

Sermon May 28, 2023 Pentecost John 7:7-39

37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:37-39

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

This Sunday we are given a teaching about the Holy Spirit. There is a huge shift now from focusing on the life of Christ and faith in his name to a life lived in and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are moving from the second article of the Creed about Jesus to the third article which is about the Spirit.

Many people hold that the Trinity, or triune God – three persons yet one God – is something people manufactured in their own minds, since obviously 1+1+1 always equals 3. Our faith and understanding of God doesn't rest on what other people think. It is based on how God actually reveals himself in the Scriptures. Not surprisingly, God reveals himself in a way that is a mystery to us. We all like a good mystery. One God as father, Son, and Holy Spirit takes the cake. But more on that next week on Trinity Sunday.

The opening pages of the Bible in the first book – Genesis – describe the Spirit of God hovering over the waters. So right away we meet the Holy Spirit in the very first book of the Bible. The Spirit is hovering over the waters getting ready to begin his creative work.

Very often we find the Holy Spirit mentioned in connection with water. Many times this is in a very powerful way. There is the Holy Spirit over the water creating this world. There is the Holy Spirit creating the Garden of Eden at the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. There is the Holy Spirit and the great Flood. Jacob wrestles with God at the Jabbok river. The great prophet Moses is first drawn out of the waters of the Nile and later with the power of the Spirit the Red sea is parted. In the wilderness God provides the Israelites with water from the rock. They enter the promised land by crossing the Jordan river. The greatest of the

prophets, John, prepared the way for Christ on the banks of that same river, offering the baptism of repentance and the forgiveness of sins, and where John saw the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus as they stood there in the water. How often the Spirit and water are connected! Jesus does the same in today's Gospel.

“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, ... John 7:38-39

There are all sorts of substances that flow from our hearts, like jealousy, hatred, criticism, fear, greed, ungodly passions, anger, etc. What would it be like to have living water flow from within us instead? That's Jesus prayer for us. That's where Jesus is leading us. As we are told, those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. That's sounds good to me. So let's get some of that water and Spirit for ourselves. But how?

Some people today live in houses that still have the old hand-operated water pumps out in the yard. A few parks also have more modern versions of the same. That's how we got the water. We used to have to work the pump, draw it from a well, or go down to the creek and fill our water buckets. Not anymore. Now we who live in a so-called first world country just turn on the faucet and out comes the water.

In the same manner, there are no pumps, streams rivers or lakes on this earth that will supply us with Jesus' living water. Yet how hard we try to find them and use them to quench our spiritual thirst. There are many man-made lakes, but the water in them all comes by God's creative work. We can control the flow, but we can't create the water. It's the same in the spiritual world. All the water comes from God.

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” John 7:37

Jesus is the source of the water. It will flow to us and even through us because Jesus does all the pumping, drilling, drawing, and collecting. A typical municipal water system sends all the water up to a water tower. You see them all around the city. They are up high. This allows the force of gravity to help bring the water down to your house, fire hydrant, and the local swimming pool. Jesus was lifted up high on the cross. When the soldier pierced his side the water and blood

flowed down. The blood flowed down from the cross to us to cleanse us from our sin and transform us into the holy and redeemed people of God. The water also flowed down to bring us from death to life and grant us to drink of the Spirit of Christ. This is something God has already done for you. As Jesus cried from the cross, "It is finished." These gifts are already yours by the grace and mercy of God. All that is left for us is to rise up and live in our new identity in Christ, drink from the Spirit, and let it flow through us.

Many doctors say dehydration is a serious health problem for millions of people. We're told to drink 8 glasses of water a day for good health. That's a lot of water. We can mix it up by drinking coffee, tea, and other healthy drinks. Many enjoy a beer or glass of wine. It's good to stay hydrated. Without liquids, we will die. I've heard you can only go 3 or 4 days without water before death. One of the most ironic and perhaps pitiable ways to die is to die of dehydration while sitting in a life raft in the middle of the ocean. Surrounded by water yet dying of thirst. Sometimes I think that is the situation for many people today. Jesus has plenty of water – rivers of it – to give, but people just don't drink. Of course with the sea water there is another problem. The reason you can easily die of thirst in the middle of the ocean is because you can't drink the sea water. Sea water has lots of salt. Salt dehydrates. I am told that if you drink sea water, it takes more water from your body to process the salt than the sea water itself gives. So you can drink it and still die of thirst. That helps explain why many don't drink of the Spirit even though they might be surrounded by it. If you drink Spirit water, it will also kill you. But it only kills the sinful self with all its earthly cravings, base appetites, and unholy desires. Many are just too attached to all of those, and they have no taste for the water of life. And they die in their sins. Without the work of God in our lives, we will travel down that same road. Therefore we always earnestly pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

You belong to God and no one else can have you. The Lord loves you with a perfect love, like no other we could ever find on this earth. Bank on that. Find strength and courage in that. Trust in Jesus like you've never trusted in anything or anyone else before. Come to him as his body and blood flow down from the cross to his table of eternal life and are given to you to eat and drink. Then drink from all the promises and pronouncements of God given to you in his love and let his peace, joy, goodness and mercy flow through you with the water of the Spirit

into God's creation, those you meet in everyday life, and especially those who do not know about or drink from that river of the water of life that is ours in Jesus.

**The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in him.
Amen.**

Pastor Ron Breight Christ Lutheran Church Forest Hills, Pennsylvania

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