

From Thirst To Overflowing

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Out of reverence for God's Word, please remain standing while we will read our sermon passage today from John 7. And if you've got your Bibles, I encourage you to grab them and open up to John 7. We're going to be starting in verse 37, is where we'll be reading from.

And as you're turning there, I just want to say again, yes, my name is Andrew. I'm from Lakeside where Jonathan and I served together before we sent out he and his family and the Simons to come and serve here. And I just want to share from Lakeside our love and prayers for you all. We have been praying for Seawee Bay Baptist Church, and it's just a joy to be able to be with you.

I personally love Jonathan and his family and Simons, and I know they love you. And so I've been excited to meet you. And again, just to share that we've been praying for you and are excited about what God's doing here. So with that, let's turn again to John 7, starting in verse 37 is where we're going to read this morning. Hear the word of the Lord. 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. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Now this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive. For as yet, the spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, some of the people said, this is really the prophet. Others said, this is the Christ. But some said, is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was from? So there was a division among the people over him.

Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees who said to them, why did you not bring him? The officers answered, no one has ever spoken like this man. The Pharisees answered them, have you also been deceived?

Have any of the authorities of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed. Nicodemus, who had gone to him before and who was one of them said to them, does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?

[2 : 3 9] They replied, are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee. This is the word of the Lord. And let's, you may be seated and let's pray that God would open up our eyes as we come to study this wonderful passage. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I just ask that you would show us the glory of your son today. Help us see that all of history and all of scripture is centered on the person of Jesus Christ. And show us the wonder of having the spirit dwell in our hearts through faith. Forgive us when we take that for granted.

And finally, I pray for all of our hearts that they would already be saying yes to what your word has for us today. Surrender to the truth, ready to respond and praise and following what your word has called us to. And we pray this for your glory and we pray it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

There is an old Russian story of a monk who is given the task of delivering a large sum of money to a poor captain. And the monk is a wise young man and he understands this task is actually not as easy as many would think. So he goes to the captain's house and finds that it's this lopsided little shack and he enters and he actually finds the situation inside is even worse than it was outside. The poor captain's two children and his wife are sick and they're so poor that they can't afford the medicine they need to get well. And then the captain is in a hopeless state as well. And in his hopelessness, he's given up and he's spending the tiny amount of money they have on alcohol to get drunk and escape.

But the monk convinces him to come on a walk with him. And the captain and the monk walk and that's where the monk finally offers him this large sum of money. And the captain rejoices and he speaks of how this will give him hope and he can stop drinking and he can get the medicine he needs for his family and he can get them a new home. But all of a sudden, he stops and he looks at the monk and he crushes the notes in his hand and he throws them on the ground and stomps them into the dirt and walks back to his house where it was falling apart just like his family. And he apparently misunderstood the person who was offering the gift, maybe his intentions, or maybe he was just too proud to accept this greatest gift that he would ever receive. But he turned it down. And you could probably think of some similar stories that you've heard of maybe it's not as extreme, maybe it's a child. You're trying to offer good help, but they refuse it. Or maybe it's someone who needs guidance and when they have someone approach them, they refuse. All the time, precious gifts are rejected. And our passage today records something very similar. Jesus gives the greatest invitation of all time, but the people, many of them, foolishly and stubbornly refuse to accept it. And it's filled with this irony as they just completely missed the point. And in that, I think we see a warning for us. Don't follow their example.

[6 : 32] Both before and after coming to Christ, we're all in danger of missing the point, of missing Jesus and failing to treasure the gift that he has given to us. Our world is filled with confusion about who Jesus is and even ridicule for those who trust in him. And I think for all of us, it can take our eyes off of Jesus. You may have been coming to church your whole life. You may know a lot about the Bible, but you can still miss the point as well. You can still miss Jesus, just like the crowds and the Pharisees did in our passage. So again, this is an even sadder story than the one of the monk and the captains. It's of the crowds and the Pharisees who reject Jesus' offer. And I believe it's intended to lead us to ask, how will I respond? And so our first point today, if you're taking notes, our first point today in John 7 verses 37 through 39 is how will you respond to the invitation?

