourselves in the place of the Pharisees and religious leaders of that day and reject Jesus for the sake of our traditions and self-righteousness... OR we can choose to respond like the disciples... the woman at the well... the lame man... and the blind man... and come to Jesus to receive the living water and light that He offers us; the Holy Spirit and eternal life that He wants us to engage in with Him.

Where do you find yourself today? Are you still going to the waters of the world and finding yourself dissatisfied? Are you still seeing the world around you and the life you're living through a blind lens?

Friends, Jesus is available for you today. Maybe you find yourself in the shoes of the blind man and you've been blind for years and years. You've given up hope and thought that you missed the ship. Maybe you've been struggling and, like myself in moments, have gone to the world for satisfaction. But Jesus is offering you something - He is offering you eternal life and the Holy Spirit. He is offering to take away your thirst. He is offering to make you see.

Perhaps you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and submitted to the living water that He offers us through the Holy Spirit, but you aren't living like you. Your life is full of secret sin, you only engage with God on Sunday's for an hour, and your spiritual life is stagnant. Maybe you simply need to reaffirm your previous decision for Christ and begin to live like it.

Or maybe you are here today and you have followed Christ. You believe He is the living water and the light of the world. You are pursuing Him, even when you are still struggling daily, and this message simply renews your spirit. Praise God - don't let this message stop with you.

All of this comes only from His power, His life, and His sacrifice. Don't miss it. Don't miss what the text is saying. I'm pleading with you today to come to Christ. Stop trying to do it on your own. Stop looking just at the rituals of the feast and instead look at the true fulfillment of it: Jesus. Back when Gene Getz started Fellowship, he founded it on the principle of Truth > Tradition - let that come true for you today.

We will have some elders and their wives in the back of the worship center, as well as prayer partners in the concourse. If you are feeling prompted today, whether it is to come to Jesus for the first time as your living water and light of your life, or you want to renew your commitment to Him, or maybe you just want to engage in a prayer of praise, please find one of them and allow us to journey with you.