

# Come to me and drink

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Preacher: Daniel Chapallaz

[0:00] That we get to look at this morning. Now I wonder, do you ever go to something and you think, I wish this could go on forever. Or I wish this could at least go on a bit longer, because this is amazing.

This is such a great experience to be in. Maybe you go to a concert and you're like, if only they could do another few songs as the concert seems to draw to a close and you've just had a great time, you want it to keep going. Last year I went to see The Lion King, the musical in London. I've wanted to see it for years and finally got to go. And it was just incredible. The puppets, the music, the songs are incredible. Just wanted that to go on. Didn't want that to end. Wanted to go back the next weekend. What a great experience. Maybe some of you this morning were here at church and maybe you wish church could go on much longer. It's great to be here. It's great to be here with brothers and sisters in Christ, worshiping God together. Maybe some of us are actually thinking the opposite. In life as human beings, we thirst after things. We're looking for meaning, for satisfaction, for something that's full of life, something which is going to last, which is going to bring us meaning and joy. Maybe it's in a relationship or a career or just a little bit more money. If only that could be the thing. That will sort everything else out. That will satisfy us. I'll make everything good and right. This thought of not wanting something to end, of wanting satisfaction. I wonder, that may well be how the Jewish people in John chapter 7 felt. They were at a festival, the festival of tabernacles, this time when they remembered how God brought his people out of Egypt and into the desert where they lived in tents. And it was a great festival. Great things happened, including the ceremony of the water drawing. Apparently, it was amazing. They took a water flagon, kind of like a jug, and they poured it out. And in this ceremony, there was lights and there was music. Psalms were sung. It was a time of great joy. People loved it. This is one of the most popular Jewish festivals to be at. And as it's drawing to a close, people may have thought, we've loved this, but it's coming to an end. Is it really a whole nother year before we get to do this again, before we get to see the joy of the water ceremony? And it was full of joy. A Jewish writer said this, he that has never seen the joy of the ceremony of the water drawing has never seen joy in his life. It sounds amazing. An amazing sight to witness. And they wouldn't want it to end. And so, with that in mind, we get to verse 37, and it says that it's the last and the greatest day of the feast. People loved this time.

[4:01] And as there was this sense of sadness, of it coming to an end, Jesus gets up and he says 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. Wow.

I say wow because in a festival where water is drawn each day and it brings great joy to people, Jesus stands up and says, you see that? Well, now look at me.

Jesus says, as people feel the sadness of this time being over, he says, well, you see this? Look at me. Look at me. And rivers of living water will flow from within you.

Jesus is the one who fulfills this feast. This feast called the Feast of Tabernacles. In John chapter 1, when we're introduced to Jesus, it tells us that Jesus came and made his dwelling amongst us.

[5:23] And that word dwelling is to tabernacle, to live amongst us. Jesus fulfills the festival of tabernacles. If you were here last week, you may remember there was confusion amongst the Jewish people as to who Jesus was.

For some in the crowds and among the Jewish leaders, they really hated Jesus. In verse 30, there's people who make an attempt to arrest Jesus. And now he claims that this feast is actually about him.

And it may well make them more angry. But for others, and we'll see more of the responses next week, it actually helps them to see who Jesus is.

The one who comes to fulfill this festival of tabernacles. Jesus fulfills this festival by inviting us into the joy of the abundant life that he gives.

That's what we see in these verses. And we begin, we've got two headings which I hope will be of some help to us this morning. The first is the invitation to the thirsty.

[6:48] That's what this is. Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. It says. Jesus takes the water symbolism, all that water stuff that's going on here, and he talks about thirst.

I guess we all, as human beings, we know what it's like to be thirsty. In those extreme hot temperatures that we had in the summer, I wonder if you remember those days where in some places it reached like 40 degrees.

So hot. Thirsty was something we all must have really felt. That longing for a nice iced cold drink. Or maybe for others, a cup of tea to quench our thirst.

I often go out running. And when I come back, I'm coming in and I want water. I go and get a glass of water and maybe another. And maybe another.

I get thirsty. We know what it's like to be thirsty. It's part of human life. And the only way to sort it out is for us to go and get some drink.

[8:01] And if we don't go and sort out our thirst, then we're going to die. We can go weeks without food, but without water, three, maybe even four days.

But that's about it. We need water to live. Our bodies need water to live. But Jesus isn't talking about our need for water.

We can get that sorted as we help ourselves to a glass of water. He's talking about a deeper thirst. Another thirst that if we get to the end of our lives and this thirst is not quenched, we will die and we will face God's judgment in hell forever.

This is serious. It's life or death. Our bodies need water. Our souls need God.

And only Jesus can sort this thirst out. We could try for the rest of our lives to try and find that thing which is going to satisfy us.

[9:13] To satisfy our spiritual thirst forever. But if it's not in Jesus, then it's not going to give us life. Jesus invites us into the joy of the abundant life that he gives us.

