

Title: **ARE YOU THIRSTY?**

Text: John 7:37-39

Subject: *Christ's Gospel Invitation*

Date: Sunday Morning — June 28, 2009

Tape: John #56

Reading: *Isaiah 55:1-13*

Introduction:

By the time our Lord Jesus came into this world the Jews' religion had degenerated into nothing but an outward form, bearing very little resemblance to the worship God established by the hand of Moses when He gave His servant the Pattern of the Tabernacle. They retained much of the outward form, the holy days and the great holy convocations required by the law. But they knew nothing of spiritual worship, and really cared nothing for the meaning of the ordinances they practiced. They retained what they wanted, observed what they enjoyed, and practiced that by which they could gain something. Everything else in the Book of God they ignored. — Much like most religious people today!

In addition to that mockery of God, the Jews had more religious traditions and customs of human invention than a dog has fleas. Let me tell you about one of them, while you turn to John 7.

During the Feast of Tabernacles, on the 8th day of the Feast, which was the last day of the Feast, that which they considered "*the great day of the Feast,*" they read the last section of the law. Then, as the climactic act of their Feast, they observed a very solemn ceremony, a ceremony altogether of their own invention. I guess they thought it made the worship of God more appealing.

In a very solemn procession they would parade down to the river Shiloh with buckets, and bring buckets of water up to the Temple. The priests would take their buckets of water and pour them out on the altar. As they did, the people would sing, "*With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*" (Isaiah 12:3).

That is exactly where we are in John 7:37-39. The Jews had been up to the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem. They had been there for eight days. They had gone through all the rites and ceremonies of their now empty religion. They had done all that they knew to do. They had done all that their

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religious leaders told them to do. But their religion had left them thirsty. Now, they were going home, going home just as empty and thirsty as they were when they came. As they were leaving the Temple, the Lord Jesus stepped up on a high place, where He could be seen and heard by all. Read with me beginning at verse 37.

(John 7:37-39) In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Are you thirsty? Has your religion left you thirsty? Come to Christ. Drink of the life-giving Fountain; and thirst no more!

THE THIRST

The Lord Jesus says, “*If any man thirst.*” — The thirst He speaks of is a spiritual thirst, a thirst of soul, a thirst of heart. It is an anxiety of soul arising from conviction of sin, — a desire of pardon arising from a sense of guilt, — a longing after peace of conscience arising from a dread of judgment. Do you feel your guilt, your sins, your iniquity? Do you want forgiveness? — Are you sensible of your soul’s need? Do you want help and relief? If so, this is the Savior’s word to you.

“*If any man thirst.*” — The Jews who heard Peter preach on the day of Pentecost, and were “*pricked in their hearts,*” — the Philippian jailer who cried to Paul and Silas, “*What must I do to be saved?*” were thirsty. — Are You thirsty? Few people are.

Many there are who thirst after every vain thing; but few thirst for Christ. Few thirst for mercy. Few thirst for God’s salvation! Are you thirsty? Blessed are those who know something by experience of this spiritual “*thirst.*” The beginning of all true Christianity is to discover that we are guilty, empty, needy sinners. Until we know that we are lost, we cannot be saved. The very first step toward heaven is to be thoroughly convinced that we deserve hell. That sense of sin which sometimes alarms a man and

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makes him think his own case hopelessly desperate, is a good sign. It is in fact a symptom of spiritual life

(Matthew 5:1-6) And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: (2) And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, (3) Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. (5) Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. (6) Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

How broad, how inclusive these words are! — “*If any man thirst!*” The Gospel of Christ is for “*any man.*” It matters not who you are, what you have been or what you have done. The Lord Jesus says, “*If any man thirst let him come!*”

If you are thirsty, the invitation is for you. No other qualification is required. Are you thirsty? Our Lord Jesus does not say a word here about...

- Repentance that must be experienced.
- Amendments that must be made.
- Preparations for grace that must be experienced.
- Knowledge that must be gained.
- Works that must be done.

Are you thirsty? Do you feel the weight of your sins pressing you down to hell? Do you thirst for peace, pardon, forgiveness, righteousness, acceptance with God? If so, this is a Word from God for you.

COME AND DRINK

“*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.*” — Here is the Fountain of Life, the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, the smitten Rock that gushes forth rivers of living waters, the Well of Salvation, stretching forth His hands to poor, needy sinners, calling thirsty souls to come to Him and drink.

- Christ is the Supplier of all spiritual necessities.
- Christ is the Reliever of all spiritual needs.
- He calls all who feel the heavy burden of sin to come to Him, and find relief.

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Those words “*let him come unto me,*” are very simple and easily understood. But they settle a mighty question which all the wisdom of Greek and Roman philosophers could never settle. They tell us how man can have peace with God. They tell us that peace is to be had in Christ by trusting in Him as our Mediator and Substitute.

To “*come*” to Christ is to believe on Him; and to “*believe*” on Him is to come. There is no other way to obtain peace. Salvation is to be had by...

- Casting your soul upon Christ.
- Committing yourself to Christ.
- Coming to Christ. — Believing on the Son of God, coming to the Lord Jesus, we receive the adoption of children, and receive free and full justification as the sons of God (John 1:12-13; 6:35, 37; Romans 4:25-5:11).

(John 1:12-13) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

(John 6:35) And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

(John 6:37) All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

(Romans 4:25) Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

(Romans 5:1-11) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a

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good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The saints of God in every age have been and are men and women who drink of this fountain by faith and find relief. Look around you this morning. Look around this room, here you sit in the midst of many, old and young, who will verify everything I'm telling you. These men and women have experienced this thirst of soul and the relief of Christ quenching their souls' thirst.

