**Rivers of Living Water Will Flow**

John 7:25-52

Key verse: 7:37b, 38 “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them”

 I will be happy and appreciative if someone invites me to have a drink of water when I am thirsty. Through this passage, Jesus invites us to come to him and drink to anyone thirsty. Would you like to respond to Jesus’ invitation? Let’s come to Jesus and drink the water he gives us.

1. **Jesus testified that he came from God**

 Jesus taught people in the temple courts during the Feast of Tabernacles. What was their response? Look at verses 25 and 26. Some of them began to ask, **“Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah?”** They knew that the religious leaders were trying to seize and kill Jesus. They wondered why the religious leaders did not catch him while not saying a word to him while he was teaching them publicly. They could find a clue and it was Jesus’ authority. His authority was amazing and wonderful. It made them think that he might be the Messiah. However, their conclusion was that he was not the Messiah because they knew where he was from. Look at verse 27. **“But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”** They might have assumed that Jesus was born in Galilee. Or they might know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Anyway, they believed that no one would know where the Messiah was from when he would come. They might have thought that the way of the Messiah should be mysterious. However, their belief was wrong. Micah 5:2 clearly said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and Jesus was born in that place. The Messiah should come from Bethlehem, not in some mysterious way. Their wrong information and belief prevented them from believing in Jesus. Even though they claimed to know who Jesus was, they did not. From time to time, wrong information prevents us from believing in Jesus, too. Therefore, we must study the Bible diligently and correctly.

 Jesus did not argue with them about his geographic hometown. Instead, he taught them where he really came from and who he was. Loot at verses 28 and 29. **“Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”** Jesus’ authority came from God. Jesus really knew who God was because he came from God. Jesus clearly proclaimed who he was. Jesus who came from God was the Messiah. God sent him from heaven as the Christ.

 As Jesus said that he came from God, they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him (30). It was because his hour had not yet come. He still had something to do for God’s salvation work and his glory. There is a saying that a servant of God will not die until he finishes his mission from God. When we try to perform his mission, he will protect us from all ungodly or harmful situations. People cannot change his time schedule while we live for the glory of God. Let us trust in God who will protect us and guide us until we finish our mission from God. Let us be courageous and brave to perform God’s mission until we finish.

 When Jesus proclaimed that he came from God and he was the Messiah, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, **“When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”** They strongly insisted that Jesus was the Messiah using sarcastic sentence. They saw many miraculous signs that Jesus performed. Those showed that Jesus was the Messiah. They could not deny the clear evidences. So, they put their faith in Jesus that he was the Messiah. We see that there are two kinds of people when we preach the word of God. One of them is a rejecting group, the other accepting. We preach the word of God because we believe that there are people who accept it. We have hope for our ministry because there are people who accept the word of God when we preach.

 The Pharisees felt a sense of crisis when the crowd began to believe in Jesus. They sent temple guards to arrest him. Look at verses 33 and 34. **“Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.”** In these verses Jesus implied his death, resurrection and ascension. In a word, it was gospel. It is amazing that he taught the gospel for people who are trying to arrest and kill him. Jesus wanted everyone to believe him and be saved and not perish even though they are his enemies. The Jews could not understand what Jesus said (35,36). They were spiritually blinded because of their stubbornness and wickedness.

1. **Come to me and drink**

 It was near the end of the festival. There was a special assembly on the last day according to Leviticus 23:36. It must have been the largest crowd on that day and the day was highlight of the festival. The crowd might have eaten and drunken during the festival after they had a service. They might have been full and could not eat anymore since their stomach was full. However, they were still hungry and thirsty. They had void inside which they could not fill with any food or drink. What was that? It was spiritual thirst and hunger. Jesus saw their spiritual empty inside and their thirst. Jesus saw they were wandering and suffering due to their spiritual thirst. Amos 8:11-13 say, **““The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land – not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. In that day the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.”** People were created as spiritual beings. They should fill their spiritual void with spiritual things. But they try to fill it with worldly things like money, honor, power, recognition, friendship, lustful desire and so on. Human beings who did not fill their spiritual void wander and suffer from sea to sea and from north to east. In Jesus’ time, the crowd was in the same situation. Jesus saw their spiritual emptiness and thirst. Jesus saw their wandering and suffering and invited them to come to him and drink.

 Look at verses 37 and 38. Let’s read all together these verses. **“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. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.””** Jesus said in a loud voice. **“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”** Think about rivers. The rivers wet dry lands and provide water to plants and animals. Therefore, from old times, rivers represented richness, blessing and abundance. All the ancient human civilizations were advanced around the rivers. The water from the rivers was essential to human beings and for their richness. In spiritual reality, it is the same. People need something which fills their spiritual emptiness and thirst. When Jesus said rivers of living water, he meant the Holy Spirit (39). Joel 2:28 and 29 say, **“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”** God promised that he would pour out his Spirit upon his children and servants. As the Scripture had said, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would flow from within them. When we come to him, he will give us the Holy Spirit as flowing of the rivers. The Holy Spirit will make our dry soul and thirsty void to be revived and refreshed. The Holy Spirit will give us love, joy, peace, happiness, freedom, courage and so on and so on (Galatians 6:22).

