

INTRODUCTION

In 1969 Peggy Lee recorded a rather depressing song entitled, "Is That All There Is?" The lyrics were based on Thomas Mann's short "Disillusionment." She spoke the verses about watching her house burn down, visiting, a circus, and being in love. At the end of each spoken verse she asked, "I said is that all there is to a fire? To a circus? To love?" Then she sang the chorus, "Is that all there is? Is that all there is? IF that's all there is, my friends, then let's keep dancing. Let's bring out the booze, and have a ball. If that's all there is." Then she comes to the end of her life and asks, "Is that all there is to life?" She only asked the question, she didn't answer it. Today I have the answer. The glorious truth is that there IS more to life than just breathing, sleeping, eating, and working. There is a level of life that Jesus can give that is so much more than ANYTHING this world can offer.

The events in John 7 all take place during the week-long Feast of Tabernacles or Shelters. It was their autumn harvest festival. The grapes, figs, olives, and pomegranates had been picked. Families would camp out for the week in temporary shelters they would build with tree branches and palm leaves.

One of the features of their Festival was the water libation ceremony every morning on the Temple Mount. On the first morning, a procession of priests would leave the Temple area and march down to the Pool of Siloam. One priest would carry a special golden pitcher and dip it into the Pool of Siloam. It would contain enough spring water for the daily water libation for seven days.

Once the pitcher was filled, the procession would walk back up the steps to the Temple Mount area. It was a procession of celebration. When they arrived at the Temple, thousands of people would be gathered there, seated on the ground around the 32 acres of the Temple Mount. There would be more singing and playing of trumpets. Then in an elaborate ceremony, the shofars, ram's horns, would be blown by the Levites and there would be a moment of total silence. In that moment, the High Priest would pour some of the water out on the ground beside the altar. He would shout the words from Isaiah 12:13, "With joy you shall draw water from the springs of salvation."

But on the last day, the great day, the shofars would sound and there would be silence. But no water would be poured out that day. Most Bible scholars believe it was at this precise moment of solemn silence that Jesus stood up and shouted the words we find in our text.

John 7:37-39: On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." He said this about the Spirit. Those who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit, for the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

How would you react if someone jumped up in the middle of my message and started yelling? They would be escorted out. In this climactic moment of silence, Jesus literally jumped up and

disrupted this religious ritual. And because Jesus did that, some of the people said, "It's the Messiah!" Others said, "We need to arrest and kill this guy." But that's in the next message.

This act of pouring out water was to commemorate when God gave the Israelites water from the rock at in the desert when they were wandering in the wilderness. We read in Exodus 17 how God told Moses to strike the rock with his staff and fresh water gushed out of the Rock. So, Jesus was literally claiming to be the Rock that produced life-giving water in the wilderness. The Apostle Paul understood this because he wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:4, "For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

Jesus knew religious rituals or religious rules don't give you life. But He can give you a life that overflows. Jesus was giving us the Secret of an Overflowing Life. If you want to experience an overflowing life there are three things you must understand.

1. An overflowing life begins with a DESIRE. You must be thirsty.

Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty." The invitation is to everyone and anyone. It's a personal invitation for you. Do you have a burning, blistering thirst for God do something fresh and refreshing in your life? Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."

The Psalmist knew what it was to have a deep-down thirst for God. He sang about it in Psalm 42. "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. I thirst for God, the living God." (Psalm 42:1-2)

In the middle of the Judean wilderness, there's nothing but dry barrenness. To this day, the Ibex, mountain deer, still populate those hills. They can live there because they never wander very far from the Spring of Ein Gedi. The Bible says we should have that same kind of thirst for God.

Transforming Truth: Being thirsty is not the same thing as being empty.

There are many empty people—but they aren't thirsty. The gasoline tank on my car has been empty many times, but it's never been thirsty. There are people like that. They have a passing interest in the things of God, but there is no burning, blistering thirst of desire to know the deep things of God.

Some people are so sermon-soaked and gospel hardened that a message like this will roll off them like water off a duck's back. But some of you are thirsty. You realize that you need *more* in your life. There's something missing. You're spiritually dry. You're going through a time of spiritual drought and have a thirst only God can quench.

A man who is truly thirsty will pay almost anything for a drink of water. Imagine you were in a desert and you had been walking in the scorching sun for three days without water. Your lips are parched and cracked. Your body is dehydrated. You are consumed with a blistering, burning

thirst. You realize that if you don't have water soon, you will die. You are consumed with the thought of some water to drink. You have finally collapsed in the sand and you think, "That's it. I can't go on." Then you see a single palm tree and there's a man under the tree. He has a Yeti cooler, and it is filled with bottles of fresh, cold, clear water. They offer you one. How much would you be willing to pay for that? \$5? 10? \$100? \$1000? If you were truly dying of thirst you would be willing to pay ALL you have. If you aren't thirsty would you pray right now and ask God to give you a thirst for the filling of His Holy Spirit?

