

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 7:37-52

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 February 2024

Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] Thank you, Danny, for reading the scripture. And today, in our text this morning, we're going to answer one question, and that is this.

What is one fruit of our salvation? What is one fruit of our salvation? And Jesus is going to answer this question. And in the answering of the question, I pray that we both would be, in part, convicted, but also it would be hope producing for all of us.

So as we look at this passage, may we hear what God's word has to say, how Jesus responded to this question, what is one fruit of salvation?

And to provide context, we want to, we see the very opening of the line in verse 37. It reads, on the last day of the feast, the great day.

On the last day of the feast, the great day. What feast are we talking about? If you remember this whole chapter, we begin with looking at verse 1 of chapter 7. After this, Jesus went about Galilee, and he would not go into Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him, and the Jews, and now the Jews' feast of booze was at hand.

[1 : 22] We're celebrating the feast of booze, and we find in our text that we're on the last day. And notice, the text doesn't just leave us at that.

It's the last day of the feast, the great day. Well, what makes the last day of this feast the great day? What is this talking about? As we've looked about verse 7, let's remind ourselves of the tension that Pastor Eric spoke of last week.

You remember that there is an active plot to kill Jesus. Jesus is in Jerusalem. There is an active plot to kill him. People are looking for him.

Namely, the religious leaders have a stranglehold on the Jewish religion, and Jesus is this disruptor. He is gaining a following, especially in Galilee.

The second part of the thing we want to remind ourselves is that people are embracing Jesus in Galilee as the Messiah, but his biological half-brothers of Jesus don't believe that he's the Messiah, and so they encourage him, hey, hey, Jesus, why don't you go down?

[2 : 28] The feast of booze is happening. Why don't you come down with us? We're going there, and you should reveal yourself to them. They're hoping that Jesus is going to just be made fun of, that mockery will begin, and everyone will, he will expose themselves to them, and everyone will not believe that he is the Messiah.

You're a big deal in Galilee, Jesus, but you're not a big deal in Judea, and that's what the half-brothers are thinking. But in Jerusalem, there is serious wonder.

You can see this in verse 12. Everyone was looking for Jesus, and why was that? Because Jesus should have been there in Jerusalem. Why?

Because every adult male from 20 years old and older should have been in Jerusalem because this is the feast of booze. This is the feast of tabernacles. This is the pilgrimage feast. This is one of the three pilgrimage feasts that every adult male should have made to Jerusalem.

He was supposed to be in Jerusalem, so everyone in Jerusalem is looking for this guy. Have you heard of this Jesus? And then surprisingly, as everyone is looking for him, and everyone was only going to speak of him in hushed tones, they would only speak privately about him, but then surprisingly, in verse 14, we read that in the middle of the feast, Jesus stands up.

[3 : 44] And he declares, he preaches, he declares who he is. He stands in the temple. Everyone who is looking for him now obviously heard him.

And tension is rising that after that event, the religious leaders get even more incensed, and they send officers out looking for Jesus to arrest him.

All of Jerusalem is a stirrer. Who is this guy, Jesus? People are curious. Some people think he's a good man.

Others think he's leading people astray. And the religious leaders are furious. They're furious, and they send officers to find Jesus and arrest him.

And we're about midway through the festival. This is an eight day feast of booths, eight day feast of tabernacles. So we're about day three, day four into this feast.

[4 : 51] And now we come to the last day. Now we're day seven or day eight. Theologians disagree with one another. Which is this?

Is this the last day, the eighth day, the last day, the seventh day? I'll let you decide. You can get into the fray if you want to get into that debate.

But on this last day, the great day of this feast, Jesus now stands up. Once again, the officers couldn't find him on day five, day six, day seven. They can't find him.

And so Jesus now on this last day, he stood up and he cried out, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Because that statement only means more to me when I understand what is taking place on a daily basis in this feast of booths, this festival that's going on.

[5 : 49] Remember what is happening. Every family is to set up temporary shelters, the booths outside the city walls where they encamp for eight days.

