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LET THE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER FLOW FROM WITHIN
John 7:37-39

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BREAKING OF THE BREAD

INTRODUCTION

It's getting warmer again here in Canada and summer is around the corner. One of the things where we would like to go is near the water.

Water is refreshing. Water is cleansing. Water is purifying. Water is satisfying.

One of the metaphors for God in the Bible is water. This is what we're going to discuss today.

John 7: 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. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." 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.

PRAY

Exposition :

On the last and greatest day of the festival,

What was the festival?

Note : The Jews has several feasts : Passover; Unleavened Bread; First Fruits; Trumpets (Jewish New Year); Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) : Pentecost (Shavuot "weeks") giving of the law that made Israel a nation (pentacota – fifty) *Leviticus 23:15-16*

And...we are familiar with; It is during "Pentecost" that the Holy Spirit was given and the church was born (*Acts 2:1-4*)

Now you have to follow me here in order for you to understand why the Lord shouted "I am the living water during this time."

What is this festival they were celebrating?? Feast of Tabernacles or Booths (Succoth)

Leviticus 23:34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.

39 “So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the Lord for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest.

What they do : People are to live in booths or tents for seven days (mid-October); after gathering their harvest (*Deuteronomy 16:13*)

Purpose :

Leviticus 23: 42 Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters 43 so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

- It is celebrated for seven days
- They are to offer sacrifices (Lev 23:36-37) burnt offering, meat offering, drink offering
- For seven days, people are holding branches from palms and other trees

Leviticus 23: 40 On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees—from palms, willows and other leafy trees—and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.

In Jesus’ time, they were celebrating it like this with a few additions:

- For seven days, with branches in hand, they marched to the temple and then with the branches, they would form a roof on top of the altar
- The priest with a golden pitcher would go to the Pool of Siloam (which was recently excavated in 2004) and draw water from it
- As he goes back and the people see him, the people will recite

Isaiah 12: 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

- The priest pours the water over the altar
- Remember this is a joyous celebration; it is done with rejoicing (Deuteronomy 16:14-15)
- Then people will sing hosannas (Lord save us) – singing Psalm 113-118 (Hallel) “praises”

Note : At a later time, Jesus will enter Jerusalem and people will be singing Hosanna to Him;

John 12: 13 Hosanna!” (yasa – save na – plea prayer... Save us)

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

Here it is : The people connect God’s salvation with water (that’s why Isaiah 12:3)

*Isaiah 12: ³ With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.*

And it is the perfect timing to tell the people, **HERE I AM, ALL THIS VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS TALKS ABOUT ME.**

Note : This is what the letter to the Hebrews (chapters 1-10) is all about

Hebrews 1: ¹ In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

Hebrews 10: ¹ The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

THIS IS WHY...

, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.

Etymology : loud voice; crying; “krazo” really cry out

Note : Why is the Lord shouting? So that everyone there will hear.

OUR LORD IS SAYING... “Here I am, you are celebrating God’s salvation (by the symbol of water)...**I AM GOD’S SALVATION!** I AM THE ONE SENT TO SAVE YOU! THAT WATER FROM THE WELLS OF SALVATION THAT YOU POURED ON THE ALTAR....THAT’S ME!!!!”

Note : And the people would have understood what he meant at that time because for seven days that is what they were remembering :

- a.) Living in booths to remember how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt
- b.) Drawing water and pouring it on the altar as a symbol of their salvation

Application : Our Lord has perfect timing when it comes to His message. Anything that is happening to your life, GOD HAS A MESSAGE..and most of the time, the message is “Believe, I am here to save you or I am the one who saves you and because of this people will glorify Me.”

So whether in times of joy or sorrow : God is saying, I am the one who has allowed this or given this and I am the one who will deliver you from this and you will glorify Me and people will glorify Me through you.”

Quote : . "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" C.S. Lewis

And what is He shouting during our pain... “I AM HERE.”

I. THE LORD GIVES THE INVITATION

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink."

Note : Who did He give the invitation to? ANYONE!!!!

A.) The Condition

who is thirsty

Etymology : thirsty "dipsao" those who suffer from thirst

Note : This is the one who knows he is in need of salvation, who realizes that they need to be saved. It is someone who knows he is doomed if he doesn't get any "water"

Note : This is in total contrast with some televangelists who give the invitation, if you want to be successful, if you want to prosper, ... come to Jesus! This appeals to the fleshly nature of men.

The invitation is for anyone who knows he is lost without God, who realizes that without the Lord he will be doomed, anyone who realizes that he is a sinner.