2. An overflowing life involves a DIRECTION. You must come to Jesus and drink.

Jesus didn't say, "Come to the Temple." Or "Come to religion." He said, "Come to ME." He is the source of living water.

Throughout the Bible, God invites us to come to Him. He told Adam and Eve, "Come let's walk together in the Garden." He told Moses, "Come up to the top of this mountain so I can show you my law." God spoke through Isaiah and said, "Come, let's reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they can be as white as snow." Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." He said, "Come to me all of you who labor and are heaven laden, and I'll give you rest for your souls."

And in the last chapter of the Bible God delivers a final invitation to us. Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let anyone who hears, say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

When my dermatologist daughter was just a little girl about four years old, I used to ask her to imitate me preaching. Jenni would always say the same thing. She would hold up both her hands and say, "Come to Jesus." I really got a kick out of that, because that is a good three-word summary of the purpose of my life. It is to invite people to come to Jesus.

Transforming Truth: God fills you with His Spirit so that the life of Jesus can be revealed in you.

When Jesus spoke these words at the festival, John and the other disciples didn't really understand what He was talking about. But in verse 39, when John is writing years after the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension of Jesus. He looked back and understood that Jesus was talking about the Day of Pentecost when they were first filled with the Holy Spirit. So, the symbolism is the living water that comes from the Rock. But the literal application of it is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus told the disciples He was going to return to His Father, but He was going to send the Holy Spirit. He said, "I have been with you, but He will be in you." And Jesus said, "He will not bear witness to Himself, but He will testify about Me." In other words, to be filled with the Holy Spirit means to be filled with the very life of Jesus.

I believe the greatest need of the church today is for Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit. One of my dearest mentors was the late Adrian Rogers, who said, "There are some of you who are saved but not Spirit-filled. You have been to Calvary for pardon, but you haven't been to Pentecost for power. Some of you are like Lazarus when he came out of the grave. He was still bound hand and foot in his grave clothes. Jesus said, 'Loose him and let him go!' Lazarus had life but he didn't have liberty. Many Christians come from the grave but they have not yet known the liberty of the Spirit-filled life."

When you are born again, you are indwelt with the Spirit. The Bible says that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. But being indwelt by the Holy Spirit is not the same thing as being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:18, "Don't be drunk with wine which leads to reckless living, but be filled with the Spirit." The verb means to keep on being filled with the Spirit. When a person is drunk they are under the influence to behave in a reckless bad way. When a person is full of the Spirit, they are under the Influence to behave in a fearless Godly way.

Let's go back in the desert. There you are almost dying of thirst. And you have come to a man with a Yeti cooler filled with water bottles. He offers one to you. So you say, "I will pay whatever you ask. But I must have that water." He smiles and says, "Oh, it's free. I've already paid for it."

So you take the bottle of water and look at it. It's so cool that there's frost on the side of the bottle. And you say, "Water! That's what I need! And it's free! Hallelujah! That is the most beautiful sight I've ever seen! There must be 12 ounces of life-giving water there!" You can extol about the wonders of the water and talk about how refreshing that water is. But there's really only one thing you have to do: You have to drink. You have to receive it.

Some people hear what I'm saying today and say, "Amen! That's right! People need to be filled with the Holy Spirit!" My friend, this is not truth to be appreciated, this is life that is to be appropriated. Jesus says, "Is anyone thirsty? Let him come to me and drink!"

How would you assess the spiritual condition of your life? Are you dry and thirsty? How about our congregation? Our congregation is experiencing a drought right now, and we need a river of revival only Jesus can give. Our generation and our nation is experiencing a deep, dusty, dry drought. We need the Springs of Living water to refresh us once again. We need to come to Jesus and drink.

3. An overflowing life produces DELIGHT. You will be a refreshing blessing to others.

Many of you know a wonderful lady in our church named Delight Clark. I've always thought she truly lived up her name because she is such a blessing to others.

Delight isn't something God wants to give you for your own use. Delight is something God wants you to BE to others. God doesn't want to fill you to be simply a reservoir of blessing, but

to be a river of revival where the life of the Spirit wells up in you and becomes a fountain of blessing to others. When the Holy Spirit begins to work in your life, it isn't primarily for your satisfaction. That's the problem with some people. They are only looking for some kind of ecstatic experience where they get goosebumps and get tingly all over. God fills you with His Spirit so that those around you can be refreshed and blessed by you.

I've been pastoring for over forty years and I have found that some Christians are like sponges. They just want to come to church to soak up a blessing. I've often said that if all you do is come and sit and soak, you'll soon become sour. But Praise God, other Christians aren't sponges, they are springs. A sponge wants to be served but a spring wants to serve others. Are you a sponge or a spring?