And so all of Jerusalem has set up these temporary shelters and they are living outside the city walls. And there is something that is occurring every morning. I think I have a slide of the pool of Silom.

Because notice what happens is every morning, this is taken a couple of years ago at the pool of Silom. So the pool would have been on the left. The archeologists have found it and if you've ever taken the Hezekiah's tunnel through the old city of Jerusalem, you pop out at the pool of Silom.

So this is where you would come out at. This is your exit point. And this pool, something would occur and go to the next slide if you could. If this is the old city of Jerusalem, the pool of Silom is at number 18 down there.

It's at the base of the old city of David. And what would happen, so you're in camp, you're observing this festival of booze, you're in camp there, what would happen is the high priest followed by a number of other priests would dip a gold pitcher of water and then he would ascend the hill to the temple mount and once he gets to the temple, he would pour out this pitcher of water all around the altar.

[7 : 22] And this would occur every morning and what would occur further is you dip the water and there's a procession. The high priest is leading the way, the other priests are leading the way, you were staying in your temporary shelters, you want to go see this parade of water and you watch this, observe this, but you're singing praises.

And then once the priest hits the temple mount through the water gate, there's a man who blows a shofar, a ram's horn and he would blow his shofar and that would announce more singing is to happen.

And so now you would read from Psalms, you would sing, the Psalms that we have today were songs, you would sing songs, Psalm 113, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18, you would sing these songs to the Lord, there's this praising going on and you would rejoice and then the high priest would give this message and every morning this would occur, every morning this would occur.

Day one, feast of booze, you would go to the parade of water, it wasn't called the parade of water, it's my nomenclature and I have the microphone. So and then day two, day three, day four, day five, day six, day seven, something different happens, day seven, seven times the high priest would do this parade.

And he would go down to the pool of silam, he would get his pool of water, he would pour it out once he gets the, and everyone is singing, it is a high day of praise and adoration to the Lord, a high day of worship and this is a fall festival.

[9 : 00] By this time, water had maybe become scarce, cisterns were now empty, the fall rains would have been longed for and so you would have been praying for rain that accompanied this festival of booze.

And now this great day, when you've seen this parade seven times, Jesus then stands up, now that's in the background and he 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. And all of a sudden, doesn't that add color to our text? What everyone would have been observing, what everyone would have been participating in all of these days.

And then this last day, notice what Jesus does, Jesus stood up.

[10:19] Now this is, Jesus is breaking all conventions, imagine getting to the temple mount, you would have heard the high priest, you would have heard a number of people who had authority to speak, but Jesus, he chooses to stand up as this water is being poured out for the seventh time and he now stands up and he cries out, this is a loud voice here, he is shouting.

If anyone thirsts, the crowd would have hushed.

He is speaking loudly and he just answered the question, what is the fruit, one fruit of salvation?

He just answered the question and let's read it one more time. 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.

Let me say it this way. What is one fruit of believing in Christ? A longer answer is, Jesus Christ blesses all who believe in him with rivers of living water of his spirit so that we may bless others.

[11:47] The short answer, Jesus Christ inhabits us through the spirit to be a conduit of blessing to others. Jesus inhabits us through his spirit to be a conduit of blessing to others.

And there's a promise that is spoken here and there's five dimensions of this promise that I want to talk about for the rest of the message.

This promise, if anyone thirsts, come to me and drink and then what does he say, whoever believes in scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

That's a promise. What are some facets of this promise that I want us to look at? First notice the person of the promise.

This is the one claiming and making this promise. Jesus claims to show himself to be God and human flesh. This is the person of the promise.

[12:47] No mere human could promise this. If I said to you, come to me, all who thirst and drink and whoever believes in me, out of your heart will flow rivers of living water, nothing's going to happen.

I don't have the authority to say that. But if you're fully God and fully man, you have the authority to be making this promise.

He is the one who can die to forgive sin for one to have a right standing with the Lord.

Who accept God in human flesh can make such a claim and to fulfill it. No one but God who tabernacles, this is the feast of booths among us could legitimately ever claim this.

No one but him in summary, who is the person of the promise Jesus and he claims to show him to be God in human flesh.

