

“Living Water For Your Thirst” (John 7:37-39a)

For Your Life in Christ the Week of the Day of Pentecost

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Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LCMS)

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Introduction: The Last Day of The Feast & Crying

- A. Two things that can fly by, but shouldn’t:
- B. “On the last day of the feast” =
 - 1. Feast of Booths or Tabernacles or Ingathering = week-long celebration of the harvest; the people of God literally made booths made out of branches and leaves and offered special thanksgivings to the Lord.
 - 2. It was a festival of joy that expressed thanksgiving in the expectation of the miracle of rain which of course would secure the harvest.

*If Israel was faithful to God’s covenant then rain:

Leviticus 26:4: *“then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.”*

*If Israel sinned against God then they would THIRST:

Deuteronomy 28:48: *“therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst...”*.

- 3. The most important element, however:

“the famous ‘water-drawing’ ceremony, including the procession from the pool of Siloam to the temple, in which priests and people marched in, after which priests would pour out water and wine at the base of the altar [in the temple].” (Keener, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1, 722)

- 4. Siloam was the pool associated with the healing of the blind man in John 9:7. But before John 7, it represented **God’s provision** when during the reign of King Hezekiah, the Assyrians under Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem in 701 B.C.
- 5. The people associated miraculous water (living water) with the temple (as the water was processed to the temple and poured there). They knew:

Isaiah 12:3: *“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”*

6. Notice also the association between water and temple:
Ezekiel 47:1: *“Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple...”*.

7. Temple and water in the new heaven & new earth:
Revelation 21:22: *“for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.”*

Revelation 22:1: *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life...flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb...”*.

***Now pause and consider: the people of God believed that from the temple sacred living water would flow to bless them and save them from all of the curses and threats of this life. And then right in the middle of this ceremony that every good Jew understood the biblical significance of...

- C. Jesus stood up and cried out (John 7:37)...
 - 1. Rabbi’s sat as they taught, they did not stand. This was an exceptional moment! Jesus stood up!
 - 2. And Jesus cried out! Only times Jesus cried out:
 - a. Two times from the cross: Mt. 27:46, 50.
 - b. Two times here in John 7 (vv 28 & 37)
 - (1) Verse 28: about his PERSON.
 - (2) Verse 37: about his WORK.
 - 3. Jesus was greatly alarmed, because He knew that people were rejecting Him. He was truly a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Is 53:3). **Jesus saw the alarming condition of the people He came to save! He spoke words to direct the people to HIM:**

Part I: If Anyone Thirsts:

- A. We must understand that this is a spiritual thirst.
- B. Health professionals say drink at least eight (8) glasses of water per day. But we can get so busy that we neglect our bodies and only drink a few glasses.
- C. It is easy to by-pass your tremendous need.

E. It is also easy to miss your great *spiritual* thirst!

F. Luther:

"[This is] a thirst of the soul, a spiritual thirst, a heartfelt desire, yes, a distressed, wretched, terrified, and aroused conscience, a despondent and frightened heart which longs to know on what terms it is with God. Such is the timid, fainthearted conscience: it feels its sin, it is conscious of a weakness of spirit, soul, and flesh; it is aware of a menacing God; it fears God and sees His Law, wrath, judgment, death, and other penalties. Such anxiety marks the proper thirst." (Luther's Works, Vol. 23, 267)

G. And with these words, Luther challenges every popular thought about the Christian faith. Oh, if you've got a strong faith, then:

1. You will defeat and be "victorious" over anxiety, depression, fear, etc.
2. You will be strong in every worldly sense.

H. Wrong! And for those who achieve such illusory thoughts about themselves, then they are delusional, but most of all: do not need the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Instead, pray to be thirsty! Luther: "Thirst is a good bartender, and hunger is a good cook." (ibid, 272) Only when we know our weakness and sin do we thirst for salvation!

J. In Scripture, it is only the weak who say "I am strong" and truly know the strength of God.

2nd Corinthians 12:10b: "For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Part II: When We Know Our Thirst, Then We Are Ready For Christ's Next Words:

John 7:37b-38: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

- A. Christ and Christ alone deals with your incredible and desperate thirst. How? By forgiving all of your sins. This is the truth of the Gospel. As horrendous, as terrible, as mortifying as your sin is: all of it is covered by His blood; all of it is conquered by His resurrection!
- B. Jesus says, "Come to me" in Matt. 11:28 not so that He would torture you, but so that He would give you rest. Cherish these words sinner; cherish them: Jesus welcomes you and forgives you for EVERYTHING.

Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

C. And now we connect these words to the beginning of the sermon:

1. Jesus is the NEW TEMPLE!
2. We process to HIM when He calls us!
3. And from Him, flow "RIVERS"...an amazing FLOOD.
4. And this river is of "LIVING WATER".
5. He is describing the outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Conclusion: This Living Water Gift is For You and From YOU to others:

- A. The Holy Spirit keeps you in the flood of the Word of Christ...it floods from Bible Studies, the testimony of fellow Christians, through prayers, through sermons, through hymns...the Word, the Word, the Word is a mighty flood that covers your life with LIFE (Jesus Christ)!
- B. And as a result, you are filled with the Word to then share it with others...to lift up those around you!

2nd Corinthians 1:4: "who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."