

John 7:37-52

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[0:00] Well, good morning. If you have your Bibles or I guess your smart phones, kindly turn to the Gospel of St. John chapter 7.

! Last week we began our study in the Gospel of John chapter 7 with our brother Kent. And we realized that this is a very important chapter because we now find our Lord entering into a new period of his ministry.

One that's going to be fraught with hostility and tension and danger. You pick that up from verse 1 of chapter 7. In chapter 7 verse 2 we learn that this is the Feast of Tabernacles, which was a very special feast at that time.

The timing of it is such that it's about six months after chapter 6 and about six months before the next Passover or the crucifixion. This feast was one of the great feasts of the Jewish year.

It was one that was requiring that every Jewish man, and oftentimes his family as well, would be required to come to Jerusalem to worship.

[1:22] The other two was that of Passover as well as first fruits. The Jewish historian Josephus called this feast the holiest and greatest of the feast.

And because of this, the Jewish leaders and the people as well were wondering, is Jesus going to come to this feast? Would he come?

Yes. But it wouldn't be until about the middle of the feast, which was taken up last time in verse 14, where he shows up at the temple courts. This was in the middle of the week.

And he began to teach the people. Now, we're not going to review everything that was discussed at that time, but what we could say is that the Jewish leaders were truly amazed at the teaching of Jesus.

And as they listened to Jesus, even though they were impressed with his ability to communicate God's word, we find that the leaders are pushing back.

[2:25] They're not accepting his authority. And we find that the people are beginning to dispute. Is this the one that is supposed to come? Or is he the wanted man?

And how come the Jewish leaders aren't saying anything? And so there was division that was taking place there. We find that there were some people who actually thought that perhaps he is the Christ. And there were others that were disputing it as well, figuring that his messiahship could not be the case because of the origin and his birthplace, which they felt was there in Nazareth as opposed to in Bethlehem.

And so they ruled out. They ruled out his messiahship. In verses 28 and 29, Jesus' response to the people as they were kind of going back and forth angered them.

And you end up having them seek to actually seize him and take him away. And yet a very important little phrase in verse 30 is, his hour had not yet come.

And you see that sprinkled throughout John, that regardless of what people wanted to do to Jesus, until his hour had come, they were not going to be able to do anything to him. Still many in the crowd, despite all of this upset, probably the pilgrims that had come in, we find in verse 31, actually put their faith in him.

[3:50] And when the Pharisees realized that there were people that were thinking that he was in fact the Christ, they sent the temple guards there in verse 32 to go get him. Now whether or not Jesus continued from the fourth day right on into the seventh day, we don't know for certain.

My guess is, is that he probably did. Why I say that is because on the fourth day, they sent the temple guards to go get him. And on the seventh day, he's still talking. And if you look at their response there, you realize that they were awed by him. So it's probably a case of where he continued to speak.

When we get to verse 37 and 38, we're on the last day of the feast. And Jesus stands up and he makes a declaration about himself. But to appreciate the drama of what's going on, I think it would be good for us to have a little bit of background.

I'll keep talking.

[5:13] I'll let him catch up. Okay. Okay. As we do some research as to different people who have written about this feast, we realize that the feast was a big festival for the year.

And the people would gather palm branches and willows, and they would begin to march in procession around the altar. And it would almost form like a canopy, a roof around it as well. And they would begin to march each day around the altar. But on the seventh day, they marched seven times in commemoration of the time when they marched around Jericho.

Now at that time, the priest would take a golden pitcher, and he would go down the hill, out the water gate, to the pool of Siloam, and he would fill the pitcher with water.

And when he came back, they would have a great procession. As he came back through the water gate, the people would recite, they would have a blowing of trumpets, and the people would recite, With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

[6:24] According to Isaiah 3. And then they would begin to have a kind of a chant back and forth by the choir of the Great Hallel.

The Great Hallel was made up of Psalm 113 through 118. And they would be singing it responsibly back and forth with one another, as the priest would go up with the golden pitcher, and then would eventually pour out the water, out onto the altar in an offering of worship to God.

