

Quenching Your Thirst For Life – John 7:37-39

Good to be back; Great time, much refreshed; But we missed you very much
So thankful for a capable staff and conscientious leadership – they really make it possible to get away without taking it all with me

Having wrapped up our study of Luke, for the next couple of weeks we're going to pick up a few events in the life of Christ that we didn't cover this past year
Then look at 3 different Psalms to round out the summer and take us to the start of the ministry year in mid August

But this morning it's John 7:37-39 and Quenching Your Thirst for Life (Bibles)
Setting was Oct of AD29, the fall before his death and resurrection the following April
Jesus, as he often does, shows up in Jerusalem during a religious festival/feast
Plays on the very common human experience of *thirst* to convey some very important spiritual truths

Thirst is a funny thing; It comes and goes depending on what your body needs
But even the mere mention of "thirst" makes you thirsty – Are you thirsty? I'm thirsty
Wish I had some cool, clear water – here's some (take a long drink☺)
Anybody else thirsty? (hand out some bottles of water)
Speak now, this is the only time you can have a drink in here

Thirst is an overwhelmingly compelling sensation
You can suppress for a time, but eventually it will catch up with you will get very desperate and die if it's not quenched

Same is true of spiritual thirst
You can suppress your desire to know God and have him fill/fuel your soul
But eventually, if you don't quench your thirst for Life (capital L), it *will* catch up with you, and you *will* die and spend eternity apart from God forever
Spiritual thirst for God's salvation/grace/blessing, is just as real and just as important as physical thirst for water

As we read this passage, keep in mind the analogy that Jesus is drawing
Water is to physical thirst as Jesus is to spiritual thirst – and both lead to life
Read **John 7:37-39**

Background

The *feast* refers to the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (Jn 7:2)
1 of the 3 major feasts during the year that God had told his people to celebrate (Lev. 23:33-43)
It was a 7 or sometimes 8 day celebration held in the fall
The purpose of which was to remember and thank God for his provision/protection in the past; And to seek his blessing in the future

For 7/8 days, upwards of 150,000-200,000 people would travel from all over Palestine and beyond, to live in makeshift shacks/booths for the duration of the celebration
Hence the name, Feast of Booths/Tabernacles
That was done to remember God's protection of the ancient Israelites in the Sinai desert when they didn't have permanent homes and lived in tents for 40 years

But the focus of the feast was an elaborate water ceremony that happened each day when the priests would draw water from the Pool of Siloam (pitcher)
The Pool of Siloam was located in the southern part of the city (**Jer map**)
Priests would lead a processional from there about ½ mile up to the temple
It might look like this – **First frame**
Model of Jerusalem at time of Christ; pool is just off the bottom of the picture
They would have led this processional (**start video of Jerusalem**) with the crowds lining both sides of the street
Going through these double doors up into the temple courts (**temple slide**)
Ending up at the altar in the inner court of the temple

And despite their thirst from the heat of the day, and the low water reserves at the end of the summer
They would pour it out on the altar as a drink offering (pour 2/3 water)
A symbolic sacrifice where they gave up what precious little they had, seeking and trusting God for more, especially for the growing season to come
That should sound familiar – that's exactly what we do when we give of our tithes and offerings every Sunday
We're giving what precious little we have, trusting God in a very real way to provide more

But they weren't just seeking the blessing of physical water for physical life
They were seeking the blessing of spiritual water for spiritual life
The blessing of God's presence
They well knew that the prophets used water to describe the life-giving blessing that would flow from the presence of God among his people – and they longed for it

They were thirsty for it – thirsty for . . .
The living water that would flow out from Jerusalem – Zech. 14:8
The fountain that would flow out of the Lord's house and water the valley – Joel 3:18
The water that would flow out from the temple, and be ever expanding – Ez 47:1-12
Thirsty for the fulfillment of God's promise in **Is 44:3** – *I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*

They were desperate for God to provide life-sustaining physical water
And they were equally desperate for God to provide life-giving spiritual water

It was in that context, with that background, that Jesus stood up *on the last day of the feast, the great day* – presumably just after the final drink offering was poured out (pour last third) . . .
And cried out to the throngs of people who were packed into the temple courts on the hot stone in the heat of the day, after living outside for 7 days on minimal water and seeing a pitcher of it go down the drain . . .
To those people he *cried out*, "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.*"

Are you thirsty yet? Are you? If so, for what?

