

May 22nd, 2016

"COME TO ME AND DRINK"

John 7:25-39

At the beginning of John seven, we saw that the Feast of Booths was at hand in Jerusalem. And that the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill Jesus. Why? Because He healed a man on the Sabbath back in chapter five. In this one act, He declared Himself unequivocally to be God.

Last time, Jesus explained why this crowd would not believe Him: they sought their own glory, they were in love with worshipping themselves. v.17 "If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority." In other words, only if God's glory is the chief, driving concern of your life, will you discover that Jesus is telling the truth. This crowd did not. His brothers did not. The reason why the world doesn't believe in Jesus, is because they don't care about God's glory.

Jesus describes this unbelief, not as a *mere* intellectual problem, but as hatred. v.7 "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil."

This morning, we see this hatred towards Jesus continue. The more Jesus talks, the more the crowd becomes enraged. They want him arrested. They want to shut His mouth. They want him to go away. That's our context: a crowd of thousands of people with Jesus-hating hearts. And from this, the kind heart of Christ shines all the brighter. He looks at His enemies, people like you and me, and He offers Himself as the drink of everlasting life. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

- ☆ The Invincible Drink That Christ Offers (v.25-31)
- ☆ The Impermanent Drink that Christ Offers (v.32-36)
- ☆ The Infinite Drink That Christ Offers (v.37-39)

Doctrine

Jesus Christ offers Himself as the drink for our soul's everlasting happiness if only we would come to Him thirsty.

I. The Invincible Drink That Christ Offers (v.25-31)

v.25-26a *Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? [26] And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him!*

In v.20 it was apparent that some of the people didn't know that the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus. They said "Who is seeking to kill you?" Perhaps they came from the outlying villages and were unaware of the growing hostility among the leadership. But there was an inner circle "*the people of Jerusalem*" that knew full well the Jews' plans. When they saw Jesus speaking openly, they were shocked that the leadership didn't try and stop him. So they ask halfway through v.26

v.26b-27 *Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?*

So some of these people started to ask the question: 'Do the authorities now believe that Jesus is the Christ? The word "Christ" means 'anointed one.' It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *Messiah*. The entire OT promised a coming 'anointed one' or Christ or Messiah that would rescue God's people from their sin. This promise was the entire hope of the Jewish people. The coming Christ is who they lived for.¹

¹The last two verses in Malachi spoke of "...the great and awesome day of the LORD..." (Malachi 4:5)

When the Jewish leaders didn't stop Jesus from speaking, these people started to question whether Jesus was the Christ. But look how quickly unbelieving hearts put stumbling blocks in their own way of belief:

[27] *But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.*"

Apparently, at this time, "some rabbis taught that the Messiah would be completely unknown until he began to save Israel."² Some of the crowd had latched on to this teaching, and was using it to reject Jesus. But just like the Jews in John 5, they did not know the Scriptures.³ Dear congregation, we must take this lesson to heart. It is dangerous to mishandle God's word. All of our problems spring from an ignorance and unbelief in the Scriptures. These Jews were using their ignorance of the Scripture to reject Christ.

v.28a *So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from.*

This is a ironic way of speaking here. Jesus says in the very next chapter in 8:14 "...you do not know where I came from." He continues

v.28b *But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know.*

Jesus is saying, 'Don't think I'm putting myself forward. God the Father sent me. And the reason why you don't recognize Me is because you don't know

² ESV Global Study Bible

Others in this crowd didn't hold this same view, v.42 "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem?"

³**Micah 5:2** says "But you, O *Bethlehem* Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, *from you shall come forth* for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, *whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*" As a man all would know where He came from. As God, His coming forth would be hidden in the very Godhead itself. The magi quoted this verse in Matthew 2:6, and they used the Scripture to find Jesus. These Jews had the Christ standing before them, the Christ whom they hoped would come, and they were blind to him, because they did not know the Scriptures.