[13:53] Secondly, what's another facet of this promise that come to me all who thirst, let him come and drink, let him come to me and drink and whoever believes as the scripture said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

What is the breadth of this promise Jesus? His offer is open to all. What is the breadth of the promise Jesus's offer is open to all notice in the verse that says if anyone, if anyone, if anyone thirst.

His offer is to everyone. Jesus extends his offer to his enemies who are actively seeking to arrest him and they and everyone knows this arrest is ultimately going to end in his death because it's everyone is seeking to kill him.

But at first they have to arrest him. So he offers this get this Jesus is offering coming to him to his bitter enemies.

They too can come and drink later. A man named Paul, the apostle would describe himself as the chief of sinner Paul, the chief of sinners could come and drink.

[15:08] This offer extends to the religious Jews. Remember this is a pilgrimage feast. There are a bunch of religious Jews who are making pilgrimage to Jerusalem that this offer to come to Christ and drink is available to them to to religious Jews.

They too can come and drink. And why do I say that? What cannot save a person?

What cannot forgive sin? Why do we need to come to Jesus for those who are spiritually thirsty and drink and and that that is a metaphor coming to him and drinking is a metaphor for believing.

Look with me in verse 38, whoever believes in me. So what is something that cannot save someone and that there was a whole host of individuals in this category standing before Jesus is there a bunch of religious people, earnest people who he was making this offer come and believe in me. But what is it that Jesus knows that we know that cannot save someone many. And that is religious observances.

[16:34] The audience was full of those who were making and had the lifestyle of making religious observances. This cannot save anyone.

Many today grew up in traditions that went through some form of religious rigor. Some churches called that confirmation. Other churches have other religious rigor systems in place to hopefully bring somebody to faith in Christ.

Some may call that Sunday school. Some may call that a wanna. Some may call it many different things. But those religious rigors cannot save someone.

But they hope to point to Christ that we might put our faith in him. Here at 4th Memorial we have a nine o'clock discipleship hour.

I encourage everyone to go to that hour. Not because the hour and the content of Jesus proclaimed in each class he is the one who saves.

[17:41] But just because you attend a class that does not save. You can do all these good things and still find yourself thirsty.

I was a baptized member of a church who did not know the Lord and would have gone to hell.

Let me explain. When I was in second grade the pastor of the church that we were attending and the religious tradition that I was in he would stand down front and he would lead people in a prayer and he would say if you prayed that prayer come.

And so people would pray. Sometimes people would come to the pastor to have him pray for him and things like this. Now I understand things far better than I did and my second grade self did. But how did I find myself down front at that time?

Well, I have an older brother and he stood up and he went forward and I thought I'm going to be left here with my parents or I could go with my brother down front.

[18:47] So I went forward and this is what the pastor asked me. He said do you know why you came forward? Yes. I want to be with my brother in my mind. I want to be with my brother.

That is exactly why I came forward. And so I said yes. And so then he said well did you pray with me? Yes. Now I didn't believe it.

But I orated words. And so then I was then baptized. Because I answered yes, I knew I was there and yes I prayed.

I was then baptized. Which then in that faith tradition that I was in then you are a member of the church just by nature of a professional faith and a baptism. So at seven years old I was a baptized member of a church but did not know the Lord.

I had a lot of religious rigor. Then I went to Awana. Then I went to years and years of Sunday school until I was 19 years old and that same older brother that I followed that misled me.

[19:49] No, I'm kidding. You can edit that out. That same brother we were going to go watch a movie. Just the two of us were in the car and he said to me, Scott tell me why is it that you think you're saved?

And I gave him some religious rigor answer and he said I have to share with you that is not how God's word says that someone sins are forgiven and you know the Lord.

And he says I'm afraid for you Scott. And it was that question and that statement by someone I loved and respected that caused me to consider.

But if you would have asked me from second grade on up, Scott are you a Christian? I would have said yes. And if you would have said why I would have pointed to all my religious rigor.

And perhaps you're sitting in here and all you have is your religious rigor. You have been going to church. You've heard the gospel, but you have not believed.