What are you thirsty for?

They had no idea how Isaiah's prophecy was going to play out (that God would pour out his Spirit on his people)

But however it happened, they knew that it meant . . .
Life where there was death; Healing where there was brokenness
Refreshment where there was exhaustion; Purpose where there was waste
They longed for it

Question is – do you? Are *you* thirsty for those things? (life, healing, renewal, purpose)
Or – Sins that leave you empty/guilty; Pleasures that quickly fade
Possessions that eventually break; Money that's always spent; Notoriety that never lasts
What are you thirsty for?
Is it the salt water of sin that leaves you constantly wanting more?
Or the living water of life that satisfies forever?

Or maybe the question for you is – are you thirsty at all?

Because if you have no thirst, you have no life

• **No Thirst – No Life**

In other words – no thirst for God, no eternal life

Some of you have no thirst for God's life because you're content with your own

You're just floating down the river of life, headed for a waterfall

Others of you are too proud to consider that your life might be severely lacking in
comparison to life Jesus offers

If that's you, I can't help you other than urge you to at least consider the life that Jesus
offers – you'd be a fool not to
You'd be a fool not to lift your head out of the mud puddle of your life long enough, to
see the waterfall of eternal life right in front of you
You'd be a fool not to *taste and see that the Lord is good*
Will you do that? If you don't, you'll never be thirsty; No thirst, no life

By the same token – a puny thirst leads to a puny life

• **Puny Thirst – Puny Life**

Some of you want God's presence, but only enough to get his blessings

Only enough to feel good about yourself

But not enough to make any real sacrifices/changes

You say outwardly “I want Jesus” but not . . .

On Saturday night at the parties; Or Monday morning at work

Not at my computer in the dark; Not if I have to risk embarrassment, or take a stand

Too many people are thirsty for Jesus only on Sunday

It leads to a puny life on Monday

A life of temporary satisfaction, shallow joy, and little purpose

If you have a puny thirst, you've either quenched the presence of the HS within you

Or you're not saved in the first place

Either way, you're grieving God and missing out

But if you're thirsty for life – life to the full and life forever . . . Only Jesus can quench it

Only Jesus can give you the water of life – but you must come to him to get it (v37)

If anyone thirsts, Jesus said . . . For the life, forgiveness, healing, renewal, strength,
passion, purpose, and blessing that God has promised . . .

For deep, everlasting satisfaction/contentment from wells that never run dry/grow stale
If *anyone* thirsts, let him come to *me* and drink
Come to me and embrace the blessing of salvation that I have to offer
Come to me to quench your thirst for life, now and forever

You can't get the water of life from a distance

Just like it's impossible to get a drink of water from this bottle when you're 10 feet
from it

It's also impossible to drink the water of life from afar

Come Jesus says – to me

He's standing at the door of your heart and knocking with living water in his hands, but
you have to answer it

You don't get life forever and full, *just* because he knocks

You're not saved just because he *offers* it to you

You're not a child of God just because you come to church, or because you've been
confirmed as a teenager, or sprinkled as an infant

You're not one of God's own just because your parents are pillars in the church or your
spouse is picture of purity

You must come to him *personally* to quench your thirst for life

This is so important that some of the last words of the Bible emphasize it in . . .