Him. My origins are unknown to you because God is unknown to you.’ Now Back in chapter five where this controversy began, He told them they didn’t know the Scriptures (5:39), then He told them they didn’t know Moses (5:45), *now* He tells them they don’t know God the Father. Why? Because they believe Jesus. Jesus couldn’t have been more *offensive* to these people. The Jews prided themselves on their knowledge of God.⁴ Here they were at one of the high holy feast days of the year. They fashioned their calendars, their travel plans, their bank accounts, their daily routines, their whole lives as Jews, all on worshipping God, and Jesus said ‘You don’t know Him.’ And then if that wasn’t offensive enough, he says

v.29 *I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”*

‘You don’t know God, but *I do*, because He sent Me. I came from Him. The reason you don’t know God, is because you reject Me.’ Jesus is turning their world upside down here by claiming He has *exclusive knowledge* of God the Father. He is saying that there is no right worship of God on planet earth, if it doesn’t go through Him.

John 5:42-43 “But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and *you do not receive me.*”

John 6:45 “Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father *comes to me*”

John 8:19 “You know neither me nor my Father. *If you knew me, you would know my Father also.*”

John 8:42 “If God were your Father, *you would love me, for I came from God*”

⁴ cf. Romans 2:17-20

I recently had a meeting with a woman who said she was a Christian. I asked her if she belonged to a particular denomination, and she said LDS. The context of that meeting prevented me from explaining to her the truth of this verse. Now I know that she knew that God exists. But she doesn't *know* Him. Just like these Jews, she had a knowledge of the Christ. But because, like these Jews, she believed in a Christ that would validate her own righteousness as a means of getting to God, she doesn't *know* God. God is only known by those who see God in Christ. God is only known by those who see the crucified, risen and glorified Christ as everything they need for salvation, and nothing in themselves. This is the message of the gospel. To attempt to know God outside of that, is to not know God.

v.30 *So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.*

This crowd couldn't stomach Jesus' words. So they tried to arrest Him. Apparently something like a spontaneous citizen's arrest. '...But no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.' His hour to be crucified was not yet here, and though they stretched out their hands against Him, the invisible hand of God restrained their rage. He was *invincible* under His Father's protection. **And this is my main point under this section.** The drink that Jesus would offer the world could not be prevented by the schemes of the world nor the rage of Satan. His mission was invincible. And His mission was deliberate. It has been popular in liberal circles to say that the cross of Christ was a terrible human mistake, that in no way was it orchestrated by God.⁵ The gospel of John will not allow this interpretation. All throughout these beginning chapters, this phrase "...his hour had not yet come" continues to repeat itself

⁵ One blog notes: "Many strands of Christianity believe that it was God's plan to send His one and only Son to this earth to die a gruesome death as an innocent victim, and that it was not only God's plan to do so, but that He orchestrated events to make it happen. This sort of makes God like Freddy Krueger, except that He carves up His own Son. <https://redeeminggod.com/death-of-jesus-a-bad-thing/>

(John 2:4; 7:6; 7:8; 7:30; 8:20). Jesus was born to die. There was an appointed *hour* for it that was planned from all eternity.

The point here in v.30 is that no one could touch Jesus until He offered up His life. **John 10:18** “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord...This charge I have received from my Father.” The only way Jesus could be a drink for our thirsty souls, is if He was crucified on a cross, and this only at the appointed hour. And His hour at this point, had not yet come.

v.31 *Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”*

It’s hard for me to say definitely whether this faith was a spurious faith or genuine faith.⁶ God knows. Certainly we’ve seen genuine and false faith in our first six chapters. We can say that these people were certainly impressed with Jesus’ miracles and they vocalized it. I think v.31 is included in our narrative here because as they began to speak positively about Jesus, the Pharisees begin to act.

II. The Impermanent Drink That Christ Offers (v.32-36)

v.32 *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.*

Once positive talk about Jesus came to the ears of the Pharisees, they sent officers to arrest Him. Even though Jerusalem was under Roman occupation, the Sanhedrin had power to prosecute on matters that Rome deemed of little consequence. So ironic, that Jesus Christ was deemed of such little consequence, since all Caesars and Presidents will one day stand before His tribunal. We will find out what happens with these officers next week, but just

⁶ Perhaps as D.A. Carson suggests, these are the ones who Jesus addresses in 8:31. D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 319

know that everything that Jesus now says is under threat of armed guards who have the “authority” to arrest Him.

v.33-34 *Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. [34] You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.”*

