

JESUS, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER

John 7:37-39

The Jews were celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. This was a seven-day feast that occurred during the first part of our month of October. During this feast, the Jews lived in booths made of tree branches to remember their forefather's pilgrimage through the wilderness.

People would pack the streets for the annual re-enactment of the water-giving miracle of Moses. Trumpets would announce the beginning. This was a high, happy, holy day in the life of the Jews. The Feast of Tabernacles was like Christmas, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July all rolled into one.

On each of these seven days, the High Priest would go to the Pool of Siloam (Peace) and draw out water in a golden vessel. This water would then be poured out on the altar where the parts of the sacrifice were arranged. As the water was poured out, the people sang unto the Lord and shouted for joy. It was a time of great celebration and worship for the people. The irony of the ritual is they were celebrating historical water while spiritually parched.

For 7 days during that feast the High Priest would go to the Pool of Siloam, take a golden pitcher, dip it into that pool, and carry it back to the temple. There he would circle the altar once and then pour that water out on the altar of sacrifice. At that moment the Levites would blow the trumpets, and the great crowd would cry out, *“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”* Isaiah 12:3

The eighth day was called The Great Day of the Feast. On this day, sacrifices were again offered, but there was no singing and no shouting. This was known as a solemn day of repentance before the Lord. On this last day of the feast, the priest would march around the altar seven times, like Jericho. That is when Jesus stood up and and proclaimed Himself to be the Fountain of Living Water. When He spoke, thousands would have been present to hear Him, and everyone who heard Him would have instantly understood what He meant.

“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice.” John 7:37

The traditional rabbis sat when they spoke, and they spoke softly. In the Bible, we have instances of people shouting. The blind man shouted appealing for sight in Mark 10:46. Peter shouted when he was sinking in the waves in Matthew 14:29. The demon possessed man shouted begging for mercy in Mark 5:2. John uses the same Greek verb to describe Jesus' words here. Jesus was moved to action because they were not moved and simply going through the motions. It was urgent to Him because time was short. In just six months, He would go to the cross. They were desperate and could not see it. Time was running out, and they were unaware.

Four verbs in the verse make the promise powerful: thirst, come, drink, and flow.

1. RECOGNIZING THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER – The Principle Of Desire

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.” John 7:37

Jesus' offer is universal but conditional. You cannot be filled if you are not thirsty. Acknowledging our spiritual dryness is essential. We often try to quench our thirst with temporary solutions (career, relationships, status). Jesus invitation to, *“Come to Me and drink,”* is an invitation to intimacy and dependence, not just intellectual belief. In these two verses, Jesus proclaims Himself to be the place where the living water is found. Jesus is the living water, and the fountain where it can be found! Look at the word “anyone.” Jesus plainly says that if anyone wants God, he can have Him. If anyone seeks God, he can find Him. This is specifically addressed only to those who are thirsty. The problem with most people is that they are not thirsty. You may be willing to admit you are empty, but being empty is not the same thing as being thirsty.

The Psalmist David once said, *“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”* Psalm 42:1-2

“O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.” Psalm 63:1

“I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land.” Psalm 143:6

If you stop drinking water, you will get dehydrated and experience all kinds of side effects. Confusion settles in, organs stop functioning, you pass out, and become unconscious. We have low water indicators. Your mouth gets dry, your tongue gets thick, your head aches, and your knees get weak. Your body will tell you. Deprive your soul of spiritual water, and your soul will tell you. You become desperate, tempers erupt, worry consumes you, guilt and fear will fill your life. There are the warning signs that we are experiencing a dry soul. Your life becomes characterized by hopelessness, sleeplessness, loneliness, resentment, irritability, insecurity. We pass it off. We say anxiety runs in my family, moodiness is just the way I am. I was hurt, so I am justified. Where do you find water for your soul? Many times we are not thirsty because you have been filled with the stagnant waters that come from the world's water spout.

You can boil the basic desires of the average person down to two types:

- 1) We all have a desire to be healthy. We want to feel good and live a long time, and we don't want to be sick.
- 2) We desire to be happy.

You can be healthy and happy and still not live a fulfilling abundant life. If you desire Him today, He will quench your thirst. Have you ever noticed that the thirstier you are, the sweeter the water tastes? The more valuable the water is to you, the better it is.

