

We're talking of being filled to overflowing - Romans 15:13, our signature verse, *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

We've used the image of a glass full of dirty water, turn a faucet on, start to fill it up, and the running water pushes any impurities out of the glass. The water will run clean in the cup. That is the idea of being filled to overflowing by this God of hope by the power of the HS. That we are filled with the Living Word and in the process we are sanctified - meaning we are changed and transformed by the HS.

And we've borrowed the image of the 5 tiered fountain down on Lancaster Ave., in front of the Bryn Mawr Trust in Ardmore. The Holy Spirit at the top filling us up, overflowing first to family and friends, then into our local community, then world around us. Overflow; a natural process of being filled, not forced or awkward. It just happens. What you're filled with overflows to others and we want to be filled with hope, peace & joy - we want to be filled with the Spirit.

And today we look at John 7 starting in verse 37, ³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

We heard this last week in the story of the Samaritan woman at the well...John is being redundant and for good reason since this filling is important. So, let's ask ourselves a few questions to begin to understand what is happening here. Questions like... When did he say this? Where did he say it? To whom did he say it? What exactly is he saying? And why did he say it? With all these questions in mind let's think this through.

Whereas the meeting next to the well with a Samaritan woman was private & intimate, John 7 is public & corporate. When did this happen? It tells us, ³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the festival. Jesus is at a festival. He waits until the last and greatest day when most people are there, right before they go home - to give them something to remember. And this is during the Feast of Tabernacles. Why then?

Before we answer that let's remember, no one would care what he told a Samaritan woman of dubious reputation in a private conversation; no one in Jerusalem cared about her thoughts. 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! Here he's in front of the Orthodox, not the half-bred Samaritan, making this strong statement. Here he's pronouncing to a large crowd of Jewish men; the faithful. This is a different scenario full of bravado.

He didn't come to the 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. Peter probably cringed and said, "Oh no, Jesus get

down, what are you doing!?” Peter probably turned to the other disciples and said, “Oh man, let’s get him out of here before he gets himself killed!” It was that bold of a move!

Because listen to what he says, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to ME and drink. ³⁸ 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 drawn such hatred. If he had said, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to GOD and 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 and drink. Believe in ME. AS THE SCRIPTURE HAS SAID! What he is claiming is divinity once more - he is saying that the Holy Scriptures speak of Himself! “I am God, I am the source of life, the Scriptures speak of ME!” If I stood up and said that to you, you’d lump me in the category of David Koresh, Jim Jones, and any other lunatic with a messiah complex; and it’s why it infuriated the Orthodox so much.

People were confused; is he deceitful, crazy, the Prophet, or the Messiah? The whispering fingers out through the crowd. He’s dropped a theological bomb with positive & negative effects. As a result, the Jewish leaders send guards to arrest him, but they don’t! And when they are asked why they didn’t, the guards say it is because no one speaks like this guy (vs46)! The guards sense his authority and divinity. The leaders get so angry, they ask the guards - has he deceived you too (vs47)!

And we see that these leaders consider themselves to be guardians of truth, that all the everyday folk don’t know the Law and are cursed (vs48-49) They are good intentioned, but they’ve become the guardians of Truth instead of followers of Truth. An easy thing to do in religious life.

We know where he is - in the Temple courts. We know when it is - the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles (the feast of Booths). We know to whom he is saying it - to the nation of Israel gathered together for remembrance and worship. We at least know in part what he is saying - that he’s the source of life and they must come to him for it - in essence he’s saying he’s God. But why did he choose to say it at that time? And we’ll find that it 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 and 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. ¹ And Isaiah 55:1 which says, “Come, all you who are

¹ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Is 12:3). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

thirsty, come to the waters".² This ritual reminded them of Moses striking the rock in the wilderness and water gushing from it (Num. 20:8-11; Ps. 78:15-16); water which saved the nation of Israel. It was a clear image of 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 quiet & solemn. A day of repentance. Against the backdrop of this silence and symbolism of water Jesus stood & said these things in a loud voice. So, His offer to come to Me and drink, was an unmistakable offer of salvation tied to image of that rock in the desert which foreshadowed the Messiah and saved the nation (cf. 4:14; 6:53-56). It must have been wild to be there.

Let's ask one more question. What does Living Water mean to me? Because we have said in the past that Jesus is the Living Water, which is true. That the Scriptures are waters which refresh us, which is true. However, there is something John adds here that is also true. What more does this Living Water mean? John answers that question in the next verse, 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.³

Many of us in this room are unchurched, this is our first experience of church and of hearing these ideas which is great. Others have past church experience which may not have focused much on the Holy Spirit - it was not a part of your experience. But according to John, this is what Jesus meant by rivers of living water flowing from within us; the Holy Spirit.