[21:01] And this is saying whoever believes in me, that's the key. But the breadth of Jesus's offer is his offer to all. That's the beauty to his enemies.

To religiously rigorous people. To those who wanted to kill him. It's open to all.

Jesus makes himself available to all. Thirdly, notice the condition of the promise. That is you must be thirsty. If anyone thirsts. Now, what is this speaking to?

There, that is, there is a recognition of one's need for the Lord. Many biblical writers have talked about this thirst. We can go from Isaiah. I'm just going to read a few passages or Isaiah 55.1. Come to everyone who thirsts. Come to the waters. He who has no money. Come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Psalm 42 verses one and two.

[22 : 03] As the deer pants for the flowing stream. So my pant, my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

Do you hear this thirsting, this recognition of one's need for the Lord and desire to know him? Verse 63. O God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you.

My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water. But there is a problem with this line of thinking for a, I want to just pause for a moment.

Let's first recognize where perhaps this recognition of one's need for the Lord comes from.

Ecclesiastes is a little bit helpful. The Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes that he has put eternity in man's heart.

Belize Pascal centuries later he would write, and he would refer to this as the God shaped hole that exists in everyone. And all that may be true and all that exists, that's great.

[23 : 09] But here's the problem. Paul and Romans shares with us that sin causes humanity, that sin causes hostility in the minds of people toward God.

Paul writes it this way. The sinful man is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Just yet, we read in Romans chapter one that humanity ignores what can be known about God because we suppress truth and unrighteousness.

We are spiritually dead in our sin. So what does humanity do with this eternity set in our hearts, this God shaped hole, if we will, because humanity apart from Christ does not feel or thirst for the Lord. What do we do? John's Piper's father was an evangelist. John Piper's father told his son, John, that the most difficult thing about being an evangelist or sharing Christ is not getting people saved, but it is getting them lost.

In other words, people don't sense their desperate need for Christ. They don't feel that they are thirsty for Him. Instead of recognizing one thirst for God, people quench this thirst with all kinds of other things.

[24 : 39] You know them. We are familiar with them. People think this success or money or social fame will fill some addictive substance, some pleasure will satisfy this inner thirst.

And so mankind thirsts for things, perhaps thirst for God, but fills it with many other things.

And we see that. Fourthly, there's a fourth aspect to this promise is the simplicity of the promise.

To receive the living water, one must believe if anyone thirsts, recognize your need for the Lord, let him come to me and drink and whoever believes in me.

Look also in the next verse in verse 39. Now he said this about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive.

[25 : 50] What is the simplicity of the promise? The simplicity of the promise is simple. One must believe. That's the simplicity of it. Isn't it beautiful? Jesus did not say, if any of you thirst, join a church, be baptized, take communion, do penance, give money to the church, clean up your life, make some holy pilgrimage, do good, attend church every Sunday.

Jesus does not solicit a moralistic response or give a works based answer.

One cannot do anything to initiate a relationship with the Lord. One must believe in his person and his work.

Let me explain those. One must believe in his person. That is, we have to have the right Jesus.

There's many Jesuses that have lived on the face of the earth and there are still many Jesuses that live today.

But who is this Jesus? You have to believe in this one. Who is he? He is fully God and he is fully man. You must believe he is fully God and he is fully man.

[27 : 08] You have to believe in his person and his work. Today is his work, that is, what did Jesus do to forgive sin that we might know him?

He's a second member of the Godhead. He condescended to earth. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He died a death for sin.

Three days later, he rose from the grave and one day he will return. This is his work and we believe, I believe in the life, his sinless life, his death for sin and resurrection on my behalf.

I believe in his person and his work. I believe he is the one who forgave sin. He is the one who can satisfy my need for the Lord.

He is God. He is the one through that act allowed me through the faith to now have a relationship with the Lord and my thirst is satisfied.

[28 : 08] There's a simplicity to the promise. Believe that simplicity of belief is still available today. When I was 19 years old after my brother shared with me the disruptive question.

Alone in my bedroom after we watched the movie that night. I believed in his person and his work from my on my behalf.

