



John 7:37-39
“Are You Thirsty?”

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The feast itself was a memorial to the time of wandering in the wilderness when food and water were scarce and God himself was the provider for the needs of His people. Although it was nowhere commanded in the Old Testament, on each of the seven days of the feast, the celebration began with a priest drawing water from the Pool of Siloam in a gold flagon and then carrying it back in folded by the worshippers in procession to the temple where they were greeted by the joyful sounding of a trumpet. Then the priest would hold up the flagon and everyone would strain to get a look before he poured the water out at the altar as simultaneously wine was poured out on the other side.

Isaiah 12:3 was often associated with this ritual ***“Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation.”***

On the last day though, no water was poured out, and soon the booths will be disassembled, and this great assembly that has come together to worship at the Temple will disperse and return to their homes, this same group of people will never again assemble together in worship, and as Matthew Henry puts it ***“When a great congregation is to be dismissed, and is about to scatter, as here, it is affecting to think that in all probability they will never come all together again in this world, and therefore, if we can say or do any thing to help them to heaven, that must be the time.”*** Because it is the last day Jesus who is the true and only source of the water of life stands and makes this final impassioned plea. For some this would be their last time hearing the gospel, the final hearing of the offer of salvation. So Christ stands and cries out to them, he desires that everyone might hear him, not just a few in his vicinity.

He desires to be heard by all, because the invitation is made to all. He says “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” When you are thirsty, you feel dry and parched, you need water to quench that thirst. I can remember once going on a 6 mile hike in Arizona that looked easy on paper, because the map I had was flat and not topographical, and I foolishly decided that because it would be so quick, and it was early in the morning, I could leave my canteen in the van. By the time I reached mile 4, I no longer had a tongue, I had a large piece of sandpaper. I was surrounded by beautiful scenery but I was no longer aware of it, the entire focus of my existence, was on the contents of a little green plastic bottle in a van 2 miles away.

Now Jesus obviously isn't speaking of physical thirst and offering to give away bottles of water. Similarly he isn't speaking of the kind of thirst every man feels. *If* anyone thirsts. Jesus is speaking of another kind of even more urgent thirst. It is the thirst of the man who suddenly feeling the terrible weight and odiousness of his sins, thirsts for forgiveness. It is the thirst of the woman who realizes how dry and lifeless her existence really is. It is the thirst of the person who wants righteousness and knows they have none of their own. It is the thirst of the crowd in Acts 2 after they had been cut to the heart by the preaching of Peter and cried out "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" That is not a thirst that cannot be relieved by physical water or alcohol for that matter. It is a thirst that can only be quenched by God Himself.

This is a thirst that all men *should* feel, as JC Ryle said "*All ought to feel it, and all would feel it if they were wise. Sinful, mortal, dying creatures as we all are, with souls that will one day be judged and spend eternity in heaven or hell, there lives not the man or woman on earth who ought not to "thirst" after salvation.*"

Now what kind of people never feel thirst? We don't feel thirsty when we are asleep, but we do when we awaken. And we don't feel thirst when we are dead. That is the spiritual condition of the natural man, and why he feels no thirst. Spiritually he is neither alive nor awake, and that is why in order to come to realize our need we must first be brought out of that state, Eph. 5:14 "*Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."* As I've said before, the believer who is spiritually alive feels His sin and feels his need of Christ, but the unbeliever, man getting them to admit any sin or any need is almost impossible. The Pharisees, for instance, thought of themselves as the sinless ones, and so they complained about Christ going and preaching to the tax collectors and sinners:

Luke 5:31 Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

32 "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

So if today you feel that thirst that Christ is speaking of, that is good sign, it is a sign that God has been doing his awakening and alarming work in you. The first step on the road to salvation is to realize that you are currently on the road to hell. If you never realize that, then you will surely reach your final destination.

What must you do if you feel that thirst? You must go to Christ by faith and drink. A living, personal faith in Christ is the condition of new life. We drink by believing. It is a faith that trusts in Christ alone not our own works, but his perfect work on the cross.

