



DATE: October 25, 2009

TEXT: John 7:37-52

TITLE: “John XXI: Quenching Your Thirst”

Jesus in our text is continuing to teach at the Feast of the Tabernacles. A couple weeks ago I stated that the Feast of the Tabernacles was a three-fold celebration.... past, present and future. All the people of Jerusalem erected tents or booths remembering the Exodus when the people lived in temporary housing for 40 years. Second, it was a harvest celebration. Finally it was the Feast that most looked forward to the coming of the Messiah.

The feast lasted 7 days. It truly was a wonderful time of celebration. Every day The High Priest would take a golden chalice from the Temple. He would process through the city of Jerusalem through the Water Gate to the Pool of Siloam. There he would fill the chalice with water and process back to the Temple. As the procession passed through the Water Gate back into the City the people would quote Isaiah 12 and chant “**With Joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.**” Then as the procession continues the people would sing the Hallel. The Psalms of praise which are in our Bible as Psalms 113 to 118.

This procession was done every day of the Celebration until the 7th and final day when the procession was done 7 times. This was praising God for the water for the harvest and praying for continued blessing of water in the Fall to refill the cisterns or Jerusalem. Imagine this scene.... possibly the last procession.... Jesus is standing by the Water Gate. The people are chanting "**With Joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.**" And Jesus stands up... and in a voice that is heard above the chanting he declares.....

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

This is dramatic. This further infuriates the Jewish leaders. This excites the crowd. Jesus is the source of sustenance. He already has claimed to be the Bread of the World..... now he is claiming to be the water of life. Allow me to share two wonderful lessons from our text.

Lesson # 1 Jesus is the source of living water. He brings abundant life.

I grew up in Buffalo. Buffalo has two prominent rivers. First there is the Buffalo river. It meanders through the city. It is a very slow, sluggish river with a small flow of water. As you might guess. It is not a healthy river. As a matter of fact a number of years ago the EPA

declared the river as dead. Nothing could live in it above green sludge. No fish could live. You would not dare swim in the river for fear of disease and contamination. A dead river.

The other major river in Western New York is the Niagara river. This is a large river.

There is a great deal of water in it... and since Lake Erie is hundreds of feet higher than Lake Ontario... the river moves very fast. This river has little to no barge and ship traffic because there is Niagara Falls at one end. One of my greatest memories from high School and College was driving to the South Grand island bridge and jumping in the river with a Tube and floating down the river. About an hour to the Holiday Inn about 2 hours to a house just below the North Grand Island Bridge. You go past that you die. This river is alive. The lower Niagara Falls area by the Whirl Pool is considered one of the best fishing areas in the world. Its volume and its movement keep it clean and alive. Jesus is saying... "I am the Niagara River. I will flow in your life and bring satisfaction and abundance. I will quench your thirst." *Eph. 1: 7 states*

7In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

I love the word "lavish" God lavished his grace upon us. Allow me to use another

illustration. Kim and I are fairly new grandparents. We love giving Alex presents. Noting big... Nothing expensive but we love to see his face as he plays with these gifts. We love to lavish. As a matter of fact we have to be careful we don't give too much. Good news.... we now can begin giving Luke some things too.

We have a heavenly Father who loves us far more than I love my children and grandchildren. REPEAT He loves to lavish us with life and abundance. We know we live in a fallen world which causes great pain and suffering. We know that the Lord guides us to maturity which is often a hard process... but we must always know that the Lord loves to give to us abundantly.

This fact guides my concept of worship. For me, worship is not primarily a solemn event. I love classical music and I love a number of hymns... but I try to be careful that our worship is not like a funeral dirge. Rejoice in the Lord... again I say rejoice. Life can be hard. I want to be like the celebrants in Jerusalem during the Festival of Tabernacles. It is a joy to be a child of God. Let us praise God and rejoice. Christ gives us life... abundant life.

Lesson # 2 Jesus not only gives us abundant life.... he gives us the Holy Spirit our text states

this.... *John 7: 37-39*

38Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." 39By 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.

When we get to John chapter 14 we will do a through study of the Holy Spirit. Right now we just rejoice in this promise. Do we understand how radical Christianity is. Because of the death and resurrection of our Lord... God Himself is with his children.

Let me ask two interesting questions. First, Where is God? You ask this question and people say "God is everywhere." In a sense this is true in that God is the creator of everything.... but as Christians we are not animists. This is the belief that God is in the trees... and God is in the grass... and God is in the grasshoppers. We do not believe that. Where is God the Father? He is in heaven on His throne. Where is Jesus Christ? He is at the right hand of God.... being worshiped and judging the world.

Second question... is God in everyone? Again the common answer is yes... God is in everyone.... but again that is not Biblical. Yes, god is the creator of everyone and is aware of all the

actions of a person...but nowhere is scripture does it say every person is a vessel of God. On the contrary... look at our text... **“up to the time the Spirit had not been (generally) given.”** Who has the Holy Spirit? Those who have given their lives to Jesus Christ. Christians have the presence of God with them at all times. It is a gift from God given to Christians. Allow me to share these texts with you First *Romans 8:9*

9You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Next *1 Corinthians 3:16*

16Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

As Christians The Holy spirit is within us... he is guiding us... he is comforting Us... he is loving us. This is the great claim of Christ as he stood in the streets of Jerusalem. This is the great joy we experience today.... the Holy Spirit is with us.

I said earlier that if you float past the North Grand island Bridge you would die. I didn't even like going around the Northern point of the island in a boat. I certainly wouldn't do it in my boat. Truthfully, if you were in a tube you would not make it tot the Falls. You wouldn't even make it to

the rapids. Right past the bridge are the Robert Moses water intakes. These intakes pumps 10,000 of gallons of water from the river to the Niagara reservoir... where they go though then go through pipes down to the Lower river turning giant water turbines on the way producing a great deal of electricity.

In some way I am once again reminded of the words of Jesus. He is the living flowing water. He is the source of power in our lives. His flow in our lives empowers us.

The truth is this... by our own power we are helpless. As we will see when we get to the 14th chapter of John, with out the Holy Spirit we can not even understand the truth of Scripture. Try explaining what I just taught on the presence of God to a non-Christian. They will scoff at it and possible laugh at you. “What do you mean God is only in those who have surrendered their lives tot Jesus Christ? Who would teach that crazy idea? You want to say “Jesus and the Bible.” But they do not understand. It is the Holy Spirit that gives understanding of the truth of God.

I conclude this sermon by briefly looking at the reaction of people to this teaching of Jesus. In some way I think it was funny. The Pharisees sent their soldiers to arrest Jesus. They come back

and we have this dialogue in *John 7: 45-49*

Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

46"No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared.

47" You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. 48"Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? 49No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them."

Event he men who were sent to arrest him were convinced of his truth. Imagine the power of these words of Jesus. The crowd and the temple guards saw the truth and the love in this man.

Jesus is the source of quenched thirst. Are you thirsty? Right now are you thirsty? Do you need comfort? Do you need loved? Is life tearing you apart? Is life discouraging? Come to Jesus Christ. Discover the living water he desires to give yo you. Discover the comfort and the power of the Holy Spirit who wants to be with you. Come to the water.. Come to Jesus

AMEN