Rev. 22:17 – *Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of
life without price.*

He offers it freely – Jesus has already paid for it with his blood on the cross

But you have to come and get it

Your old watering holes may wet your appetite for a time, but in the end they will leave
you *more* thirsty than when you started, with a bitter after taste of guilt that leads to
death

That's what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well 2 years earlier in –

John 4:13-14 – *Everyone who drinks this water [the water of this world] will be thirsty
again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I
give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*

If you're thirsty for eternal life and life to the full, Jesus can quench it, but *only* Jesus

He's waiting to do so – waiting for you to come to him

Question is – what are *you* waiting for?

You don't hesitate to get a drink of physical water in order to *sustain* your life

So why hesitate to drink of spiritual water in order to *gain* your life?

Come to him – only he can give you the water of life; And . . .

**Only Jesus can fill your soul with living water – but you must believe in him to
receive it (v38-39)**

When I was a kid and we'd go to my grandparent's house in MO

There was this spring running out of the side of a hill that we'd always look for about
20 miles from their home – it was always running

When went back there recently to bury my Grandma – *still* running, 30+ years later

That's a drop in the bucket (pun intended) compared to the everlasting *ivers* of *living*
water that God puts within you when you believe in Jesus (read v38)

God alone will fill your heart/soul with rivers of living water
But you must believe in Jesus in order to receive it
You must believe in who he is and what he said and what he did . . .
To the point that you entrust your entire life to him – that kind of belief
When you do, you'll receive the HS within you – the very presence of God taking up
residence in your soul, filling and fueling you forever like rivers of living water that
never stop flowing
Believe and receive

That's what Jesus was talking about in v39 (read)
The Spirit wasn't given to those who believed, until Jesus was glorified – until his true
nature as God in the flesh was revealed and worshipped
That happened after his resurrection – no longer any doubt as to who he was
And sure enough, 10 days after his ascension, at another major feast (Pentecost), those
who *believed* in Jesus *received* the Holy Spirit

What God initiated then, he continues to do now
He is still establishing his Spirit in the hearts and lives of those who believe in his Son
The only difference now is that we receive the Holy Spirit *immediately* upon believing in
Jesus as our Savior and confessing him as Lord
There's no wait like there was for the first believers when Jesus walked the earth
We receive the HS in full *when* we believe
He comes into our heart, seals us for eternal life, and guides us for the rest of our life
Giving us peace, contentment, understanding of spiritual truths, and joy unspeakable

So in this passage, the rivers of living water refer to the life-giving presence of the Holy
Spirit within us
And Jesus is saying that the Spirit's presence, together with his blessing of eternal life,
is available right now – when you believe (read v38)
Do you believe?
There's no substitute; No other way

Summary slide

Only Jesus can fill your soul with living water – but you must believe in him to receive it
Only Jesus can give you the water of life – but you must come to him to get it

If you're ready to do that
If you're thirsty for the life he offers
And believe in who he is, what he's done
Give you an opp in a few minutes to pray and begin a relationship with him . . .
Becoming a new person in Christ, forgiven of your sin and relieved of your guilt

Before we do that, take a few minutes and listen to the words of this song
Quiet your heart and let Jesus satisfy your thirst
If you've never come to him or believed – get ready
When it's finished, I'll lead you in a prayer of salvation (band)

Song

Bow our heads (continue playing) – listen carefully
If you've never come to Jesus and want to
If you never believed, but do now
Or you're not sure where you stand with him, and want to make sure
Stand right where you're at and I'll lead you in a prayer of salvation

Everybody else is praying, and even if they weren't it wouldn't matter
The water of eternal life is worth whatever embarrassment you might endure
Fact is – you're surrounded by hundreds of people who've already come to Jesus, and
will rejoice with you – you're in a safe place
Just stand up right now, and stay standing
Won't belabor the point, but if there's even one person who's thirsty for life, I want to
lead you to Jesus and the water of life

Pray

For those of you who just received Jesus as your Savior . . .
Praise God for you – now grow
New Believers Packet to help you get started this week – at the doors
Or, if you'd like to talk/pray with someone about the decision you just made, or you
have questions – come down front after the service