The Hallel was a set of Psalms that recounted, not only the thanksgiving to God for what he had done for them in the past, but also it was like a prayer for God to continue on with that prosperity and peace for the people.

This whole ceremony, a very dramatic ceremony, was a vivid thanksgiving for God's provision of water for them. You want to keep in mind that they were a people that were in a very arid place. Water was very precious. And very often, from time to time, we'd see God providing for them water. You might recall back at the time when they were in the wilderness, that God brought forth water actually from a rock on a couple different occasions, so as to provide for the people.

[7:58] In addition to that, they would pray that God would continue to provide rain for their crops, that they might continue to prosper. In addition to that, there was a time of the festival where they were celebrating the coming of the Messiah, according to Zechariah 14, his coming days and when he would provide prosperity for them.

Now, many people believe that it was immediately following the ending of the chanting back and forth of the great Hallel, when there was a quieting down, when Jesus stood up and cried out, in verse 37a.

This is when he lift up his voice to the people. He probably got to a place where he could be on a high location, where he could be easily seen and easily heard as well.

And he could make the proclamation of where he begins to present himself as the great spiritual thirst quencher. Now, as we look at this passage, I want to first of all have us note the universal invitation that Jesus is making.

Notice carefully, he says, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Now, I want to, again, emphasize the fact that the Feast of Tabernacles commemorated how God provided for them in the arid desert, in a time when they were, in fact, going from Egypt over to the Promised Land.

[9:41] And it was a time where they oftentimes suffered from thirst. But God provided for them time and again. Now Jesus is standing before them, and he's saying, You know how God provided for you in the wilderness in the past with physical water?

I'm going to, I'm going to be the one that's going to provide you spiritual water to quench your spiritual thirst. Earlier, you might remember, in John chapter 4, verse 14, when Jesus met with the

woman at the well, we find him telling her, he says, Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.

The water that I will give him will become to him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. And if you've been through John lately, you can remember that when she heard that and she took up the water that Jesus was providing by putting her trust and faith in him.

In fact, she's the first one that Jesus ever proclaimed that he was the Messiah. He was a Samaritan woman. And yet, she's the first one who actually heard that.

Well, she got hold of that, and you know what happened? She ran back to town and says, Come see this guy that told me everything about my life. And if you know anything about her life, it wasn't the most clean type life that she had lived.

[11:06] And so they all came back out. And they said that we first believe because of what she said. Now we believe because of what we have heard from you. So now Jesus is making the same offer.

And he's saying, If anyone, anyone thirsts, let them come to me and drink. Jesus is preaching himself with a voice of authority.

Now this is very different from what the Jews had been used to. Because you see, the Pharisees used to tell the people to follow their traditions. And the Sadducees used to tell them to follow their rituals.

But Jesus was inviting them to follow him and take of him, eat of him in John 6, or drink of him. It was a very similar invitation in Matthew chapter 11, verses 28 to 29.

Many of you are probably familiar with it. He says, Come to me, all who labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you'll find rest for your soul.

[12:26] I want you to notice the universal breadth of the invitation that Jesus is giving. He says it's for anyone.

Anyone who's thirsty, let them come. No matter who you are or what you've done, anyone can come to Jesus. No matter how bad or how wicked you've been, the invitation is to any.

And to all thirsty souls. Of course, again, Jesus is speaking of spiritual thirst as opposed to physical thirst. But if any of you have been someplace where you were just dying of thirst, you know how intense that can be to grab hold of your attention.

And it's an apt description of what a person who begins to develop spiritual thirst for. As he begins to understand the value of his soul, and he begins to understand the sinfulness of his sin and the burden of his guilt and the intense longing of his spirit to experience some peace and forgiveness. That person's burning desire within is in fact aptly described by thirst here in this passage. It's a wonderful word picture. Now I want you to notice the simplicity of what that thirsty soul longing for peace needs to do.

[13:56] It says he needs to simply come to Jesus and drink. He only has to come to Jesus in faith. Verse 38 explains that it's faith, that drinking and faith go together.

