

John 7:37-39

On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” ³⁹ (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

Background

The “festival” in verse 37 refers to the Feast of Tabernacles. This seven-day celebration was followed by an eighth-day solemn assembly (Leviticus 23:33–36). It commemorated God’s provision for Israel during their 40 years in the wilderness.

Jewish tradition tells us that during the first seven days, a priest would draw water from the Pool of Siloam and pour it by the altar. This symbolized God’s miraculous provision of water in the desert. On the eighth day, the water ritual stopped, marking Israel’s entrance into the Promised Land, and pointing forward to the coming of the Messiah. It was on this eighth day that Jesus proclaimed, “*Anyone who is thirsty may come to me!*” (v37), and promised that believers would have “*rivers of living water*” flowing from within them (v38), referring to the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus said, “*For the Scriptures declare*” (v. 38), He likely wasn’t quoting a single verse, but summarizing a broader theme found throughout the Old Testament: God as the source of life-giving water. Key examples include *Isaiah 41:17–18*, *44:3*, and *58:11*.

Teaching Points

1. The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.

Verse 39 says that the Holy Spirit “had not yet been given.” That is, the Holy Spirit did not yet permanently indwell individual believers or the Church. This wouldn’t take place until the Lord was glorified, or resurrected and ascended to Heaven (see John 7:39, 16:7).

The Holy Spirit always existed and was active in the Old Testament but did not permanently indwell believers or the Church until Pentecost (Acts 2). After Jesus’ glorification, the Holy Spirit was given to indwell the Church and individual believers, as promised in John 16:7.

2. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer.

1 Corinthians 6:19 says, *“Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?”* The Holy Spirit indwells every believer at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:9). This is not the same as being filled with the Spirit, or living under His influence, letting Him guide our thoughts, choices, and actions (Ephesians 5:18). But the Holy Spirit indwells every believer.

3. The Holy Spirit brings continuous blessing.

The phrase, “rivers of living water” symbolizes continuous, overflowing blessings from the Holy Spirit within every believer. Though the Spirit indwells all Christians, these blessings are only experienced when we live by the Spirit and submit to Him fully. Sin can obstruct them, and only by being continually filled and surrendered to the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) can we overflow with His blessings to others.

Application

1. Have you done the one thing you need to do to become a Christian?

To become a Christian, the one essential thing is to come to Jesus Christ and “drink.” That is, to personally trust Him as your Savior. It’s not about church attendance, good works, or giving. It’s about coming to Jesus and believing in Him to satisfy your spiritual thirst. Only you can do this for yourself.

2. Let’s look for opportunities to practice “situation evangelism.”

Situation evangelism means using the current situation or context to share Christ. This differs from relationship evangelism, which focuses on developing a personal connection first. Jesus did situation evangelism by using everyday things, such as water at the Pool of Siloam or the well with the Samaritan woman, to teach spiritual truths. We should look for these everyday opportunities to witness naturally.