Francis Chan in, *Forgotten God, Reversing our tragic neglect of the Holy Spirit*, says this, "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 and only accomplish human-size results."

Jesus acknowledged God the Father. Jesus claimed divinity for himself. Jesus claimed the same for the HS. But we mistakenly look at these three as if there is a hierarchy of power in the Trinity. To us the Trinity is, God the Father as the head honcho, Jesus as the 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 other two. That would not be how Jesus viewed the relationship between the three.

² *The New International Version*. 2011 (Is 55:1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 7:37-39). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Our own statement of faith clarifies 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.

Equal in power and glory. One God, same substance. Yet, still we have so little knowledge and relationship with the HS. The Spirit has become the Trinity's errand boy - but the HS is 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 and 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 and brings it before the Father (Rom. 8:26-27). It is the Spirit of God that makes the Christian life possible (Gal. 4:6). The Spirit comes with the Christ (Rom. 8:9). Each and 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, and indwelling work of the Spirit in the Church Age, which started on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 8). Jesus promised He would "send the Spirit" to His followers (John 15:26; 16:7).

Therefore, we could say if the Spirit is 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,** 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.**⁴

We avoid the Spirit because we don't understand the Spirit. We have a small view of the Spirit, as if the fountain has 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 HS" - is that really better than having Jesus here!?! But Jesus said wait here, the Spirit is 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 was turned on. And they go out to the nations gathered in Jerusalem and speak to the crowds in power and everyone hears them in their own language - the message had overflowed to them personally, out to those closest to them, into their local community, and now to the world. There was a difference in the Disciples after that event - they weren't the same - now they had power and they did the things Jesus was 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 is definitely in the mundane of life but, when we need it where is the power? Maybe we've been imbalanced in our view, pursuit, and experience of the HS? We've not engaged the Spirit, and God the HS waits patiently for us to do so. Maybe we feel like Nicodemus - we can postulate our theology of Jesus and the Father, but we're uncomfortable with this Wind; this Spirit

⁴ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 16:6-7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

which we cannot 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. There's always more.

It's as if God is a bodybuilder and we are scrawny weaklings. 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.

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, and the HS as just a subordinate cork in the bottle of salvation, you will never see the Spirit work. But if we say, God is a god of life, Jesus is our daily bread of Grace, the HS is our power for living; one substance, three persons, equal in power and glory; If we believe the kingdom can break into our reality; then we'll see Him work.

⁸“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”⁵ Ephesians 2, the evangelical rally cry. But we need to continue on to verse 10, ¹⁰ “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” ⁶ more than ‘personal salvation’; a dynamic life in the Spirit. ¹² “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.”⁷ The fountain has been turned on. Yet, that scares us to death; a life of risk! Faith is spelled R.I.S.K.

John Wimber was reading the NT and 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 is not going to 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, and 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 and pray for 200 people then come back and tell me Jesus does not have the power to move in people.” There's much to unlearn, to learn, but it takes risk and 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. He's not a pentecostal, but just a pastor trying to live in the radical middle. They got a booth, and they put up a sign which said ‘Healing Prayer & Dream Interpretation’. He asked the girl that organized it for his church, “Do we know how to interpret dreams?” She said, “No, but God's gonna show

⁵ *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Eph 2:7–9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁶ *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Eph 2:10). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁷ *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Jn 14:12). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

us how!" And the end result was that they prayed over hundreds of people, and saw great things happen. And the attendees were coming back and saying, "The spiritual power at this booth is the greatest, can you pray over me again?" **R.I.S.K**

In Jesus the fountain has been turned on. The Spirit flows. Father, Son & Spirit, equal in power and glory, one god in three persons. Do we want to live in that power? If we do, then we have to believe differently and take faith risks. Here's a challenge...

Wherever you are this week, ask God to reveal to you a person that needs prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to come, invite him. Ask him to clear your fears and doubts and speak to you. Then talk to that person and tell them you feel God would like you to pray for them and ask, Can I pray for you, RIGHT NOW? The 'right now' is the kicker, it's polite to say, "Can I pray for you?". But to pray on the spot is powerful - and even if they are not healed, don't come to faith, you don't get anything, or nothing seems to happen, 99% of the time they will feel cared for and impressed you would take the risk to pray for them.

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