He only has to lean on Jesus and give himself over to Jesus and allow Jesus to minister to him and feed him and his soul. only has to come and drink and Jesus will quench his inner thirst of his heart. Now the expression drink of course is figurative. It means to take in or to appropriate all that Jesus is and provides for you.

Whether it has to do with forgiveness, whether it has to do with peace, whether it has to do with understanding and wisdom, whatever it is, Jesus promises to be that one to provide what you need. Jesus is the fountain of life and refreshment. He says, come and draw from me, from me, and you'll thirst no more.

[15:08] I don't know about you friends, but I can't imagine a person even down through history that could use that kind of language.

If you have any need, you come to me. There are great religious leaders in the past that says, I know the way. Jesus says, I am the way. There are those that say, I know the truth, but Jesus says, I am the truth.

I know how to point you in the direction of life. He says, I am the life. No one spoke like Jesus did. And no one could do that down through history because no one was like Jesus who was indeed God in the flesh ministering in our midst.

I don't know where all of you are this morning, but I guess what I would like to do is ask where you're at to kind of just think for a minute as to whether or not you came in here this morning weighed down with troubles, difficulties, perhaps guilt, perhaps looking for some inner peace. Jesus is giving an invitation to each and every one of us today. If you're finding yourself feeling empty, if you're finding yourself full with dissatisfaction and all you've tried in the world isn't working, Jesus invites each of you to come and drink and quench the thirsting of your soul.

[16:52] I don't know about you, but I think that's a grand and glorious universal invitation. What could be better?

Well, there could be the promise of an overflowing abundance. We read there in verse 38, whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Now, that verse has had various interpretations. To begin with, does the phrase as the scripture has said refer to whoever believes or out of his heart will flow rivers of living water?

The latter seems best for most commentators, scriptures. But, a second question comes when we think about it. It says, where in the Old Testament does that passage that Jesus as the scriptures say, where do you find that?

You don't. There is no direct quote. The most probable solution to that, I would say, is probably that Jesus didn't intend to quote a particular passage, but rather knowing the scriptures as he did, he gathered together the import of so many passages that spoke of living water and life and everything like that and he brought it together.

[18:27] Some of the passages he might have been thinking of as we've already looked at is Isaiah 12, 3, where it says, with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. Of course, we mentioned that this was recited as the high priest had brought back the water in the golden goblet.

But perhaps there was another one. In Isaiah 35, verses 5 to 7, this is a passage that talks about the signs of when the Messiah would come. And among those different signs were the blind would begin to see and the deaf would begin to hear and the lame would begin to leap for joy.

But among all those things, in addition to that, we read as a sign that the Messiah had come was that waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert, the burning sand will become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.

Perhaps he was thinking also of Isaiah 44, 3, where it says, and I will pour forth water on the thirsty land and the streams on the dry grounds, and I will pour out my spirit upon the offspring and my blessing upon your descendants.

Maybe he was thinking of Isaiah 55 that we read this morning with Man and Jules, who says, come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters and delight yourself in rich food, incline your ear and come to me, hear that your soul may live.

[19:58] life. He may also have been thinking about Zechariah. Now this whole passage speaks about the day when the Messiah comes back and he delivers the nation of Israel from all of its enemies and he's going to vindicate his people once and for all and set up his kingdom there in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. I'll just read a couple of verses there. Verse 8, and on that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem.

Half of them will go to the eastern sea and half of them will go to the western sea and shall continue in summer as in winter. And then verse 16, and this is kind of an interesting one, it says, then everyone who survives all of the nations that have come against Jerusalem, namely all of Jerusalem's enemies, says they shall go up to Jerusalem year after year and worship the king, the lord of hosts, and they will keep the feast of tabernacles.

He's talking about a time of what many believe was the millennial kingdom when in fact Jesus would come back, deliver his people from all their enemies, and set up his kingdom and reign as king Jesus there.

And it says there that they would celebrate the feast of tabernacles. Regarding this last passage, it's believed that Zechariah 14 was often read in public at the feast of tabernacles on the first day of the feast.

[21:31] So it's as if Jesus is saying, you've already heard Zechariah 14 and how the Messiah was going to come and how living water was going to

flow out and come to you.

