

Sermon: Pentecost Sunday

Text: John 7:37-39

Theme: Living water

Goal: Jesus quenches our spiritual thirst by the Holy Spirit that we may be God's channel to quench the thirst of others.

Dear Friends,

**Introduction:** To understand the Gospel better, let me share with you a commentary about the circumstances under which Jesus proclaimed these words:

*“The Feast of the Tabernacles, at which Jesus spoke the words of the text, commemorated the wilderness wanderings of Israel. For seven days the people lived in booths. Every morning a libation of water was brought in a golden pitcher from the pool of Siloam and poured out in the temple in commemoration of the water from the rock that God had provided for the Israelites in the desert. On the last day of the feast, the eighth and great day, this rite was probably omitted, either to suggest the blessedness of the people on their entrance into the Promised Land or to indicate their thirst for the greater spiritual blessings of which the prophets had spoken. Jesus must have seen in the multitudes at the feast those in all ages and lands who had been making their pilgrimages, thirsting, fainting, and distressed. Jesus makes the supreme claim that He is for the whole weary, unsatisfied, thirsty world what the split rock had been for the Israelite in the wilderness.”* (Series B, p.152).

**I - “If anyone is thirsty...”**

It is so easy for us to have water. We need just to open the tap and lots of water flows. But for people who live in the desert, or in the savannah, as we saw in Kenya so many women carrying water in big containers on their head, water is rare and precious. When we

traveled to certain regions, we used to have several plastic bottles of water in the car to give to people walking beside the roads in the dry land. When they saw a car coming, they pointed to their mouth, showing that they wanted water. They were really thirsty people. -

As many of us have a more or less comfortable way of life, we don't feel the need for water as much as people who live in the desert. It is similar in a spiritual aspect as well. Few people feel that they are spiritually thirsty. In the time of Jesus, the Pharisees and leaders of the church didn't feel the need of help that Jesus was offering. The ordinary people felt, because they “were like sheep without a shepherd”. They recognized that they were weak and thirsty. And Jesus invites: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” If we don't acknowledge our need, we will never look for the water Jesus is offering. The Law of God must reflect our daily life and show us like in a mirror that we are in need of the living water. Helpless by ourselves and repented, we come to Jesus.

## **II - “...let him come to me and drink.”**

In Him we have the living water, who quenches our spiritual thirst and makes us rest “beside quiet water”, as the Psalm 23:2 says. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”, invites Jesus (Matt 11:28) And to the Samaritan woman He said: “Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14).

Jesus invites us in such a lovely way. But many are still searching for other fountains of water, despising Jesus. God says through the prophet 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.”

When Paul mentioned the story of the Israelite in the wilderness and

the water that flowed from the rock, he wrote: “They all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock, that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ... These things happened to them as examples and were written down to warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (1 Corinthians 10:4,11).

In Isaiah 55(:1-3, 6-7) God invites us: “Come, all who are thirsty, come to the waters... Listen, listen to Me, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to Me; hear Me, that your soul may live. Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.”

The invitation of Jesus is still valid and true, and has been offered throughout the ages, till our time.

### **III - “Whoever believes in me...”**

Blessed are those who believe and accept Jesus' invitation. Thanks God that there are always believers, as we are now gathered here in His name; and so many other groups of believers are gathered as well.

We can paraphrase Shakespeare and say: “To believe or not to believe, that is the issue.” There is no other way to come to Jesus and to drink from His living water of love, forgiveness and hope but by faith. Only by faith the benefits that Christ conquered on the cross flow into us. This connection with Christ by faith ignites the new life in us and transforms the desert inside us in a garden with a spring of living water. God promises through Isaiah (58:11): “The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose water never fail.”

#### IV - “...streams of living water will flow from within him.”

And that living water in us is to water everyone who is around us. We cannot retain the living water for ourselves only. It has to be shared. Jesus says: “Whoever believes in Me, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant the Spirit whom those who believed in Him were later to receive.” - With the gift of faith we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as well. Faith doesn't exist without the Holy Spirit. Peter preached on the first Pentecost Sunday: “Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38).

And “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22).

**Conclusion:** The map of the Holy Land helps us to understand what it means to receive the Holy Spirit with all His gifts and what happens when we share it – or what happens when we don't share it: The Jordan River flows from North to South. It passes through the Sea of Galilee and ends into the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee receives and gives away the water it receives. It's a living water, plenty of fish. The Dead Sea only receives water, and receives, and receives... and is dead. No life can survive there.

*“The fullness of the Spirit work depends on Jesus' prior work of salvation”* (CSSB, 1621). Our faith in Jesus is active in our works of love, guided by the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus' Word and His Sacraments the Holy Spirit is still working, offering and giving the living water that flows from Jesus to us, and through us to our neighbor. Amen.

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