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| <b>Series:</b><br>Portraits of Jesus in<br>John   | <b>Reference:</b><br><i>John 7</i> | <b>Title:</b><br>The Fountain | <b>Date:</b><br>03.22.2019 |
| <b>Website Writeup:</b><br>Today we see the Holy Spirit as the Living Water, and Christ as the Fountain which provides it!<br>Do we have a vibrant life in the Spirit? Read along and see where the Spirit takes you! |                                    |                               |                            |

## COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

*Memory Verses for this Series - about 1 every 2 weeks*

Open with me to John 7 beginning in v37 where it says...<sup>37</sup> *On the last & greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood & said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me & drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."*

Where've we heard this before? Yes, the Samaritan woman at the well...John's being redundant. What more can we say about it? How can we preach on the same words we had just a few weeks back? Well, let's ask ourselves a few questions about this situation in John 7...When, where, to whom did He say this? And what exactly is He saying & why? With those questions in mind let's think this through & contrast those two events.

As we said, the first time we hear Him say this he is sitting next to a well during a time of day where no one else would be around with only a Samaritan woman. We conjectured she went at that time due to her reputation - she could not go when others were around. It's a private conversation, no one else hears it - intimate & directed right to her heart & situation, using imagery of the water in the well. She was a woman, and as such in that culture was a second class citizen, no man would care or dare to spark up conversation with a woman. She also was a Samaritan, Jesus had traveled right through Samaria when Jews normally would have taken the route around it. Jews considered Samaritans to be half-breeds, dogs, since they'd intermarried with those outside Israel. There was a long standing feud between the two religious groups. No Jewish man at the time would consider it worthwhile to talk with not only a woman, but especially a Samaritan woman dubious reputation.

But this situation in John 7:37 is different. The conversation with the Samaritan Woman was private & intimate, whereas this is public & corporate. So, when did this happen? It tells us, <sup>37</sup> *On the last & greatest day of the festival*. So, Jesus is at a festival, waiting until the last & greatest day when there'll be the most ears available, right before they go home - to give them something to remember during the Feast of Tabernacles (which was the festival). Why then?

Before we answer, let's remember, no one would care what He told a Samaritan woman of dubious reputation in a private conversation. He could have said anything to her, but it wouldn't matter because no one in Jerusalem cared about her thoughts (except Jesus obviously!). But here Jesus is standing up in the Temple courts, probably on some high

place pronouncing this in a loud voice - which was only done if someone was going to make a solemn proclamation of Truth! In front of Orthodox Jews, not the half-bred Samaritan, making this statement. Pronouncing to a large crowd of men; the faithful. A very different scenario - Jesus is showing serious bravado.

He didn't come to this festival until about half-way through since the Jewish leaders were out to kill Him - but here He stands in the middle of the crowd shouting believe in ME! That's a death sentence. I imagine Peter probably cringed. He's probably saying, "Oh no, Jesus get down, what are you doing!?" He probably turned to the other disciples saying, "Let's get Jesus out of here before He gets Himself killed!" It's that bold!

Because listen to what He says, "*Let anyone who is thirsty come to ME & drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in ME, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.*" Now, if we reworded that, maybe Jesus wouldn't have been so hated. If He'd said, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to GOD & drink. Whoever believes in GOD, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." That would've been fine; they would've nodded, and said, "Mmmm, good teaching, that guy has passion for the Lord." But He didn't, He said ME! Come to ME & drink. Believe in ME. AS THE SCRIPTURE HAS SAID! "I am God, I am the source of life, the Scripture speaks of ME!" If I stood up & said that to you, you would lump me in the category of David Koresh, Jim Jones, or any other lunatic with a messiah complex. You see why this would infuriate the Orthodox Jew.

The people were confused; is He deceitful, crazy, the Prophet, the Messiah? Whispering through the crowd. He's dropped a theological bomb & it's having both positive & negative effects. As a result, the Jewish leaders send guards to arrest him, but they don't! And when they're asked why they didn't, the guards say it's because no one speaks like this guy (vs46)! The leaders get so angry they ask the guards, "Has He deceived you too (VS47)!?" And these leaders are so arrogant to claim that they're the guardians of truth, that all the people are a bunch of idiots, they don't know the Law (vs48-49). Do we hear the spiritual pride in their demeanor? They have become the guardians of Truth instead of the followers of Truth.

So, we know He's in the Temple courts. We know when, the last & greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles (also referred to as the feast of Booths). We know to whom He's speaking, the nation of Israel gathered together for remembrance & worship of God. We at least know in part what He's saying, that He's the source of life & they must come to Him for it - in essence saying He's God. But we still don't know why He chose to say it at that time, which has everything to do with the reason they're gathered - the Feast of Tabernacles.