Well, that's going to come from me. It's going to come from me. and you'll come and drink and believe. My friend, here's a promise that has an overflowing abundance that I see has two parts to it.

First, all those who come to Christ in faith will not only find all of their needs, spiritual needs taken care of, met fully and completely, but also those who do that, fountains of living water will flow out from them and be a blessing to others around them.

In other words, the living waters is not something that originates with the believer. That's a gift from God. But Jesus seems to be implying that if they come to Jesus, drink and take of him and believe in him, that God would put rivers of living water within them that would flow out to be a blessing to those around them.

One backdrop for this extremely important principle is what sometimes people refer to as the rule of the pool, best illustrated by the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

[23:11] With the Sea of Galilee, water keeps flowing in but never flows out. And so, over time, it has become stagnant and represents death.

Nothing lives there. On the other hand, the pool that has not only water flowing out but also has coming in, much like what we know of the Sea of Galilee, sparkles with life and vitality.

And so, what Jesus is saying here is that you will have rivers flowing out of you. And my exhortation to myself as well as to you is don't stop the flow.

Keep it going. Keep that flow of the Spirit flowing within you. Keep yourself in ministry to others and you'll continue to be refreshed in your own soul.

And this is an important point, however, though, as you continue to come and drink from Jesus. You see, to the extent that you live for yourself or, and this is important, especially for many of you that I know that are very busy in ministry here, or cease to continually come to Jesus to drink, there's a real danger of beginning to get dry, stagnant, or burnt out.

[24:45] I have to confess that in the years of my ministry, there were times that I didn't follow this. I got so busy with ministry, I was just doing it for the Lord. And I got worn out and burnt out for a while.

I needed a time of rest to recover. And so we want to give out so that we will come back and we come back to Jesus to receive that ongoing, continual refreshing of the Spirit of God.

We want to make sure that we continually get the refreshment of the Spirit within us. You know, one of the biggest stumbling blocks for unbelievers believers or new believers are Christians who have been in the faith for many, many years.

They're saved, but that's about it. They may come to church on Sunday, most of the time, but that's about it.

There's no zest, there's no life, there's no vitality in them. They've become like the Dead Sea.

[26:08] It had the wonderful living water float in, but it just got stagnant. So my friends, don't stop the flow.

Keep it going. Give out what God gives you, but then remember to go back and wait on him again that he might refresh you again or you'll run dry.

Let Christ's rivers of living water overflow the banks of your life to the benefit of others. Well, we note in verse 39 that Jesus identifies this living water with the Holy Spirit.

Spirit. This is whom he says he would send eventually after he was glorified.

That's after he was risen from the dead, ascended into heaven and seated at the right hand of his Father. In the time when Jesus was speaking to his disciples, he says, the Spirit is with you right now, but soon will be in you.

[27:22] See, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was not dwelling within people. He was with people. He would come upon people for power and ministry and things like that. It's only after Pentecost that the Spirit of God came to dwell within people.

Today, however, when you come to Christ, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit comes and dwells within you to give you the strength and the power and the understanding and the desire to live for Jesus with all of your might, trusting him for it.

In John chapter 14 verse 16 to 17, a lot of passages with regards to the Holy Spirit in John 14 to 16, but we'll just read a couple. It says, and I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper that

word another is just another just like me.

Give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him, but you know him, for he dwells with you, that's Old Testament, but will be in you, New Testament after Pentecost.

Another passage, same chapter, in verse 26, it says, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

[28:56] You want wisdom? You want understanding? In terms of even coming to God's word and say, open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your truth. We need to go to the Holy Spirit for that.

That's what he'll teach us, all things. Another passage, in John 15, 26, it says, but when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, whom proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness of me, or testimony of me.

The Spirit of God helps you to know his Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you're of his, and he will help you bear witness and testimony to others of the Jesus that's living within you.

Another passage, Romans 8, 9, says, you, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If, in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you, and listen to this, especially for those of you who have ever been involved with second blessing type churches and things like that, that you get saved, and then it's only later that you get the Spirit.