Throughout the New Testament, water for drinking is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit of God that comes to us as sinners and shows us our need of salvation, John 16:8. It is the Holy Spirit that applies the Word of God in conviction, John 6:44. It is the Spirit that baptizes the new believer into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13. It is the Spirit that seals the believer, Ephesians 4:30. It is the Spirit of God that fills the believer and uses him for the glory of God, Ephesians 5:18.

Salvation involves every member of the Holy Trinity, but the Spirit of God is the One who abides in us and helps us day by day. He is the “water of life.”

If the Spirit is the Water of Life, then Jesus is the Fountain of Living Water. Before the Water of Life could be dispensed to a lost and dying world, the Fountain of Living Water had to be opened.

The opening of a well requires that the earth be torn open so that life-giving water can flow forth. This was accomplished when Jesus died on the cross, the horrible torture and death He died for the sin of all mankind. He allowed Himself to be mocked, beaten, spit upon, and crucified just so He could be opened up and the water of the Spirit might be free to flow to a needy humanity.

Jesus told the disciples that if He didn't go away, the Spirit could not come into the world, John 16:7.

Jesus died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended back into Heaven. Then, He sent His Spirit into the world to function as Living Water to all who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus went to the cross and died, He was doing it just for you. He wasn't dying because He was a bad man and deserved to die. He was dying because He loved you and wanted to make a way for you to miss hell. He died because He loves sinners, Romans 5:6-8; Revelation 1:5.

2. The Response To Our Thirst – The Principle of Decision

“Let him come to Me.” John 7:37

Coming to Christ is a conscious desire for something we don't currently have and can't produce on our own. Before a person can be saved, they must sense the need of salvation. This involves the conviction of the Holy Spirit, John 6:44.

Before we know Christ, we are dead in sins, Ephesians 2:1; but the Spirit of God comes and quickens that dead spirit and makes us aware of our sins. When this awareness comes, we can then turn to Jesus for salvation.

Proverbs 27:7 tells us that if you are full of the world and sense no need of God, you will not come to Him. But, when the soul is empty and the heart is hungry, even the bitterness of conviction feels sweet, and the path to Jesus seems a blessed thing. What a difference a thirsty heart makes in the sinner's life.

“Come” (Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 22:17), is an Invitation from Heaven, and it is available to everyone—“Anyone” (John 6:37; 1 John 5:1; Romans 10:13).

But you have to choose for yourself. If you want to experience the presence of God in your soul, come to Jesus. If you want to know the person of God in your heart, come to Jesus. If you want to receive the power of God in your life, come to Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only true source of satisfaction you will ever find in this life.

3. THE REWARDS OF THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER – The Principle Of Delight

“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” John 7:38

Imagine you have been in a desert for several days and have been totally without water. You are almost delirious. Your lips are parched, and your skin is cracked from the heat of that boiling sun. All of a sudden, you come upon a river. What would you do? You know what you would do. You would drink and drink until you were full. That is exactly what Jesus tells us to do. “Let him come to Me and drink.” Come over and over. Not a once and for all thing.

Some translations appropriately say, “Let him come to me and drink and keep on drinking.” Ceaseless communion with God satisfies the soul. You need regular sips from God's reservoir to survive this life. You don't have to live with a dehydrated heart.

Jesus says that those who believe will have “*rivers of living water*” flowing from within them. Religion often focuses on external rules. The Gospel focuses on an internal transformation. There is a promise of abundance. It is not a trickle or a cup; it is a river. The Holy Spirit provides a surplus of grace that is meant to overflow that has four clear results.

- Salvation

The primary benefit of coming to Jesus by faith is being saved from hell! The sinner is condemned and doomed before the Lord, John 3:36; Psalm 9:17.

When we come to Jesus and receives Him by faith, we are saved from eternity in hell, delivered from death, and protected from the wrath of God, Romans 5:9; John 5:24; John 10:28.

Salvation will change your life here and bring you into a place of blessing and into the family of God, and it guarantees you that you will go to Heaven when you leave this world.