During the feast of Tabernacles there was a solemn procession each day for 7 days from the Temple to get water from the pool of Siloam. A priest would fill a gold pitcher with water from the pool, then return to the altar & pour out the water where the parts of the sacrifice were arranged while the choir sang Isaiah 12:3 - *3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.* And Isaiah 55:1 which says, "*Come, all you who are thirsty,*

*come to the waters.*” This ritual reminded them of the water from the rock during the wilderness wanderings which saved them (Num. 20:8-11; Ps. 78:15-16). It imaged the coming Messiah (cf. Zech. 14:8, 16-19). The 8th day was different, no singing, no shouting, no water being poured out, it was solemn & quiet. A day of repentance. Against the backdrop of this silence & symbolism Jesus stood & said these things in a loud voice. So, His offer to come to Me & drink, was an unmistakable offer of salvation (cf. 4:14; 6:53-56). So, this particular day, at this festival, with these rituals fresh in their minds, is for us another painting as Jesus, the Fountain of Life, among thousands of faithful. The crowd, the tension, the claims, the questions - must’ve been wild to be there.

So we have to ask one more question. What does Living Water mean to me? Because we’ve said in the past, Jesus is the Living Water, which is true. However, there’s something John adds here which is also true. What more does Living Water mean? John answers that question in v39, *39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

I spent my early years of faith in a conservative evangelical church where I got tremendous teaching. I learned about discipleship, theology, doctrine, missions, etc... I learned about leadership & ministry, and was given ample opportunity to use my gifts. I developed my preaching. I am grateful to that church. But, there was always one thing missing. It wasn’t that we didn’t believe in the Holy Spirit, we confessed the Spirit to be real. But we didn’t talk about, pray to, or rely on the Holy Spirit. It was almost as if the Trinity had become the Father, Son & the Holy Bible, and the Holy Spirit was just this small add on we just didn’t understand. But according to John, this is what Jesus meant by rivers of living water flowing from with us - the Holy Spirit.

Francis Chan wrote a book, *Forgotten God, Reversing our tragic neglect of the Holy Spirit*. It comes with a workbook so it is great for personal or group study. Let me just quote him from the introduction. *“From my perspective the Holy Spirit is tragically neglected and, for all practical purposes, forgotten. While no evangelical would deny His existence, I’m willing to bet there are millions of churchgoers across America who cannot confidently say they have experienced His presence or action in their lives over the past year. And many of them do not believe they can. If you just read the Scriptures without any prior context, you would be convinced the Holy Spirit is as essential to a believer’s existence as air is to staying alive. I believe that this missing something is actually a missing someone - namely the Holy Spirit. Without Him, people operate in their own strength & only accomplish human-size results.”*

Jesus acknowledged God the Father. Jesus claimed divinity for Himself. Jesus claimed the same for the Holy Spirit. But we look at these three as if there is a hierarchy of power in the Trinity. To us the Trinity is, God the Father as head honcho, Jesus as subordinate son, and when we write the Holy Spirit we have to use an eraser to remember to capitalize the H & S. The Spirit becomes subordinate to the others. That would not be how Jesus viewed the relationship between the three. Statements like this from our own

statement of faith clarify for us the relationship of the Trinity: *'We believe in One True & Living God, eternally existing in three persons, equal in power & glory; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.'* Any balanced church would agree with that statement no matter the denomination.

Equal in power & glory. One God, same substance. Yet, still many have so little knowledge & relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has become the Trinity's errand boy - but He's equally God, poured out into our lives to reveal our need (John 16:8), for conviction (John 6:44), to baptize us into the family of God (1 Cor. 12:13), to seal us in Christ (Eph. 4:30), to fill & use us in Kingdom work (Eph. 5:18). When the Spirit of God lives in you (John 14:16), and lives through you (Gal. 5:16), you have strength to do all things (Phil. 4:13) through this Spirit.

The Spirit knows my need & brings it before the Father (Rom. 8:26-27). It's the Spirit of God who makes the Christian life possible (Gal. 4:6). The Spirit comes with the Christ (Rom. 8:9). Each & every work of God involves all three persons of the Trinity, yet the Spirit of God abides in us as a day-to-day help. The "Water of Life." Jesus referred to the special baptizing, sealing & indwelling work of the Spirit in the Church Age, which started on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 8). Jesus promised He'd "send the Spirit" to His followers (John 15:26; 16:7).

Therefore in a sense, we can say if the Spirit's the water of life, Jesus is the fountain. That fountain was turned on when Jesus was glorified through the cross, resurrection & ascension. We think it would be better if Jesus were here right now, but listen to what He said in John 16:7...*7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate (Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

Do we have a small view of the Holy Spirit? Do we avoid the Spirit because we don't understand the Spirit? As if the fountain's been turned off. Our lack of power doesn't jive with the book of Acts. "Don't worry, I'm leaving, it will be better for you to have the Holy Spirit" - is that really better than having Jesus here!?! But Jesus said wait here, the Spirit's gonna come - don't try to change the world yourself, wait, you need the Spirit. They wait, the Spirit comes - a rushing wind, tongues of flame - the fountain turned on. They go out to the nations gathered in Jerusalem & speak to the crowds in power & everyone hears them in their own language. There was a difference in the Disciples after the Spirit rested on them. They weren't the same - now they had power & did the things Jesus had been doing.