Jesus says, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. You're not a Christian. And we know from Ephesians 1, that when you come to Christ, you put your trust and faith in him, the Holy Spirit will come and dwell within you and seal you on the day of redemption.

[30:19] That's all blessings that we have as Christians. And while every believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him, not every believer is filled with the Spirit.

We read in Ephesians chapter 5, 18, it says, do not get drunk or controlled with wine, for that's dissipation or debauchery, but be filled or controlled with the Spirit.

You see, my friends, it's only as we yield ourselves over to the Spirit of God that he is going to fill or control us. The Spirit of God dwells within us, but he doesn't necessarily control us.

He leaves that up to our yielding to him. And the Holy Spirit can be quenched. The Holy Spirit can be grieved by our life of selfishness, by our life of giving over to sin, unconfessed sin, by a life that is an unyielded spirit.

I want what I want. I'm going to do it my way. The Spirit's not going to work in us in that way. So, church, I want to encourage me as well as you, again, don't hinder the flow.

[31:35] Don't grieve the Spirit, but let him flow through you to the blessing of others. Moving on in the passage, we find that this gracious, universal invitation that Jesus gives as the great spiritual quench thirster becomes, as we find in this passage here, Jesus is also the great spiritual divider.

we see division among the people in verses 40 to 44. Now, some were expressing their faith that Jesus would come from God and would, in fact, be the one that was, be the prophet.

It says, if you take a look at verse 40, it says, this is really the prophet of verse 41, and some said more directly, he's the Christ. But there were some in the crowd in verses 41 to 42 that we found rejected those interpretations.

They rightly believed that the scriptures said that the Messiah would come from the line of David, from the city of Bethlehem. And they're saying, but we know he didn't.

And so they chuck him off of their mind from there. what they didn't rightly know, where they rightly knew that, what they didn't rightly know is that Jesus did come from the line of David, from Bethlehem.

[33:11] It's just that he grew up in Nazareth. And so they were acting on misinformation, whether it was due to laziness or apathy or accepting hearsay or whatever of what the rabbi said, whatever it might be, they chose not to check into Jesus' background, his origin, his birth.

And so verse 43 tells us, there was division among the people. and some so much so that they wanted to arrest them. What can we learn from this?

I want you to note that division arose in the crowd because of Jesus. We need to realize that Jesus is the great spiritual thirst quencher, but he's also the great spiritual divider.

We get that sense all through the Gospel of John where you find John making contrast back and forth between light and darkness, life and death, belief and unbelief.

Over and over again, Jesus often said that he would bring division. You think I've come to bring peace? No, I've come to bring sword. Between parents and children, mother-in-laws, father-in-laws, all of these different folks within the family, you're going to be at odds with one another because of me.

[34:46] And so if we're going to faithfully proclaim Jesus, whether in this kind of setting or across from a table having coffee with a neighbor, we need to expect that when we proclaim Jesus, we could expect to have some division.

but I want to stress that we don't want to make the same mistake that these people have made.

We want to make sure that if they're rejecting Jesus, it's because of Jesus and his words, not because of anything about myself or the way I act or my mannerisms.

also when it comes to just not making the same mistake of these people who went by hearsay or apathy or whatever the case is, understand when you're dealing with your walk with the Lord, don't simply accept something that you've heard from some person on television or the radio, whatever the case might be, that that's doctrine or truth just because so and so said it.

Check it out. Study the word of God. Be like the Bereans who the apostle Paul commended for checking him out against the scriptures.

[36:13] We want to be people of the word, deep studied students of the word. And when it comes to dealing with people, again, I would say don't accept hearsay on face value.

Check it out. And if you can, especially with the word of God, we need to remember what the book of Proverbs 18 says in verse 17.

It says, the one who states his case first seems right until the other comes along and examines them. We want to check it out.

Well, there was not only division among the people, but there was also division among the rulers as well. And we get the report of the temple guards in verses 45 and 46.

Now, you remember the temple guards? They're the ones that we heard of last week in verse 32 that the religious leaders sent to go arrest Jesus. Can you imagine coming back and empty handed?