This thirst, it's a spiritual thirst we all thirst for. Thirsty for meaning.

Thirsty to be loved. Thirsty for something that satisfies. Something that lasts. Those moments that we wish we could go on forever.

But then we're back to reality. We go and see the Lion King and it's great. But then you get back and it's normal life. In Jesus, our spiritual thirst is satisfied forever.

It doesn't run out. Rivers of living water will flow from within us. I've been really enjoying living and working around these parts of Brighton.

[10:22] And I was pleased to discover just a few days in a Gregg's just down the road. And when I saw there was a Gregg's, I remembered how good Gregg's sausage rolls are.

I'm a big fan of a Gregg's sausage rolls. And this made me think I'd quite like one. But I knew they weren't so healthy.

So I thought, well, no, I'm going to be self-controlled. I'm going to be really good and I'm not going to. But then every day for the next week, particularly around lunchtime, I was just thinking about a Gregg's sausage roll.

And so finally I gave in and I went down the road and bought one. And it was great. I enjoyed it, but it didn't last very long. And I soon wanted another one.

Without Jesus, we're lost. We're chasing after things that might satisfy us for a moment, but won't satisfy us forever. In John chapter 4, Jesus meets with a Samaritan woman by a well.

[11:32] Samaritans and Jewish people, they didn't get on. Samaritans were shunned and marginalized. And if you're a woman, even more so. And so for a Jewish man to be chatting to a Samaritan woman, that was, don't do that.

And this woman particularly, she had five husbands and the current husband, the current man that she was living with was not her husband. But Jesus, full of compassion, goes and speaks to her. And says to her, as she draws water from a well, everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Jesus, in his great love and compassion, offers to this Samaritan woman life that lasts.

Life that can satisfy her in a way no man, no relationship in all the world could satisfy her. Life that's not her husband, no relationship in all the world could satisfy her.

[13:18] It's like sipping salt water at the sea. It's not going to satisfy you. It's going to leave your mouth dry and even more thirsty than when you began.

And if you keep going like that to the end of your life, you'll end up empty and dead.

The deep spiritual need that we have is for our sins to be forgiven, to find in him the satisfaction of a life that will last forever.

And Jesus says it's for anybody. Let anyone who is thirsty come to me. It's an amazing offer of grace to anybody.

Think of the crowd that Jesus stands up and says this to. There are people there who hated him and tried to arrest him and want him dead. And Jesus offers life, abundant life to even them.

[14:28] And Jesus offers it to you today. And he's so willing to offer it that he was willing to become thirsty himself.

And drink.

Jesus goes to the cross. And he's thirsty himself. And dies to give his life up for you. So that you can come to him and drink.

You might be thinking, how on earth can a dead man then give me life? He didn't stay dead. You move on to chapter 20 of John.

One of my favorite chapters in the Bible when you see that there is an empty tomb. Jesus gives life. He is the one who can quench our spiritual thirst.

[16:24] And it's amazing. It's an invitation open to all. We sang earlier, here is love. Vast as the ocean.

We sang of the cross on the mount of crucifixion. Fountains open, deep and wide. Through the floodgates of God's mercy.

Flowed a vast and a gracious tide. Grace and love like mighty rivers. Flowed incessant from above. Heaven's peace and perfect justice. Kissed a guilty world in love. If you want to be loved with a love that will never ever let you go.

Come to Jesus. He invites us to come and freely drink of him. Who offers to us the joy of the abundant life that he can offer.

[17:25] So we can stop sipping salt water. And we can be satisfied with the water of life that flows within. That's our second point.

Verse 38. It says this. Whoever believes in me. As scripture has said rivers of living water will flow within them. I've used the word abundant life and it is abundant.

It talks about rivers flowing. Not just a little pond. Not just a puddle when the rain comes down. Rivers.

Big mighty rivers flowing. It's amazing. This is life. Life flowing within the believer.

I don't know why I kept thinking of this this week as I was picturing this. It's not a river. It's custard. I like it on a menu.

[18:30] If I ever see that a pudding comes with bottomless custard. Just the image I have in my mind of just pouring a jug of custard endlessly onto a pudding.

I don't think it ever quite happens. But that's what it's like inside of us. But rivers of water. Of life. Flowing within us.

And if you're a Christian this morning. That's us. And that's so amazing. That's a blessing. That's a joy. That we have rivers of life flowing within us.

We have abundant life if we're Christian people here this morning. Jesus says in verse 38. He says as scripture has said.

Rivers of living water will flow from within. Us. There's many verses we could look at. But just a whistle stop tour through the Old Testament.

[19:33] Exodus 17 and Numbers 20. The Israelites were in the desert and they were grumbling to Moses. Why on earth have we been brought to this desert?

We're thirsty. It's dry. We want to go back to Egypt. Why they want to go back to slavery in Egypt? Why would they? God has rescued them.