Lyrics:

This is the air I breathe (2x)

Your holy presence living in me.

This is my daily prayer (2x)

Your very word spoken to me.

And I, I'm desperate for you.

And I, I'm lost without you.

Note : The condition is you must be desperate for God and you know you are nothing and lost without God.

B.) The Action

come to Me and drink.

Here's the thing : Sometimes, people come to a point of desperation whether because of dissatisfaction or whether because they are in trouble BUT the problem is in their desperation, they JUST HANG ON TO ANYTHING THAT WILL TEMPORARILY SATISFY, THINKING THAT IS THE ANSWER BUT PUTS THEM IN BIGGER TROUBLE.

Look at what our Lord said to Jeremiah

Jeremiah 2: 13 "My people have committed two sins:

They have forsaken me,

the spring of living water,

and have dug their own cisterns,

broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

In short, God is offering Himself as the one who will truly satisfy but they don't trust Him, they don't believe Him, they find their own ways to satisfy themselves.

E.g.

In heartaches, they use alcohol.

In dissatisfaction, some people turn to food or shopping

In loneliness, (married) they turn to other men or women to satisfy (single) sex

In wanting to be rich, they turn to gambling or cheating

And etc. etc.

But our Lord is saying, are you dissatisfied? Are you thirsty? Are you desperate?

come to Me

JESUS IS THE ANSWER!!!!

come to Me and drink.

Note : The Lord is saying, "Drink" which means, make me a part of your life. Put me inside you and I will be part of you.

Note : Because some people would just put him in just parts of their lives. They put Him in a box – Jesus is only for church and Bible studies and etc. NO! OUR LORD MUST TAKE OVER YOUR ENTIRE LIFE...your home life, your work life, your marriage, your parenthood, your bad habits, your dreams and ambitions, your plans, your sins and etc...

This is the reason why

Romans 10: ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

That's the reason why we say: Jesus you are My Saviour and Lord! He can never be your Saviour if He is not Lord of your life.

Note : Most of the time, this is what people only think about Him...Lord you saved me from hell, but you are not Lord of my life...and they think they are saved! That's ridiculous!

When the Lord wants to save you, He wants to save the ENTIRE YOU. THAT'S WHY HE MUST BE LORD IN EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE.

Illustration : Why? What is going to heaven or hell? Is it just part of you or the entire you?

Quote : He must be Lord of all or He is not Lord at all. (in your life)

Note : The concept of Jesus taking over ALL YOUR LIFE is replete in the Bible in order to be saved.

Mark 3: ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Matthew 6 :24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

II. THE LORD GIVES THE SATISFACTION

³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." 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.

Again, what is the requirement?

³⁸Whoever believes in me

Note : As I've always shared with you, most of the time in the Bible...for every promise, there is a premise.

And the promise :

, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.

Note : *, as Scripture has said* , we have to remember that the Scripture of Jesus is the Old Testament. There is no exact verse in the Old Testament that says "*rivers of living water will flow from within them.*" BUT the idea of water that symbolizes the Spirit and that it quenches the thirst of men is found in the Old Testament

Some of the verses :

Isaiah 44:3 For I will pour out water on the thirsty land....I will pour out my Spirit on your offsprings

55:1 Come all you who are thirst, come to the waters

Note : Even when God created Garden of Eden, He made a river to water it.

Genesis 2:10 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters

Note : Right from the beginning of the Bible, God has already shown that He is the one who will take care of us, who will provide for us...WHO WILL SATISFY US.

What is the promise?

God will give you spiritual and eternal satisfaction.

Note : I'm not saying that material things such as money, food, clothes does not satisfy. Yes they do BUT the problem is they only satisfy you temporarily and cannot satisfy fully.

Illustration : Clothes go out of fashion. When you have money, you want more money and etc.

Now : What makes you unhappy? When you don't get what you want. When your plans aren't fulfilled and etc. **and the problem is they find things that will make them happy from the outside.**

Our Lord is saying if when you believe in Me, you don't have to find satisfaction and happiness from the outside... from material things...from relationships... from careers... you can find SATISFACTION AND happiness from within you.

God's promise :

*rivers of living water will flow from **within them***

And this is the difference of the Christian.

Note : Yes, sometimes you will be knocked down and frustrated BUT there is something within you that pulls you back again...THE LIVING WATER.

In order to get the full impact of this, we must answer two questions :

1. What is this living water?
2. Who is this living water?

What is this "living water?"

