

“Jesus’ Promise Of Living Water” Delivered by Pastor Ed Terry

Exodus 17: 1- 7; Jeremiah 2: 9 – 13; Revelation 22: 1 – 5 & 17; **John 7: 37 – 44 (Sermon)**

The events described in our scripture lesson from John this morning took place on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The spiritual purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles was for the Children of Israel to recall the journey that their forefathers made in the wilderness after God delivered them out of slavery in Egypt. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles the Jews remembered and celebrated the occasion when God miraculously supplied water out of the rock at Horeb for their ancestors. (Leviticus 23: 33 – 36)

During that feast the High Priest would take a golden pitcher to the Pool of Siloam, fill it with water from the pool, and carry it back to the Temple through the Water Gate. Then the High Priest would pour the water out on the Altar of Sacrifice. At that moment the Levites would blow the trumpets and the people would shout out, ***“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation!”*** (Isaiah 12:3). At the climax of this celebration Jesus ***“stood up and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’”*** (John 7:37 – 38) Jesus was saying that He is the fulfillment of all that The Feast of Tabernacles symbolized. Jesus was telling the people that He was the rock in the wilderness that the water came from. ***“...for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”*** (1st Corinthians 10:4) Jesus was saying that He is the rock that living water comes from. Jesus was saying that He is God. Verse 37 tells us that the living water is the indwelling Holy Spirit that God would give to all who believe in Jesus as The Christ. ***“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*** (Luke 11: 13)

When we understand the symbolic meaning of this ceremony we can understand why Jesus chose this particular time to stand up and announce that He is The Messiah. The drawing of the water from the pool was symbolic of drawing salvation from God’s well of mercy and grace. The water coming out of the rock at Horeb was symbolic of Jesus being the source of living water. The pouring of the water on the Alter of Sacrifice was symbolic of Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross for the sins of all mankind. And as Jesus said in verse 39, the pouring of the water is also symbolic of Jesus pouring out His Holy Spirit on the people. The water running down the altar of our life is symbolic of the streams of living water that will flow out of a believer’s life that Jesus spoke of in verse 38.

During The Feast of Tabernacles devout Jewish people would come to the Temple each morning to offer their sacrifices and sing their songs. Then for seven days they would sleep in a temporary shelter. Yet despite their faithful ritual they did not have the peace and joy of The Lord in their life. They were still thirsty because they did not have a personal relationship with the Living God. These people were trusted in their rituals of worship and in their sacrifice. Remember in Hosea 6:6 God tells us, ***“For I desire mercy not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.”*** You see the people in Jesus’ day missed the point that God wants a personal relationship with His people. Jesus wanted them and Jesus wants all of us to choose to make The Living God a real part of our daily life.

Without water our physical bodies will die. Without living water our spiritual life is dead. Jesus was clearly saying, ***“I am what keeps you spiritually and eternally alive. Not only will I give you enough for yourself but you will have an abundant supply to share with the people around you.”***

Notice in verse 37 Jesus gave an invitation to everyone who was thirsty. ***“if anyone is thirsty”***. To take advantage of Jesus’ offer we must admit our need by coming to Jesus. Then we have to drink. To drink means to make Jesus a part of our daily life. Next Jesus said if you truly believe ***“streams of living water will flow from within him.”*** In other words if you truly believe Jesus’ words you will automatically share this God given gift of life with the people around you.

When Jesus said: ***“If anyone is thirsty let Him come to me and drink.”*** Some said, ***“Surely this man is a prophet.”*** Others said, ***“He is the Christ.”*** You see, these people clearly understood that only The Christ could make such a claim. However our text tells us that other people doubted and that other people wanted to do away with Jesus. And that is exactly the same kind of reaction people have today to Jesus’ invitation to have spiritual and eternal life.

Today many people are searching for peace, happiness, and meaning in their lives. They are trying to satisfy a thirst they cannot identify so they try alcohol, drugs, relationships, sex, possessions, etc. Sadly, most people will try anything but Jesus is the only thing that truly satisfies a person’s soul. Jesus said, ***“If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me will have streams of living water flowing from them.”*** When you drink living water, Jesus will set you free. Free from guilt and shame, free to love, free to forgive, free from want, free to enjoy the abundant victorious life God has planned for you, free to serve The Lord by leading other thirsty souls to the living water. The truth is coming to Jesus, having a personal relationship with Jesus, and living for Jesus never takes away from your life. A personal relationship with The Living God always gives you an abundant victorious life that enriches not only your life but also it also enriches the life of everybody around you. The living water that flows from a person when they have a personal relationship with The Living God is the love, joy, peace, and hope of Jesus Christ.