Fast forward to now, isn't it so predictable? Go to church, sing, hear a message, go home. Go to community group, go to work, go home. God's definitely in the mundane of life, but when we need it, where's the power? Maybe we've been imbalanced in our view, pursuit & experience of the Holy Spirit? We've not engaged the Spirit & God the Holy Spirit waits patiently for us to do so. Maybe we feel like Nicodemus - we can postulate our theology of Jesus & the Father, but we're uncomfortable with this Wind. This Spirit

we can't contain or control. Don't ever fall into the trap that you have learned or experienced all that there is to learn & experience about God.

Francis Chan tells this story of a couple in his church. The guy was interviewed on CNN as the strongest man on earth. He benches over 1000lbs - his wife over 400! Francis asks, wouldn't it be weird if you met their kids & they were scrawny & weak? Are we weak children of God denying the Spirit's power? Church should be a family gathering waiting to see what the Father will do. He wants to be active in our lives. He wants to be invited; like riding a wave on a surfboard - uncontrollable & powerful.

This is where what you believe to be true of God, makes a big difference. If you view God the Father as the angry cosmic kill joy, Jesus as fire insurance & the Holy Spirit as just a subordinate cork in the bottle of salvation, you'll never see the Spirit work. But if we say, God's a god of life, Jesus is our daily bread of Grace, the Holy Spirit is our power for living; one substance, three persons, equal in power & glory; If we believe the kingdom can break into our reality, then we can break free from the confines of a powerless life.

*<sup>8</sup>“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9, the evangelical rally cry. But we need to continue on to verse 10, <sup>10</sup> “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” More than ‘personal salvation’. A dynamic life in the Spirit. In John 14:12 Jesus says...<sup>12</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, BECAUSE I am going to the Father.” The fountain has been turned on. Yet, a life of risk scares us! Faith is spelled R.I.S.K.*

John Wimber was reading the NT & thought, I should be doing this! He started praying for hundred's of people to be healed. Nothing happened. Discouraged in his newfound ministry, a woman asked him to pray. He thought, this isn't gonna work, but he prayed. She was healed. From that point on, not everyone was healed whom John prayed over, but thousands were. Later in life John was speaking to a crowd about this kingdom ministry, healing & power evangelism. They wanted to know how to do it. He said, “You want me to just tell you how to do it. But I can't, because you don't want to do the hard work which brought me here today. Go out & pray for 200 people then come back & tell me Jesus doesn't have the power to move in people.” There's much to unlearn or relearn, but it takes risk & practice.

Do we want the fountain turned on? One church in Cincinnati decided to get a booth in a psychic fair which was being held in their city. The pastor's not a pentecostal, just a pastor trying to live in the radical middle. They got a booth & put up a sign which said ‘Healing Prayer & Dream Interpretation’. He asked the girl who organized it for his church, “Do we know how to interpret dreams?” She said, “No, but God's gonna show us how!” And the end result was, they prayed over hundreds of people, and saw great

things happen. And the attendees were coming back, saying, “The spiritual power at this booth is the greatest, can you pray over me again?” R.I.S.K

The fountain has been turned on, equal in power & glory, one God in three persons. Do we want to live in that power? If we do, then we have to believe differently & take faith risks. Here are three challenges:

1. Read & Study, maybe even with others, using Francis Chan’s book, *Forgotten God*. Get a free Zoom account or use FaceTime to virtually meet up & discuss it.
2. There are plenty of people around us right now in need of prayer. Ask God to reveal someone & invite the Holy Spirit to clear away fear & doubt, and to speak to you about them. Then talk to that person & tell them you feel God would like you to pray for them. Maybe you do that by phone or FaceTime right now while we’re in the middle of this pandemic. Ask, “Can I pray for you, RIGHT NOW?” Then do it - even if they’re not healed, don’t come to faith, you don’t get anything from the Spirit for them, or nothing seems to happen, 99% of the time they’ll feel cared for & impressed you took the risk.
3. Do a virtual version of a *Spiritual Treasure Hunt* with a group of people. This typically would entail gathering with a small group of people & praying the Holy Spirit directs you to some local need. Stories abound as to how this plays out. One is of a small group praying as one person sensed the Spirit gave them an image of a yellow house with green shutters. Another person said, “I know that house!” So they drove & sat in front, praying over the house. One person felt the Spirit telling them this person needed groceries. So they went to the store & bought groceries, returned to the home & knocked on the door only to find that person had lost their job & didn’t know how they were going to afford groceries! They were able to pray over them at that moment! Maybe, FaceTime with some folks & do this virtually - I don’t think the Spirit is limited to us having to be in close proximity to direct us & move through us. Try it!

Then come back & tell me what the Holy Spirit has done.

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*God’s chosen you for this time and for His purposes.* Times like these are open doors for the Gospel. With each tragic event in history people have come to Jesus in greater numbers. People are losing all sense of security. Christians in faith have historically put themselves in harms way for the sake of others, or stood in the gap with the HOPE of Christ in hand for them.

Be open to the idea of selfless practical love & care for the sake of Christ. I urge you simply NOT to succumb to fear, but to listen to the Spirit’s lead as you are faced with situations & respond in obedience to faith in Christ.