Fifthly, this is the last one. There's a supplier to the promise. That is the Holy Spirit dwelling in each believer to fill us with every spiritual need.

Look with me in John 39, 7 for verse 39. Now this he said about the spirit. So out of his heart flows rivers of living water, but he says, but now he said this about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive for as yet the spirit had not been given because Jesus had not been glorified. So because Jesus had not completed his work on the cross, the Holy Spirit and the Pentecost had not yet happened when the Holy Spirit was given to those who in Christ.

[29 : 37] Because that event had not yet occurred. He's speaking of the spirit in future tense for us. We read in Ephesians 113 that those who believe were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

So for those believers today, we are, it's not a future event. It is a past event that we have at the moment of salvation. And so the Holy Spirit is the supplier of the promise that out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

So now let me repeat the answer to the question that we've been trying to answer today. What is one of the fruits of salvation of knowing God?

Jesus Christ blesses all who believe in him with rivers of living water of his spirit so that we may bless others.

What is stunning about North Africa is this amazing Sahara desert that just defines the landscape. I enjoy looking at satellite photos.

[30 : 46] I like topography and things. So I look at photos and topography. What's amazing is in North Africa, it's just this barren land.

And then you have a Nile River that for some distance away on the east and the west of the Nile River, it is fruitful.

It is lush. It is green. And for millennia, the Nile River has been a source of food and irrigation and transportation employment. It's been fertile soil.

It has blessed. Egypt has been blessed for many, many years because of the Nile River. And it is this fountain of water that has been life giving for the nation of Egypt.

Just the same. God gives us the Holy Spirit and out of the Holy Spirit flows rivers, plural, not singular, rivers of living water to refresh and to bless others just like the Nile River in a barren land does for the nation of Egypt.

[31 : 56] So too should you and I be to others around us because of what God has done, this benefit of salvation.

I am willfully not using her name because now we are being recorded. But there stood someone on stage earlier that is going to the most unreached people with have little to no access to the gospel. Because upon believing, she knows that inhabiting her is the Holy Spirit that is gushing forth rivers of living water that just as she understood now she has has the capacity to bless others with the gospel that they may be fountains of living water there and there and to use her life to be a conduit for the Holy Spirit to bless others with the gospel and with all the attributes of the Holy Spirit, things like love, things like joy, peace.

Patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control, rivers of water, blessing others because of her faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit who is just oozing this stuff out.

And so you say, Scott, I don't know if that defines me. In a moment I'm going to ask you to consider two things, but first, well, let me do it now.

[33 : 54] If that you say that, I don't know if that's me, Scott. I don't see, you know, it's been some time since I befriended someone without Christ. It's been some time since I've shared what Christ is doing in my life.

It's been some time since I, to think of myself as using my life to be a blessing to others. I don't know. It's been some time.

I would ask two questions for you to consider. Number one, you may not know the Lord. The Holy Spirit may not reside in you. That may be the answer.

And just like me, from second grade until the age of 19 years old, I thought something about myself that I was saved, that I knew the Lord.

And more to the contrary, nothing further from the truth could have been possibly said of me. I have teasingly said to my wife, if we had met in high school, you would have not have liked me.

[34 : 53] And that's true. So you may not know the Lord.

You may have a lot of religious rigor going for you, but you have not yet believed in Christ and His person and His work for your salvation.

If that is you, I want to encourage you to take the Lord at His word who in verse 39 says, whoever believes in me as the Scripture says, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Your sins can be forgiven and I encourage you today to believe in Christ. Finally, for those who have trusted the Lord, but that life of blessing others with the gospel and the fruit of the Spirit may not be defining you, I would encourage you in this way that perhaps you are quenching the Spirit and you are grieving this Holy Spirit.

When we do not cultivate our walk of Christ in purity, we grieve the Spirit. That's found in Ephesians 4 and it caused the Holy Spirit sorrow and pain.

[36 : 07] He is a third member of the Godhead. Secondly, when we grieve the Spirit, we're also quenching the Spirit. That is, we're suppressing, we're stifling the Spirit within us.