[37:19] I know you sent us to go get him, but we don't have him. Now, they could have fudged and said, well, he snuck away, but they didn't say that.

You notice there what he says in verse 46. It says, no one ever spoke like this man. Quite literally, it says, never so spoke a man, which might imply that the guards got the sense that he was not like any other man, or maybe he was something more than a man.

Understand, they heard lots of preachers. No one spoke like Jesus spoke. You know, the Gospels reveal that Jesus was esteemed as a great teacher, very impressive.

In Matthew chapter 7, verse 28, we read, and when Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority.

And not like their scribes and their Pharisees and the like. While Jesus was increasingly opposed by many who heard him, many were also moved positively by him as well.

[38:32] You see that in verse 31 in your chapter, if you take a look, or also in verses 40 and 41. And in this particular case here right now, you have those who were sent to arrest him, were arrested by him and his words.

An example, you may have known people in your own life like that, and one that happened to come to mind was, how many are familiar with Ben Hur? Do you know that the one who wrote the book Ben Hur was originally, that was General Lew Wallace during the Civil War, he was pretty much very apathetic towards religion, very indifferent, and he got challenged by an agnostic, one of his colonels, Ingersoll, who was pounding away at him and says, you can't believe this stuff, you're an educated person, stuff like that.

And so he went from being kind of apathetic and indifferent to he began to study and study the background, the history, everything about Jesus Christ, to ultimately he bowed the knee to Jesus and wrote that fantastic novel that became a fantastic movie, Ben Hur.

So when we're witnessing, we want to keep in mind that we need to focus on Jesus and his words, not our words and our thinking and all the stuff like that.

And I know from past experiences as a young Christian, I was very enthused to witness at EB and stuff like that, and I get going talking about all kinds of apologetics and things like that, people that I worked with at one point would say, wow, you really know what you're talking about.

[40:16] But we never got any closer to talking about Jesus. We spent all this time talking about all this other stuff. Focus on Jesus. And either he's going to draw them or repel them.

Focus on Jesus. I want to also have you notice the anger of the council.

Take a look there, verses 47 and 49. It says, so the Pharisees answered them, have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities of the Pharisees believed in him?

This crowd that does not know the law, they're accursed. One of the things that stands out to me as a stark contrast to Jesus is these religious leaders' contempt for the common people.

It was unthinkable for them to think that Jesus would be the Messiah. Why? Well, look around you. Nobody that knows anything. None of these religious leaders believe in him.

[41:21] Case closed. Right? Well, not exactly. I want you also notice the tentative defense by Nicodemus in verses 50 to 52.

Now, you might remember that Nicodemus was the one that kind of went to Jesus by night, probably because of the fear of the sneer or being put out by these folks here.

But we find here he eventually comes to them and begins to point out that they really legally, according to their law, which they claimed to know, had no grounds to be condemning Jesus without at least hearing him first.

It's kind of ironic, isn't it? These religious leaders, puffed up individuals, were putting down those common folks who didn't know the law, and yet those who supposedly knew the law were ignoring it if it suited them.

And so you find the Jewish leaders turning on Nicodemus. They're absolutely livid. First, they were turning on the common people, then the temple guard, then Nicodemus, as it says in verse 50, who was one of them, turning on their own.

[42:47] They're about to come unglued. They were so angry that they spoke foolishly, without thinking.

If you have your Bibles there, take a look at verse 52. It says, they replied, Are you from Galilee also? Search and see, there is no prophet that arises out of Galilee.

Is that right? No, the Bible says that Jonah came from Galilee. Many believe that Nahum may have come from Galilee, and the town Capernaum was named after him.

I'd like to just focus for the moment on this man, Nicodemus, who is a picture of how the grace of God often works in a person's life.

Remember, he was the Jewish leader who came to Jesus by night, fearful of what his contemporaries would say of him. But now you see him kind of taking a tentative move in the lion's den to kind of somewhat stand up for Jesus Christ.

[44:03] And finally, a little further on, six months from now, at the cross, you find him, after they crucified his savior, him along with Joseph, Joseph of Arimathea.