Jesus said very similar things to His own disciples. But with one important difference: the hope that they *will follow him later*. **John 13:36** “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, *but you will follow me afterward*.”⁷ Jesus is issuing a warning to this crowd, and to all who hear His voice in our day: the time to receive Christ is in this *life only*. There is coming a time very soon, for all the world when the time for seeking repentance will not be found. We have examples of this in Scripture. Esau, who is a sign of those cut off from God, sought to repent, and even did so with tears, but He could not find it. **Hebrews 12:17** “...he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.”⁸ Likewise, the story of the rich man and Lazarus. After the rich man died, he sought after relief and he could not even find one drop of water to cool his burning tongue (Luke 16:24)⁹

The time for repentance is in this life only! Jesus’ offer to drink Him in for everlasting life is an impermanent offer. Meaning, you will spend numberless more ages of your life outside of His offer than you will while His offer remains. The scripture always speaks of believing on Him as an urgent thing. **Isaiah**

⁷ See how on the other hand Jesus says in the next chapter “So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” (John 8:21)

⁸ Esau had a worldly repentance that led to death, not a godly repentance that led to life—2 Cor. 7:10

⁹ Likewise in the parable of the ten virgins, who represent the confessing visible church, we see five wise and five foolish virgins waiting for the Bridegroom who is Christ. The five foolish virgins did not with in faith, they were not filled with the Holy Spirit, and when the Bridegroom came, they were shut out. Knocking on the door, Jesus said to them “Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.” (Matthew 25:12) Or consider the enemies of David in Psalm 18:41 “They cried for help, but there was none to save; they cried to the LORD, but he did not answer them.”

55:6-7 “Seek the LORD *while he may be found*; call upon him *while he is near*; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;”

v.35-36 *The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? [36] What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come?’”*

These Jews however could not hear what Jesus was saying. They reasoned only on the human level.¹⁰ This severe threat that Jesus gave did not move them in the slightest. They reasoned on a merely human level, thinking He meant that He would soon leave Israel and go to the Jews who were dispersed among the Gentile nations and preach to them. Dear congregation, unbelief is the most terrible condition on all the planet. It makes cancer and aids and ebola look like a paper cut. Oh the need for the Holy Spirit to come and subdue wicked hearts and grant mercy.

III. The Infinite Drink That Christ Offers (v.37-39)

v.37-38 *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.’”*

Here’s where we see the great significance of the Feast of Booths. Recall that this feast was commemorated to celebrate the time when God provided for the Israelites while they were in the wilderness between Egypt and the promised land. They lived in booths or little tabernacles. Thus during this celebration, the Jews would come and build little booths and live in them. On the last day of this 7 day feast, called the great day, the Jews added a water-pouring ceremony. “The officiating priest would draw water from the pool of Siloam and pour it

¹⁰ They did not seek the glory of God, so they would not believe Jesus (v.17-18)

into the basin near the altar in the temple.”¹¹ This was to remember when God gave them water out of the rock. (Exodus 17:1-7; Number 20:1-13).

So just imagine the scene. The crowd is being hushed, and everyone’s eyes are being drawn to this ceremony. The priest stands water basin in hand retelling the story of when God told Moses to strike the rock so that water would come out. And then Jesus, the Rock of Ages,¹² stands up and **cries out** “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” What a scene! The soldiers are seeing to arrest Him, and Jesus fearlessly stands up in front of this crowd of people who mostly hated Him (v.7) and **cries out** that He is the one who will fulfill all our thirstings. In other words, Jesus is claiming that He is the fulfillment that every Feast of Booths celebration pointed to.¹³

What does Jesus mean by thirsting after Him?¹⁴

Let’s examine Jesus words carefully because there is so much glory in them. “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” **First**, what does Jesus mean by “If anyone thirsts.” The word “if” tells us that a condition must be met in order to come to Him. What’s the condition. Thirst. **Neediness**. Thirsty people are needy people. And needy people by definition do not have the means to obtain what they seek. Jesus is not asking to you bring Him money, or merit, or a good life, but **neediness**.¹⁵ Jesus is inviting desperate needy people to Him. The more desperate you are, the better He will taste to you.¹⁶

¹¹ <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/feast-booths/>

¹² cf. 1 Corinthians 10:3

¹³ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 322

¹⁴ Much help in this section from John Piper <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/out-of-your-heart-will-flow-rivers-of-living-water>

¹⁵ cf. Revelation 22:17

¹⁶ Mark 2:17 “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Second, this thirst is a thirsting of your soul. Just as God made your palate to thirst for physical water, so He made your soul to thirst for spiritual water. “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” **Psalms 42:1** “O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” **Psalms 63:1** If you stop drinking water you will die. If your soul doesn’t drink in God, it will die. The world is dying of God-dehydration. And Jesus is here offering the very thing that it and we need: A taste of His infinite, unchanging, eternal, all-wise, all-good, all-holy, perfectly just, perfectly happy, perfectly true Being.