- They felt their guilt and emptiness, and thirsted for deliverance.
- They heard of a full supply of pardon, mercy, and grace in Christ crucified for all who trust Him.
- They believed the good news.
- They have cast aside all confidence in their own goodness and worthiness, and come to Christ by faith.
- So coming they have found relief. So coming daily they live. So coming they hope to die.

“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” — “Drink!” — What a great word that is! The Son of God says to thirsty sinners, *“Come unto Me and drink!”* He says, *“Come to Me and freely take from me everything your soul needs: mercy, grace, pardon, peace, strength, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption!”* — Christ is the Fountain of Life.

- Drink from the Fountain!
- Bathe in the Fountain!
- Swim in the Fountain!

THE PROMISE OF LIFE

In verse 37 the Lord Jesus promises life to all who come and drink. But there is more here than the promise of life. The Lord Jesus promises that every thirsty sinner who comes to Him shall have life in himself, a river of life in himself!

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(John 7:38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

- All who come to Christ by faith shall find in Him abundant satisfaction.
- The believing sinner becomes a fountain of life to others. — Being blessed of God, the believing sinner is made an instrumental source of blessing to others.

What a Fountain of Life Christ is in my soul! — “*Christ in you, the Hope of Glory!*”

Once far from God and dead in sin,
No light my heart could see;
But in God’s Word the light now shines,
And Christ liveth in me!

As rays of light from yonder sun,
The flowers of earth set free,
So life and light and love came forth
From Christ living in me.

Christ liveth in me,
Christ liveth in me,
Oh! what a salvation this,
That Christ liveth in me.

What peace and hope, what comfort and joy, what riches of grace and mercy and love I find in my Savior! In Him I find grace according to my need, and strength according to my days. In myself I find nothing but disappointed; but I’ve have never been disappointed in Christ.

I cannot tell you what a blessing my God has made other saved sinners to be to me. I constantly find the sweet waters of life flowing to my soul from God’s saints.

- Your love engaged for my help.
- Your quickness to forgive my offences.
- Your readiness to supply the needs of others.
- Your eagerness to see sinners come to know the Savior.
- Your zeal for the Gospel, for the Glory of God and for the Kingdom of God.

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Only in the Day of Judgment, when all things are revealed, will we know the good that God has done by each believer, once the rivers of living water start flowing out of his belly.

- Some do good while they live, by their tongues, like the Apostles and first preachers of the Gospel.
- Some do good when they are dying, like Stephen and the penitent thief.
- Some do good after they have been dead many years: Bunyan, Gill, Spurgeon, Hawker.

Perhaps, like me, when you read here, “*He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,*” you pull down a concordance and start looking for the place in which the Scriptures say that. Have you? If you have, you came up empty. The Scriptures do not say that anywhere; but the Scriptures do declare it everywhere.

(Isaiah 12:3) Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

(Isaiah 35:6-7) Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. (7) And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

(Isaiah 41:18) I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

(Isaiah 44:3) For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

(Isaiah 55:1) Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

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(Isaiah 58:11) And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

(Zechariah 14:8) And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

(Zechariah 14:16) And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

A DIFFICULTY CLEARED

I am reluctant to mention it, but there is a difficulty in our text that needs to be cleared. Look at verse 39.

(John 7:39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Obviously, the Holy Spirit existed before the Lord Jesus was glorified. He is the eternal God, the Third Person in the Triune Godhead (1 John 5:7).

Equally obvious is the fact that in the Old Testament, God the Holy Spirit regenerated, called, sanctified, guided and preserved chosen, redeemed sinners, just as He does today. Without the Spirit of God there is no spiritual life. Without Him there is no faith in Christ. Without Him there is no union with Christ. Yet, God's saints of old enjoyed those sweet blessings of grace just as we do.

- Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
- Enoch walked in sweet communion with God and spoke by the Spirit of prophecy.
- Abraham believed God.
- David cried, "*Take not thy Holy Spirit from me!*"

What, then, is the meaning of John's words in verse 39? In what sense was the Holy Spirit not yet given because Christ was not yet glorified? — He

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was not yet given to the Gentiles as the manifest, inaugural gift of the enthroned Messiah. It was, as our Savior said in John 16, expedient for us that He return to the Father, that the blessing of Abraham, the promise of the Spirit might gush forth from heaven upon chosen sinners in all His life-giving power. **The gift of the Spirit is God's declaration of...**

- Redemption accomplished!
- Christ enthroned!
- Salvation finished!
- The Surety accepted!
- The Covenant fulfilled!

(Psalms 68:18-19) Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*. (19) Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits*, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

Are you thirsty? Come to Christ and drink away the thirst of your soul!

(John 7:37-39) In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

“Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power:
He is able, He is able,
He is willing: doubt no more.

Ho! ye thirsty, come and welcome;
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh,
Without money, Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.

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Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him:
This he gives you; This he gives you;
‘Tis the Spirit’s rising beam.

Come, ye weary heavy laden,
Bruised and mangled by the fall;
If you tarry till you’re better,
You will never come at all;
Not the righteous, Not the righteous,
Sinners Jesus came to call.

View him grov’ling in the garden,
Lo! Your Maker prostrate lies;
On the bloody tree behold him!
Hear him cry before he dies,
‘It is finished!’ ‘It is finished!’
Sinner, will not this suffice?

Lo! Th’ incarnate God ascended,
Pleads the merit of his blood;
Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude:
None but Jesus, None but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.

Saints and angels, joined in concert,
Sing the praises of the Lamb;
While the blissful seats of heaven
Sweetly echo with his name.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Sinners here may sing the same.”

(Joseph Hart)

Amen.