They take his body down from the cross and they very tenderly, lovingly put him away in the grave to give him a loving burial. We see little by little, Nicodemus' faith grow.

He went from being kind of a tentative scaredy-cat of sort to kind of got a little more, oh, I'll say steel in his backbone to where he eventually comes up and he's somewhere where the apostles of Jesus are nowhere to be found.

They're scattered away like scared jack rabbits. And he comes and takes the body down from the cross. And he shows his love for his savior.

His savior who loved him and patiently waited for him and accepted him so readily. And so we see even though Nicodemus stood at a distance at one point in the shadows, he eventually came forward.

[45:24] And you know, I have to ask myself and maybe ask you as well, where are you at? Do you stand in the shadows when you leave here? Well, we're all praising God here and we rejoice in that. But when you go out into the workforce, into your neighborhood, among your family members, do you stand in the shadows or are you bold for Jesus?

Do you let them know that he is in fact your savior and that you are a follower of Jesus Christ? Christ. It's time that we perhaps separate ourselves from the average Christian from that pack and begin to publicly identify ourselves for the savior and let the world know that Jesus is in fact our savior.

Jesus is calling. He's calling us today with outstretched arms. He says, if anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink, whether for salvation or for a new refilling.

Day after day, drink from Jesus and have your spirit filled. Let those rivers of living water overflow the banks of your life to the blessing of others.

Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Lord, dear father God, how we thank you so very much for your word.

[46:59] We thank you especially for your son, our Lord Jesus, and how he has loved us so much to give himself for us. But Lord, we realize that he comes to, oh, to be our living water.

God, we come to us to come and to drink and to have our souls refreshed, to have our spirits renewed, to have our hearts blessed within.

And I ask, oh God, that you might just be doing a special work in us right now, that we would not be content to simply be saved and go about our life, but that we would drink from the Lord daily, from his word, from his spirit and prayer, and that we might be renewed in such a fashion that we might be able to be not just saved, but Lord, that we might be a blessing to others around us.

To his glory, we pray in Christ's name, amen. Amen. Thank you, Dave, for feeding us from the word.

Jesus promises us in this text that we can be satisfied in him, right? If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

[48:20] And he also promises us the spirit out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. And those two things, our satisfaction and God's presence with us, are really closely linked in scripture.

They're actually inseparable. We see that our satisfaction is actually dependent on God's presence with us. We also see that God's communion with us is often symbolized with eating and drinking and feasting.

We see Jesus repeatedly offer living water. He claims to be the bread of life, but it's not just in the New Testament that we see that.

In Isaiah, in the Old Testament, Isaiah paints a picture of our future feasting in heaven. on this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well-refined, and he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever, forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces and the reproach of his people. He will take away from the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

[49:49] So that's the future feast that we look forward to. On that day, we'll feast without any sorrow. On that day, our faith will become sight, will be physically in the presence of the Lord.

But we don't wait until that day to feast, right? 2,000 years ago, Jesus instituted for us a feast that anticipates the future feast.

And so today, as we take communion, we anticipate that feast as he instructed us, with symbols of his broken body and his blood poured out on our behalf.

The Bible makes it clear that this communion meal is for the believer only, and so if you have not accepted Christ as your Savior, then I just encourage you, instead of taking communion, why don't you come to him to quench your thirst, acknowledge that thirst, and come to him.

we're going to spend some time now in preparation for this meal, and we prepare by asking the Lord to search our hearts, and to show us the sin that may be there, and then confessing that to him.

[51:06] And then after we prepare our hearts, we spend that time of preparation. When you feel ready, you can come to one of the tables on either side of the room, and take the bread and the cup, return to your seats, and then we'll take communion all together.

So let me open this time of searching our hearts with prayer. Father, you know our hearts better than we do. Please show us what's there.

Please show us our sin, the sin that so easily entangles, things. Perhaps even bring to mind sins, maybe that we've seen, you know, in part in the past, but that we're afraid to deal with.

Lord, hard spots, calluses on our hearts. Help us to know that sin has no power over us. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death.

Amen. Amen. Amen.