 Then, how can we get the Holy Spirit? First, we have to believe in Jesus. Look at verse 38 again. **“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”** Believing in Jesus means accepting Jesus as a Savior and Christ. When we accept Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives us heavenly joy and peace. As a typical example, we feel joyful and peaceful when we have a baptism confessing Jesus as my Savior and Christ. Long time ago, I experienced such joy and peace when I confessed Jesus as my Savior and Christ. When I was a college student, I was invited to UBF Summer Bible Conference. There, I accepted Jesus as my Savoir and Christ, repenting my sins. Then, I felt heavenly joy and peace in my heart which I never felt before. It seemed like rivers of living water flowed from within me. I shall never forget such joy and peace. I believe that it was a work of the Holy Spirit. When we believe in him, rivers of living water-the Holy Spirit will wet my dry and thirsty soul like the river does the dry land.

 Second, we have to repent to get the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in the holy place. So, we must repent our sins and make our hearts holy. If our hearts are filled with the evil spirit, the Holy Spirit will not be with us anymore. If somebody is full of evil spirit like sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, hatred and so on, he will be like a person who gets arteriosclerosis and have blocked veins. That person will not be happy nor joyful until he has a surgery to be healed. Likewise, a person who is full of evil spirit must repent and get rid of the evil spirit to have the Holy Spirit poured into his heart. If he does not repent his sins, he will not get the Holy Spirit because his sins will block the Holy Spirit coming. We are going to have Easter Bible Conference between April 7th and 8th. The main theme of the conference is “repentance” based on Luke chapter 13 which is **“Unless you repent, you too will all perish.”** I pray that we all repent our sins before God through the conference and receive the Holy Spirit.

 Third, we must pray to get the Holy Spirit. When we see the book of Acts (1:14), Jesus’ disciples and women gathered in one place and joined all together in prayer after Jesus ascended. Then, they received the Holy Spirit from the heaven. The Holy Spirit rested on each of them. When they got the Holy Spirit, they could overcome their fear and became brave and courageous people to serve world mission. Today we live in an era that value individualism. Nobody wants others intervene with their privacy. They do not want to gather in one heart and mind for one purpose. When I was converted by UBF one to one Bible study, we met and prayed together many times. We had so many prayer meetings like Bible study meeting, fellowship meeting, fellowship leaders meeting, one to one Bible study meeting, testimony sharing meeting, Friday prayer meeting, common life prayer meeting, freshmen testimony sharing meeting and early morning prayer meeting. One day, my mother asked me, “Why do you in UBF have such so many meetings? Are you guys communists?” In fact, we were not communists. We wanted to pray together and get the Holy Spirit to serve God’s ministry. I pray that we receive the Holy Spirit when we pray together.

 Look at verses 40 and 41. When Jesus proclaimed powerful messages, some of the people said, **“Surely this man is the Prophet.”** Others said, **“He is the Messiah.”** Jesus’ powerful message was like welcome rain for their dry inside. Their belief that Jesus may be the Messiah crystalized ever more. They confessed, **“He is the Messiah.”** On the contrary, others asked, **“How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?”** They knew that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem according to Scripture, but not that Jesus was born in there and he was a David’s descendant. Thus, the people were divided in two. Some tried to seize him, others believed in him.

 Look at verses 45 and 46. The temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees and confessed, **“No one ever spoke the way this man does.”** They were full of grace with Jesus’ message returning to them. Look at verses 47-49. The religious leaders were trying not to acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit which had occurred among the guards. They insisted that the guards should not believe in Jesus because any of the rulers or of the Pharisees did not. They even cursed those who had believed in him. They might have been out of their minds, being blinded spiritually.

 Look at verses 50-52. Nicodemus who was one of their members asked, **“Does our law condemn a man without first hearing to find out what he has been doing?”** They replied, **“Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”** They were consumed with prejudice and bias of localism. They could not discern what is right since they became victims of the localism.

 In today’s passage, we considered about rivers of living water which was the Holy Spirit. Jesus invites us to come to him and drink if we are thirsty. Jesus says, **“Whoever believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”** I pray that all of us may come to Jesus and drink living water which Jesus gives and rivers of living water may flow from within us. May God bless all of us to be joyful, peaceful and plentiful in Jesus who makes rivers of living water flow from within us. Amen.