So again, that's John 7 verse 37. And it starts by saying it was the last day of the feast, the great day, as verse 37 says. And I want you to just, in your mind's eye, picture what it would be like to have been there. The people would have been living in these booths or these tents for about seven days now. And things would have been crowded. The people would have been needing a good bath, needing to get home to their beds. It would have been sore. And all of it would have, it was all intended to remind them of the time when the people of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, living in tents of their own. And it was the last day, this great day. And they had this ceremony that they would do, where they would take a golden pitcher and they'd fill it up with water. And they would have a procession that walks back to the temple. And when they get to the temple, they would pour the water out on the dry ground. And it was a way of remembering the time when in the middle of the desert, God had provided water out of the rock. But it was also intended to look not just back, but to look forward.

Isaiah 44 says that God would pour out his spirit on his people like water on a dry ground. And this is what they were anticipating. And it's in this ceremonial and significant moment in time that Jesus stands up and cries out, 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. This is like the climax of John 7, maybe of the book so far. And John wants to go ahead and clarify. We even sang about living waters. And so we want to see what John is talking about, really what Jesus is talking about when he says living waters. And so John clarifies in verse 39 that 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. So notice what Jesus is doing here. On this great day of the feast, they're anticipating the spirit of God being poured out like water on a dry and thirsty ground. And Jesus is saying, you must come to me for that. He's saying, this whole festival, it's looking forward to me. That's what he's saying. Even the way he phrases the call should remind us of what we read earlier in Isaiah 55. Remember, it says, come and drink, come and eat. And Jesus even phrasing it like that is a way of him identifying himself with God, who is speaking in Isaiah 55. He's identifying himself as God and as the one who can give the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, into the hearts of his people.

And it's interesting because he references how this scripture has said this. But actually, if you look, there isn't a direct quote. So it's not like a word for word quote of any one passage. Instead, it seems to be just like a general reference of how the Old Testament scriptures anticipated a time when the Holy Spirit would be poured out. I think Jesus is saying he is the fulfillment of all those promises.

This is where scripture has been pointing forward to. He's saying whoever will believe in him will receive the Holy Spirit. So you need to understand this invitation is where all of the Old Testament has been leading to, has been pointing to. These passages, these ceremonies are all looking to Jesus.

[11 : 51] And so I just want to challenge you. If you are reading your Old Testament without ever thinking about Jesus, you're reading it wrong. Jesus is saying it's looking to me. And I want to challenge you. Look for Christ in all of scripture. Notice how the Old Testament is longing for someone to come and make things right. Notice how all of the heroes of the Old Testament are simply imperfect reflections of the one, the Christ, the Messiah who is coming. And I want you to challenge you to read your Old Testament like Jesus does. Like it's all pointing towards him and his offer of life. It's easy to read the Old Testament and miss the longing in it. And I think it's easy, even easy for us to miss the longing that's in our hearts. The thirst for something to be made right. My dad is actually a lot like this with literal water. Using the example of literal water, he can go all day and not drink anything. And he would just keep going until he collapsed. Unless somebody takes a water bottle and puts it in front of his face and says, drink this. And then all of a sudden he realizes how thirsty he's been. And he downs the whole water bottle. And Jesus' invitation in some ways should be like that of saying, look, you're thirsty. You might not realize it, but you're thirsty. Drink this. Or maybe it's to the people who already realize they are broken. They need the solution, the life that the Holy Spirit can offer. But whoever it is, he welcomes them all to come to him and drink. And again, it's not talking about physical water here. John clarifies it's talking about the Holy Spirit. All those who come to

Jesus in faith will be given the Holy Spirit in their hearts. And the analogy Jesus uses is so good because it shows the total transformation that takes place. Before Jesus, they were thirsty.