- Satisfaction

Notice that it is from the belly that these “*rivers of living waters*” flow. The belly is the part of man that is never satisfied. We feed it, and soon we want more. Jesus says that if we come to Him, He will give us satisfaction for our most pressing needs.

The things we seek in this life can never truly satisfy. The pursuit of these things leaves us empty and always looking for more. Jesus, on the other hand, abundantly satisfies the soul! (Psalm 34:8; Psalm 107:9)

- Strength

The water is always there and is constantly refreshing the life of the believer. This Living Water gives us power, gives us joy, and gives us hope in this world.

No one in their natural state can live the Christian life. However, when the Spirit of God lives in you, John 14:16, and lives through you, Galatians 5:16, He makes all things possible, Philippians 4:13.

The Spirit knows my needs, and He makes intercession for me before the throne of God, Romans 8:26-27.

It is the Spirit of God that makes Christian living possible, Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:9

- Service

The Bible makes it clear that this Water of Life forms a mighty river that flows out from us and touches those around us. His promise is that we will be sufficiently satisfied, and that He will use us to reach others for His glory!

In Exodus 17:6 when the rock opened up, the water flowed out into the desert and refreshed everyone who came into contact with it. So it is with us. When we are saved and willing in the hand of God, He will allow us to pour out the Living Water into the dry desert of this world.

Jesus realized that these people were drinking from the river of ritual, and drawing water from the well of religion. Jesus knew they would soon go back home to the same old fears, the same old worries, the same old struggles and temptations, and the same old frustrations.

What was wrong with that crowd in that day, is what is wrong with many people in this crowd this day. They were drawing water from the wrong well. What water does for your body, Jesus can do for your soul. Saturate what is dry, and flush out what is contaminated. Flush out fears and regrets. Dislodge sin and shame.

Like water, Jesus knows where to go. You drink the Living Water, and He just knows where to go. You don't tell the water where to go. You go to my spleen, you go to my muscles. He was speaking of the Spirit who would enter into them.

You don't have to know how it works. But it won't work unless you take it in to your body. For the promise to work, Jesus must penetrate your heart. Everyone is invited, and no one is left out. Welcome Him into the inner workings of your life.

Begins first by heeding your thirst. Don't dismiss your thirst. Don't deny your anger. Don't bury your restlessness in another person or thing. Don't let your heart shrink into a raisin. Drink good water. Don't gulp dirt and swallow rocks. Sometimes we live drinking pond water and act as if it is good. When you are thirsty, you reach for the right stuff do the same for your soul. Not everything you put your lips to will quench your thirst.

Are you thirsty? Are you thirsty for God? Are you thirsty for the Holy Spirit? Are you thirsty for a victorious life? Are you thirsty for a Spirit-filled life? Come to Jesus and drink, and He will fill you until you overflow and become a river of living water that will bless others as well.

If I am thirsty, I can satisfy that thirst with water, but water will only work for my thirst if I drink it. I can fix a glass, but it does me no good in the glass. It is only when I place the glass to my lips, tilt that glass, and allow the water to enter my body that I can receive the benefits of the water.

John concludes the story by giving us an explanation of what Jesus meant and what His promise is available to us.

“By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” John 7:37

Being filled with the Spirit is for the thirsty. If you are satisfied with “religion as usual,” you’ll miss the River of Life. Jesus is looking for the “thirsty”—those who know they cannot survive another day without a fresh filling from Heaven and the Water of Life.

Jesus doesn't promise a stagnant pond. He promises rivers (plural) with a continuous flow. A river is movement. In the Pentecostal life, we believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time “event,” but a continuous “infilling.”

Jesus said it comes from “the belly,” from our innermost being. The Greek word refers to the deepest part of a person. The Spirit doesn't just sit in your mind. He occupies your inner emotions and your very soul. If the river is flowing, it must come out. This is the foundation of our belief in the *manifestation* of the Spirit.

The text says that they were “*later to receive*.” We live in the “later!” The waiting is over. The disciples had to wait for Jesus to be glorified. We don't have to wait for the Spirit to be “given”—He has already been poured out in Acts 2. There is a difference between the Spirit being *available* and the Spirit being *received*. Just as the disciples had to be in the Upper Room, we must position ourselves to receive the “rivers” through faith and surrender.