The Holy Spirit, when we are abiding in Him, we produce fruit stemming from these rivers of living water, much fruit, we're told in John chapter 5.

We produce attitudes and actions that reveal who He is. And if this is you, I would ask that you confess.

You say, Lord, forgive me. It's been some time since I've walked with you. Lord, today I want to renew my relationship with you, take sin seriously and battle sin.

Thank you for giving me the tools in this life and help me to have every desire satisfied in you.

[37 : 13] And for some in this room, that may be an appropriate step for all of us regardless. But those in the second category specifically also, I want to make a book recommendation of this book by David Mathis called The Habits of Grace.

I think we have it for sale in the book nook. But this book is the best book I have come across with regard to spiritual disciplines.

Spiritual disciplines are those avenues that God has made available for us to know Him. So things like prayer and reading God's word and being in community with others and things like this, gathering of the saints.

What David Mathis does is he doesn't call them spiritual disciplines. Because I've always often, if you're like me, thought of spiritual disciplines like, I just get in there and pray.

Nothing more encouraging than that. But what is prayer? David Mathis, I appreciate how he just says prayer is a habit of grace.

[38 : 20] What is spending time with God in His word? It's just a habit of grace. It's a gift to you. You get to do that. What is it to gather as saints corporately and worship Him together?

What is that? That's a habit of grace. And he writes in this way that is liberating and encouraging. And so if you want to cultivate your life in this way, I encourage and I submit to this book to you for your consideration.

Let me conclude this way. I see a twofold purpose here in this promise for it says, out of His heart will flow.

Out of His heart will flow. The implication is clear that we are ultimately satisfied in Him. The Holy Spirit is at work in us.

He's a fountain of the rivers of living water and we are just a conduit by which others are blessed in this way. And so we find our ultimate satisfaction in Him when we see this promise played out.

[39 : 30] Secondly, nothing matters more than that. All of us want to be a conduit of God's blessing to people. May we find our ultimate satisfaction in Him.

Secondly, there's a the second purpose of this is to be a blessing to others. Out of His heart will flow.

It will flow. You are not to be damned up if you will reservoir of God's blessing.

No, no, no, no. It is to be flowing to other people what the Holy Spirit is doing in your life.

And what does it require believing in Him? This is why He said, what is one blessing of salvation? This is it.

[40 : 25] Out of your heart will flow fountains of river. We are a source of blessing to other. This is why I real quick story and I'll conclude.

My wife and I this last year moved one house to another. This is our second house in our second place to live in 20 something years.

We don't move very often. I'm like a house plant and just just leave me alone. And so I like it right here. So but we moved and we're moved into a neighborhood and there is there's a need for someone to draft a document.

I've told you about this earlier, but my whole purpose in drafting a document for my neighborhood is to so I can meet my neighbors.

So I can have a relationship with them. It's so because I know their need is for the Lord ultimately and I want to have an avenue for this. I gladly do this.

[41 : 33] I welcome this. So wherever the Lord has you look for opportunities to be a blessing to to share the gospel.

We're in a spiritually dry and barren land. People are dying of spiritual thirst. And you and I are conduits of rivers of living water to a people who are dying with that need.

I pray. I know someone recently joined a gym not because he really wants to go work out, but that is an avenue to meet those without Christ.

Wherever the Lord has you, you may be in a neighborhood, a job, whatever. May you and I be a conduit of blessing and be of the fountain of living waters that are flowing from the Holy Spirit inside you and me.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word this morning. Thank you for this day.

[42 : 51] Lord, thank you for the privilege to send one out to this morning earlier, who is purposed her life to be a conduit of the living waters in her.

I pray that each one of us, we could go around the room and we could share and give testimony to what you are doing. But for those in this room that have had a life of religious rigor apart from you, I pray that they would believe today would be a day of salvation.

Lord, I pray for those in this room who that a life of being a conduit would not be describing them and that there would be repentance and confession of sin, a renewal unto you.

And I pray that all of us in this room would find our ultimate satisfaction in you. You are to be praised, Lord. And it's in your name we pray. Amen.