You will only find this particular concept by our Lord in two passages :

- Here in our study in John 7:38, He talks about ***"rivers of living water will flow from within them"***
- The other one is in John 4:14, where our Lord is talking to a Samaritan woman who has to draw water at noon in Jacob's well. He told her, ***" Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."***

Now, you have to follow carefully here because we will get the answer based on the historical and textual context :

- In John 7, as mentioned earlier, the feast is culminated by the priest "drawing" water out of the Pool of Siloam and then pouring it over the altar as a symbol
- In John 4, the woman who was living a sinful life (that's why she has to draw water at noon time, a peculiar time to do so) went to the well to "draw" water for life and refreshment. This is the reason why she said in verse 15 after hearing Jesus' offer of "living water", ***"Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."***

Here is the meaning of the “rivers of living water or spring of water” Jesus is offering :
It is the finding of life and satisfaction from within you. You will never lose it because it’s within you. It’s always there when you need it. It is unlike the water for ceremonial purposes in John 7 or for physical refreshment in John 4, which you have to repeatedly go out and draw from “external” sources.

In short : You can draw life and satisfaction inside of you (internal; spiritual; eternal) which never runs out rather than from the outside (external; material; temporal) which always runs out.

This is the reason why Jesus’ promised:

John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Now, let’s add another dimension to this study.

If there is “living water”, then is there such a thing as “dead water”?

Note : If we answer this, then we will get the full impact of the statement of our Lord,
rivers of living water will flow from within them.

We will get the answer to this based on the “geographical” context.

Note : In the time of our Lord and in the Old Testament, rivers are a source of life. This is the reason why the Psalmist said :

*Psalm 1:3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper*

Now, people in that area are familiar with “dead water”, this is the reason why they have a body of water they call the “Dead Sea” (although it’s not really a “sea”, it’s a lake; it has also been called the “dead sea” since the Greek era). You will find no living aquatic creature in the Dead Sea because it is the saltiest (five to six times) body of water in the world. This is the reason in the Old Testament, it is referred to as the “Salt Sea” (Gen 14:3; Num 34:3; Joshua 3:16 and etc).

The major characteristic of the Dead Sea is that it is “fed” by the Jordan River and some streams BUT IT HAS NO OUTLET to which the water can “flow through”. **In short, it’s always on the receiving end.**

VERY IMPORTANT : This is the reason why the secret of life and satisfaction is that our Lord is offering is this : Once you believe in Him, *“Whoever believes in me”,* He will give us *“rivers of living water”* that you can draw from the inside *“from within them”* and it is the kind of water that flows to other people *“rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*

This is the reason personally, I believe the Christians who are truly satisfied are the ones who have “life in them” (1 John 5:12) and they let that life flow to others.

Now let’s go to the next question :

Who is this “living water”? In the end, the “living water” is not a what but a “who”.

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.

The living water is the Holy Spirit!

And who is the Holy Spirit? GOD!!!!

Ephesians 3 : 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,

IMPORTANT : Do you see the impact of this? GOD, the Holy Spirit Himself is within you and satisfies you and you let His life flow in your life.

The question is : Are you letting Him flow in your life to others? Or are we just concerned with our own comfort rather than be the comforter like the Spirit.

Are we just keeping the truth (which is the Spirit) for ourselves? Or are we sharing it with others?

Because the real satisfaction is in letting the rivers of living water (who is the Spirit) flow from within you to others.

Now again : How do we get the Spirit in us?

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.

Note : When was Jesus glorified? When He rose from the dead!

And what was His last words before He ascended to heaven?

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses...

See that? You receive the living water and then you let it flow to others.

CONCLUSION :

If you want to live life to the full and be satisfied, there are only two things :

- 1. You have to receive Jesus in your life instead of trying to fill the emptiness up with external, material, temporal and religious things.**

You have to admit your thirsty and believe that only Jesus can satisfy you JUST AS HE SAID.

If you do this, then rivers of living water will be flowing and springing from within you.

- 2. And if you have the Lord in your life already, you have to let the Spirit in you flow to others.**

In short : You must not only be at the receiving end of truth and of being comforted BUT you must share the truth and take the time out to comfort and encourage others.

Acts 20: ³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

At the end of the day,

This is the riches of the Christian...it's because people only think that the one that will truly give them satisfaction are money, houses, cars, clothes, jewelry, relationships but these are only temporary and short-lived. CHRIST HIMSELF OFFERS TRUE AND LASTING SATISFACTION!

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

S.G.D.