But they're there and they're grumbling. And so Moses is told by God to strike the rock and water comes. A miraculous provision for them in the desert.

And Paul says in 1 Corinthians that that rock they drank from is Christ. That's who we're to be pointed to. In Zechariah 14.

It says this. On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem. Half of it east to the Dead Sea. Half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea.

[20:34] In summer and in winter. All throughout the year. The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord and his name the only name. And here is Jesus and he's offering life.

Rivers of water of life which will flow out to the world. Isaiah 44 verse 3. For I will pour out water on the thirsty lands.

And streams on the dry ground. I will pour out my spirit on your offspring. And my blessing on your descendants. Or as we looked at earlier. No doubt these words were in Jesus' mind.

As he offered this invitation. Come all who are thirsty. Come to the waters. It's as scripture says.

And we see it being fulfilled. Here in John 7. In Jesus' words. Jesus who is the source. Of the river.

[21:37] Of abundant life. And the river itself. We get this comment in verse 39. It's the Holy Spirit. By this he meant the Spirit.

Whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given. Since Jesus had not yet been glorified. Jesus is the source of the river.

The Holy Spirit flows out from Jesus to all who believe in him. The Holy Spirit is God himself. The Holy Spirit is God himself. We call it the Trinity.

God the Father. God the Son. God the Holy Spirit. One God in three persons. The Holy Spirit. God himself comes to dwell within all believers.

That is the rivers of life which flow within us. God himself within Christians. God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit. Right now in John 7 that we're reading.

[22:41] Jesus was still there on earth. The Spirit hadn't been poured out among his people yet. Because Jesus had not yet been glorified. Jesus had not yet gone to the cross where he would be glorified.

Where he would be lifted up. Where his life would flow out for us. He then rose and was ascended. And then in Acts chapter 2.

We read of the time where Jesus' followers were together. And the Holy Spirit descended upon his people. Just as Jesus said.

And now given to all who come and believe in Jesus. Rivers of life is having God himself come to live inside of us.

Never again do we need to thirst. We have God in us. And yet it's possible this morning that for some of us.

[23:55] Maybe we don't quite feel this this morning. Life actually is feeling quite tricky. The thought of having rivers of living water.

Of abundant life in us. That actually feels quite far off from us at the moment. That can be a normal experience for Christian people.

Feeling dry and empty. It's possible that we're looking away from Jesus. Away from the source of life. As we're overwhelmed with the struggles that life brings.

But this morning we get to see in John 7. We get to see the Savior. Who calls the thirsty to come to him and drink. And so we can be refreshed by him again this morning.

By looking to the Savior again. Why not pray as we go. As you go from here.

[24:58] Restore to me the joy of this salvation. Maybe for others of us. We hear of those Israelites who are in the desert.

Grumbling saying we're thirsty. Why have you let us hear God's? Well, again, Paul, when he writes in Corinthians.

He says that these stories are warnings for us who believe. And instead of grumbling, we need to look to Jesus.

And see how good the water of life that he gives us is. The Spirit lives within us. We know joy and satisfaction like no one else.

And when we remember that. Surely there isn't room for grumbling. We need to remember as well.

[25:59] That this invitation that Jesus offers of water. Of life. It's to anyone. Let anyone who is thirsty.

Come to me and drink. It's for all of us in this room. It's for the whole of Brighton and Hove. It's for the whole of the country. The whole of the world.

Jesus offers this. There's a wonderful simplicity to this, I think.

In a crowd of people that want him dead. A crowd of people that are struggling to work out where on earth has Jesus come from. A crowd of some others in the crowd who just want another miracle from Jesus.

The beautiful simplicity is that Jesus just says, If you're thirsty, and everyone is. Just come to me for life. You don't have to know all the answers.

[26:59] You don't have to be a certain type of person. You just have to be thirsty, and we all are. And find that your thirst can be quenched only in the Lord Jesus.

Believe on him and you'll receive abundant life. The world we live in is desperately searching for meaning.

Searching for something that will satisfy them. Something which will last. I told you earlier how I wish the Lion King musical went on forever.

I wish that could be every weekend, and yet there is something even better. Something more satisfying. And it's the water of life that Jesus offers. It's found in the one who says, Come to me and drink.

Look to me. And I will quench your thirst. You will have rivers of living water. The Spirit living in us. So don't hide this abundant life to people.

[28:14] It's full of joy. Great invitation to life. And maybe this morning, maybe, maybe you're here, and you've seen the thirst that you have.

You've tried all sorts of things to satisfy you. You're searching. But you've not found it yet.

It's all just sipping salt water. It leaves you drier and emptier. Here again, this invitation that Jesus stands up and speaks to you today.

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow within them.

And you can respond and say to God, Lord, I have sinned. I am thirsty for the life that you offer. Forgive me.

[29:18] I believe in Jesus, the one who can quench my thirst. Help me to follow him from this day onwards.

Amen.