Third, when Jesus is inviting thirsty people, He is inviting us because He wants to *satisfy* us. Jesus is inviting desperately thirsty, needy people to Him because He wants to make glad their hearts. Ponder that. Wonder over that. That the infinitely self-sufficient King of the universe thinks about us: weak, degenerate flesh pots, and He wants to make us happy. I don’t mean that in a weak sense of the word, like when our children get toys they are happy. I mean it in the strongest sense possible. Jesus wants to make our souls infinitely happy with no room for regret or want or longing of any kind. “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! **Blessed** is the man who takes refuge in him!” (Psalm 34:8). Jesus doesn’t offer bitter water. He offers soul-satisfying, heart-gratifying, Spirit-occupying water. That is the aim of the entire Bible. That we would come to Christ and enjoy Him as God, and find all our longings fulfilled in Him.

How do we come to Jesus to drink?

Jesus says “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” So how do we come to Jesus to drink? **First**, this drinking is believing. That’s the structure of this verse. ‘Come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me...’ Stop. Jesus is using *drink* as a deeper word for *believe*. We already saw this in **John 6:35** “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, *and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*” Believing in Jesus is not

simply agreeing with a proposition laid out in the Bible. Believing in Jesus is drinking Him into your soul, because if you don't have Him will perish from spiritual thirst. This is how Jesus is offering Himself to us. We can't receive Him in a different way than He intends.

I heard one time that missionaries in India had difficulty evangelizing in that nation because the people were all too ready to receive Jesus Christ as god. But the way that they received him was just as another god to add to their plethora of gods. They are a polytheistic nation. But Jesus won't be received like that. And so the missionaries had to change they way they preached so that the natives would know that believing in Jesus meant repudiating all other gods. It's not much different in America. Jesus will not be received in such a way where you place Him right next to all your other idols. Jesus is not just a box to be checked in your otherwise American dream. He offers Himself as the only water to your soul, and if you don't receive Him like that, you don't yet believe. Paul puts it like this in **Colossians 3:4** "When *Christ who is your life* appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Believing in Christ, is drinking Him in as the life of your soul. Just as physical H2O is the water our bodies needs, so Jesus is the water our souls needs. If we believe Him for that "...as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

v.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.*

This verse seems a little puzzling at first, because it could leave the impression that people before the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ did not possess the Holy Spirit. But this would be false. Every OT said who believed in the coming Messiah were given a measure of the Holy Spirit. There would have been no believers if the Holy Spirit producing regeneration. We've already seen this in John 3. Jesus rebuked Nicodemus for not knowing about the new birth in the OT (John 3:10). Likewise Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit— Luke 1:67; Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit— Luke 2:25; King David was filled with the Spirit— Psalm 51:11.

So what does John mean here? John is interpreting Jesus' last words "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" to mean that the Holy Spirit will grant a deeper, more plentiful, more abiding experience of Himself to the believer after the work of Christ than ever was experienced before. The New Covenant has greater blessings than the Old. The OT contained the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit, but in the NT after Christ's work we see the harvest.¹⁷ The believers before the cross enjoyed the Spirit of the Pre-Incarnate Christ, but after the cross we have the greater enjoyment of the Spirit of risen and glorified Christ.¹⁸

This has implications. Under the Old Covenant, the Spirit came upon fewer individuals for power and ministry. Moses once cried out "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" (Numbers 11:29). This cry of Moses became a prophecy through Joel "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;" (Joel 2:28) And this was realized at Pentecost in Acts 2 when Christ from the right hand of His Father poured out the Holy Spirit on the church in Jerusalem forever changing how believers experience the Holy Spirit. Now there is a priesthood of all believers. Not only is the Spirit now empowering the church in a greater way than under the Old Covenant, but the Spirit is communicating to the saints the Spirit of our risen and glorified Lord.¹⁹