Just as physical life cannot survive without water, no soul can survive without Jesus. This morning we all need to ask ourselves: *Am I thirsty for spiritual life? Have I accepted Jesus’ offer to come to Him, admitted my need, and decided to make Jesus a part of every aspect of my life? Am I a source of spiritual refreshment to the people around me?*

When you first asked Jesus to be your personal Savior all of the sins you had ever committed were forgiven. You were given the gift of The Holy Spirit and you were given the power to overcome your sinful nature. However, we all need to continually ask The Holy Spirit to fill our life in order to be successful in overcoming our sinful nature. When The Holy Spirit fills your life the love, peace, joy, and hope of Jesus Christ will be evident in everything you do and in everything you say.

Once we have quenched our spiritual thirst with living water then our job as a Christians is to help the unbelievers God has put in our life identify the cause of their thirst. You see people often see their problems as physical problems so they treat the symptom. However, many times the root of our physical problems are a spiritual problem. When we come to that realization and turn to Jesus, believing in Jesus as the giver of life and as the great miracle worker, Jesus will turn our problems into a victory.

In our lesson from Jeremiah we read where God said Israel had forsaken Him and the living water God offered. God said they had dug their own cisterns which were broken and would not hold water (Jeremiah 2:13) Earthly fountains only satisfy temporarily. We can drink of the fountain of wealth every day but it will not satisfy very long. We can drink of the fountain of fame but the satisfaction is very short. We can drink from the fountain of worldly pleasure, human science, philosophy, education; and even drink of the fountain of human love, but none of these will satisfy very long. Earthly fountains only make things worse. Drinking from an earthly fountain is like drinking ocean water. The thirst is quenched for a few seconds but the thirst comes back bigger than before. Earthly fountains create more thirst rather than quenching our thirst. We all need to ask ourselves; *“Have I been drinking the contaminated waters of the world or have you been drinking the living water that Jesus offers?”* Failing to spend quality time with The Lord and trying to do things in our own will only weaken us and eventually result in our death. Without the living water, without personal fellowship with The Lord, our soul cannot get any nourishment. It is only as we fellowship with The Lord that we can be changed into His likeness by The Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ offers us what we need - we need the Living Water that only Jesus Christ can supply.

Notice the invitation Jesus gives in verse 37. Jesus said, ***“If any one is thirsty...”*** Jesus didn’t give this invitation to those who had prayed and fasted long enough. Jesus didn’t give this invitation to those who had prayed loud enough. Jesus didn’t give this invitation to those who had repeated phrases of praises enough. Jesus didn’t give this invitation to those who had recently taken the sacraments. Jesus simply gave this invitation to all people who were spiritually thirsty.

Now look at Jesus’ promise in verse 38 ***“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*** The picture that Jesus paints for us is that each and every Christian will be a fountain of living water giving blessings from Jesus to everyone around us. When a stream of living water flows from within you, you will start making a difference in the lives of the people around you. You will be spiritually refreshing the people around you.

If that ***“living water”*** is not freely flowing out from your life and watering the people around you there is something within your life that is obstructing the flow! Unconfessed sin always obstructs the flow of ***“living water”*** in a believer’s life? Some of us are like the Dead Sea, always taking in; but never giving out, because we are not in a right relationship with Almighty God, through Jesus the Christ! Remember Jesus said; ***“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him”***. (John 7:38)

In our lesson from John we saw three reactions to Jesus’ invitation. Some believed and accepted Jesus as The Christ. Some questioned and left without satisfying their greatest need. Still others left with bitterness in their heart because they refused to admit their greatest need. This morning Jesus is saying to each one of us; ***“Come to me and I will satisfy all your needs. Come to me and enjoy the abundant victorious life that I have planned for you.”*** God’s Word to us today challenges each of us to ask ourselves these questions; ***Have I accepted Jesus’ offer to come to Him and admitted my spiritual need? Have I quenched my spiritual thirst with living water? Am I a source of spiritual refreshment to the people around me?***

This morning we all have the privilege of celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. As you approach The Lord’s Table will you tell Jesus that you are thirsty to know more about Him and to be closer to Him? Will you ask Jesus to replace the hurt and the emptiness in your life with His presence, His peace, His provision, His power, and His protection so that the people around you will become thirsty for Jesus in their life? **AMEN.**