So how does the Living Water express itself in us? It affects how we treat others. One of the ways we can be a blessing to others is by what we say to them. The Bible says, "The words of a person's mouth are deep waters, a flowing river, a fountain of wisdom." (Proverbs 18:4)

In James 3 we learn that your tongue can either be destructive or a delight. To many people get hung by their tongue. Years ago, I preached a message from James 3 entitled "How to Tame your Tongue." It's in our message archive on our website if you want to listen to it. Or I can give you the five-word summary. How to Tame your tongue: You can't. But God can. That happens when you surrender all that you have and all that you are to God. your life to Him. Every morning you should pray, "Lord keep my words sweet as honey today; because tomorrow I may have to eat them."

Transforming Truth: The Holy Spirit brings Jesus to us so that we can bring Jesus to others.

Your life is the only sermon some people will ever hear. So how do you know when you're full of the Holy Spirit? It's like the old farmer who went out to his well one night to fill the bucket with water. His son followed him out and said, "Dad it's dark down there. How can you tell when the bucket is full?" The dad said, "The only way that I know that it's full is when I hear it overflowing."

The way you can tell when a person is full of Jesus is when you hear them overflowing Jesus. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus said, "Your mouth speaks what your heart is full of." If you want to know what's filling a person's heart listen to what they talk about. If it's a certain music filling their heart, they'll talk about it. If it's a hobby like golf or horseshoes they'll talk about it. If it's the latest television series, they'll talk about it. If their heart is full of Jesus, they'll talk about Him. I don't mean that's all you'll talk about—but if you never or seldom speak about Jesus, you need to check your heart.

So, Pastor, how do I know when someone is full of the Holy Spirit? How do I determine if there are springs of living water flowing out of my life to others? It's not complicated. When Living Water is flowing out of you and refreshing others you will demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit.

Have you ever noticed the drug commercials on television? Because they are legally required to mention the possible harmful side effects, they spend 1/3 of the commercial telling you about the benefits of the medicine. Then they spend 2/3 of the commercial saying, "Possible side effects include ..." And they read through the scary list while you are distracted watching people do happy things.

I was thinking about how I would make a commercial about Springs of Living Water. Are you suffering from spiritual dryness, deadness, or dullness? Now there's Springs of Living Water. It's Jesus living His life through you to produce the fruit of the Spirit. Come to Jesus the Rock and drink. Possible side effects include an unusual desire to love all people; an infectious sense of joy; a deep inner peace that defies explanation. Other side effects include a sudden onset of patience; a habitual practice of kindness and goodness; a continual expression for gentleness; an unavoidable commitment to faithfulness; and an increased sense of self-control.

CONCLUSION

So, let's go back to that the Feast of Shelters during the time of Jesus. There's another detail about the festival that I've saved for last. Each day the High Priest would pour out some of the water on the ground. Then he would pour some of it in a silver bowl of wine. Then he would pour the mixture of wine and water on the altar where the daily sacrifices would be made. If you ask most Rabbis why they used water and wine, they will say the water represents blessing of rain and the wine represents the blessing of the harvest.

But we know the real reason. It goes back to that Rock in the desert. Remember Jesus was that Rock. In Exodus 17 Moses struck the Rock and water gushed out. The Rock was smitten. A few months after Jesus stood up and shouted this invitation, the rock which the builders rejected would be smitten as well. He would be nailed to a cross. The night before He took a cup of wine and said, "This cup is my blood."

And in John 19 we read that when the spear punctured the side of Jesus, water and blood flowed out mixed together. And as the old song says, "Rock of Ages cleft [split/punctured] for me. Let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood. From thy wounded side which flowed; Be for sin the double cure. Save from death AND make me sure."

If you remember the story about Moses and the Rock, in Numbers 20 God said speak to the rock. But Moses was peeved, mad, and frustrated at the people for constantly complaining. So he said, "You bunch of Rebels, do I have to give you water?" And in anger he struck the rock not once but twice. So God said, "Hey son, come over here. I'm going to give them the water like I promised but you disobeyed me. I told you to speak to the rock and you hit it." So how many times did Moses hit the rock? Once in Exodus 17 and twice in Numbers 20. God said, "Moses, three strikes and you're out." Why? Because in Hebrews we read that Christ died ONCE for all. He was smitten and crucified once for all time.

So come to the Rock today. His name is Jesus. Are you thirsty? He can give you living water, and then you become like that Rock and torrents of cool living water can gush out of you to

refresh people around you. Will you do that? Just say, "Jesus, I'm thirsty. I'm burning with a desire to have your fullness in me so that I can have an overflowing life to bless others."

OUTLINE

1. Desire: You must be thirsty.

"As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. I thirst for God, the living God." *Psalms 42:1-2*

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2. Direction: You must come to Jesus and drink.

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



*David O. Dykes, Pastor
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