¹⁷ Matthew Henry, *A Commentary On The Whole Bible, Vol. 5: Matthew to John*, (Iowa Falls, IA,: World Bible Publishers), pg. 975

¹⁸ <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/out-of-your-heart-will-flow-rivers-of-living-water>

¹⁹ As the author of Hebrews says "God has provided something better for us" (Hebrews 11:40)

Application

Our Doctrine: Jesus Christ offers Himself as the drink for our soul's everlasting happiness if only we would come to Him thirsty.

I was working out of town a few years back, and my co-workers and I were carpooling together. On the way back to Boise one Friday afternoon, my unbelieving friend said to me "I feel sorry for you." He said that because he knew I was a Christian, and therefore concluded that I have no joy, no happiness, no fulfillment in life. He was going to go out partying and must have imagined me to be spend my Friday nights staring at a white wall or something. Oh what a tragic conception of Christ non-believers have, as if Christ's chief characteristic is to drain the believer of all his happiness. The truth is, I felt sorry for my friend. There is no happiness outside of coming to Jesus as thirsty souls. Listen to Puritan Thomas Brooks on this point: "True happiness and satisfaction is not to be had in the enjoyment of worldly goods...[It] is too big and too glorious of a thing to be found in anything below...Certainly happiness lies not in those things that cannot comfort a man upon a dying bed. Is it honors, riches or friends that can comfort thee when thou comest to die? Or is it not rather faith in the blood of Christ, the witness of the Spirit of Christ, the sense and feeling of the love and favor of Christ, and the hopes of eternally reigning with Christ? Can happiness lie in those things that cannot give us health, or strength, or ease, or a good night's rest?...Nothing is sweet to me without the enjoyment of Christ in it; honors, more riches, nor the smiles of creature, are not sweet to me no farther than I see Christ, and taste Christ in them."²⁰ Dear congregation, you will never be happy in this life or the life to come if you don't come to Christ thirsty, and drink what He has for your soul.

²⁰ Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, (Carlisle, PA,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2008), pg. 110-111, 161

Our Duty & Delight: Come to Me and Drink

If you are an **unbeliever** this morning, Jesus voice extends to you this morning: ‘Come to me and drink, stop drinking from the poisoned well the world offers you. I made your soul, I alone know what will satisfy you. It’s me.’ **Revelation 22:17** says “The Spirit and the bride say, "Come " And let the one who hears say, "Come " And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.” Jesus Christ says “Drink” It’s so easy to drink when you are thirsty. Your soul is thirsty for Him, come to Him, find your satisfaction in Him

Fellow Saints: Has your soul gone dry? Perhaps you’ve allowed the cares of this world to distract you from going to Christ for spiritual water. Perhaps you’ve grown slothful in pursuing Christ, and you’re drowning yourself in endless entertainment to quiet your thirsty soul. Perhaps you’re just weary of this hard life that is full of trials and tribulations. In any case, are you thirsty? **Drink.** “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (**Isaiah 55:1**) Jesus is not asking you to make yourself spiritually well and then come to Him. He’s telling you to drink. **Drink** in the free forgiveness of sins. **Drink** in the knowledge that in the future when you grieve His heart, He will never leave you nor forsake you. **Drink** in His infinite righteousness that qualifies you to stand before Father. **Drink** in the future hope that you will not go before Father without a mediator, but that Christ will stand next to you and say “Father, this one is mine.” **Drink** in the delight that Christ is working holiness in you, and is removing all the dross of sin that displeases Him and seeks to destroy you. **Drink** in the ineffable reality that God the Holy Spirit now dwells in you. That God’s has been poured his love into your heart through the Holy Spirit that He has given to you.²¹ **Drink** in the Christ made this provision for you **John 14:16** “And I will ask the Father, and

²¹ Romans 5:5

he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,” **Drink** in Christ’s kind heart of holding out the promise of everlasting life. That though the flesh, and the world and Satan may rage against you will all the powers of hell, you will never die. **Drink** in the vision of the New Jerusalem. **Revelation 22:3-5** “No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.”