Now it may be that you are hesitant to do that, you are thinking to yourself, I cannot go to Him, because I'm not ready, I'm not worthy. No one is *worthy* to go to Christ, in fact it is only those people who realize the true depth of their unworthiness who will flee to Him at all. He does not say clean up your act, then come to me. He invites *Anyone to come to him*. Jesus literally went out of his way to prove that. At the well at Sychar, Jesus met a Samaritan woman who had been married 5 times and was currently living with a man she wasn't married to. And yet Jesus offered the living water to her too saying in John 4:14 "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

As the hymnist put it *All the fitness Christ requires is to feel your need of Him*.

David Dickson, once Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh, being asked, when on his deathbed, how he found himself answered, 'I have taken my good deeds and bad deeds, and thrown them together in a heap, and fled from them both to Christ, and in Him I have peace.'

Jesus assures us that if you come to Him, your spiritual thirst will be quenched forever, and the gift of the Spirit will mean that your heart will become a source or spring of that living water. The heart that is able to bring forth living water is enabled to do so because of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit.

Living Water is flowing water, it has none of the stagnant qualities of the pond or the swamp. When a man becomes a Christian it is God's intention that he would become a means of blessing to others. It is a gift that we are supposed to be continuously giving away.

What John is telling us in verse 39 is that this principle was gloriously proven in the explosion of the gospel as not angels, but ordinary men carried the word to every race and tribe and tongue on earth. Now for millennia the word of God had barely spread beyond the borders of Israel and but after the Spirit's empowering of the church at Pentecost in a little over two hundred years despite terrible persecution, the Gospel would spread to the limits of the known world and overcome even the Roman Empire. Every changed became a river of living gospel water, and together those rivers filled the world with the water of life.

The Holy Spirit had not been inactive before Pentecost, we read of His working in both the Old Testament and in the Gospels, but it was the sacrifice of Christ that made possible and inaugurated the age of the spirit. The evidence of the pouring forth of the Spirit was also evident in the dramatic change that occurred in the Apostles, they went from hiding in a locked upper room to boldly proclaiming the gospel and doing signs and wonders in Christ's name. All of this was the confirmation of what God said would take place in the last days, those days between Christ's ascension and his return: "**Joel 2:28 " And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.**

29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

3 Applications: **Kids** I know it may be difficult to understand what this principle of coming to Christ because you are thirsty means so if I can let me give you C.S. Lewis's illustration from the Silver Chair:

Jill sees a lion and is scared out of her wits she runs and runs and becomes incredibly thirsty, then she hears what she needs most, a gurgling stream

"Are you not thirsty?" said the Lion.

"I'm dying of thirst", said Jill.

"May I - could I - would you mind going away while I do?", said jill.

The Lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the while montain to move aside for her convenience.

The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic.

“Will you promise not to - do anything to me, if I do come?”, said Jill.

“I make no promise”, said the Lion.

Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer.

“Do you eat girls?”, she said.

“I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, knigs and emperors, cities and realms”, said the Lion. It didn’t say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it.

“I daren’t come and drink”, said Jill.

“Then you will die of thirst”, said the Lion.

“Oh dear!”, said Jill, coming another step nearer. “I suppose I must go and look for another stream then.”

“There is no other stream”, said the Lion.

"There is no other stream," said the Lion.

It never occurred to Jill to disbelieve the Lion — no one who had seen his stern face could do that-and her mind suddenly made itself up. It was the worst thing she had ever had to do, but she went forward to the stream, knelt down, and began scooping up water in her hand. It was the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted. You didn't need to drink much of it, for it quenched your thirst at once.

Christians: Out of your heart should be pouring forth those rivers of living water. He has filled your cup to the brim and it should be flowing over to others. Is it? To often we can become individually or corporately swamps. To many churches come to resemble not a flowing river but the dead sea. The Jordan empties into it, but because the water does not flow out it has become dead and lifeless.

All: Are you thirsty? *There will be a day when you will be hearing the gospel for the last time.*

“I preached as never sure to preach again, And as a dying man to dying men.” – Richard Baxter

2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.