After Jesus, their heart is overflowing with living water. Before Jesus, they were in desperate need. But after, their life-giving, blessing others, flowing out. And it's just like Jesus said, this might remind you of chapter 4 when Jesus talked to the woman at the well. And it's just like that, where Jesus is saying, even here, the person who drinks will never be thirsty again.

And I want you to notice in all of this how great Jesus is. All of the feasts, all the stories, all the promises of the Old Testament are looking forward to him. And how great must he be that all of scripture is looking forward to him. And how great must he be that he can offer God, the Holy Spirit, to dwell in the hearts of all who believe in him. I mean, think about it. Before that time, if people, just anybody out and about, was to enter the temple of God, they would die.

But now, Jesus is saying, if you believe in me, you can have God, the Holy Spirit, dwell in your hearts. It's an incredible promise that could only be offered by an incredible person. If Jesus was just a good example for us, we would be hopelessly lost. I mean, nobody can live up to his example in our own strength. But he not only shows us what a righteous life looks like, he offers us the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts, to change us, empower us, secure us. And I think all of this might explain a little bit of why John says here, the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. So Jesus being glorified refers to his death, his resurrection, and his ascension. And it's clear that this, so this was done, the death, the burial, the resurrection, it was done to pay the penalty of the sins of all who trust in him, to atone for their sin and their guilt. And this is important because if that were not possible, to have our sin atoned for, our guilt taken away, then it would not be possible to have the Holy Spirit living in us. That's why Jesus had to be glorified first and then the Spirit would come. I mean, think about how frightening it would be for you to have the Holy Spirit living in your heart all while you're under the wrath of God. You wouldn't survive. But Jesus has taken us from enemies to children. He's taken away our guilt and now we know that the Spirit is for us. And if he is for us, nothing can stand against us. And he's not just out there working on our behalf. He is within us, working on our behalf. And this is why Jesus says in John 16, it's to your advantage that I go away. For if I don't go, the Spirit, the Helper, will not come to you.

[17 : 22] But if I go, I will send him to you. He's saying it's better for you to have the Holy Spirit in your heart than to be able to walk and see Jesus with your own eyes. It's better to have the Holy Spirit in you. And when we look at this passage in John 7, we can see why. The Holy Spirit's work is beautifully described, not as stagnant water. I think this is kind of swamp land around here in some spots, if I'm remembering this right. You got swamps around here and you know how, you know how bad that can be, marshy. But he's describing a beautiful river of living water.

That's what this picture of the Holy Spirit is in us, in offering us God himself. Jesus not only meets our needs, he changes our hearts so they overflow and bless others with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

We are flowing out now because we have been filled with the Spirit. So praise Jesus. Because without him, we wouldn't, we'd be dying of thirst. We wouldn't have the gift of the Holy Spirit and the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. And now, in response, we should seek to walk in step with the Spirit. Who intends to make our lives not a stagnant pool, but a river of life that flows outward and blesses others and brings the good news of life as well. And if there's anybody here today who hasn't come to Christ by believing in him, I just want you to see Jesus offers this to all who are thirsty.

So if you are here today and you feel your need for him, then my friend, you qualify. He offers this to you. It's not just a get out of hell card. No, it's so much more. He's promising you the deepest communion with God possible. That he would dwell in your hearts. The Holy Spirit to dwell in your hearts and change you and bring you joy and knowledge of God. There could be no greater invitation. And we're going to read, we're going to read about some people who just totally missed this.

I just want to warn you, if you have not believed in Christ, do not be like them. Come back to what Jesus is offering and accept this gift through faith in him. Well, let's look at some of those responses.

[19 : 58] So first we had the invitation in verses 37 through 39, but now in verses 40 through 44, I want you to ask the question, how will I respond to the confusion? So how will you respond to the confusion in verses 40 through 44? Look down at your Bibles with me at verse 40. When they heard these words, some of the people said, this really is the prophet. Others said, this is the Christ. But some said, is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So there was a division among the people. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. So all throughout chapter seven, there's been this debate, this confusion about who Jesus is. The city would have been seething with discussion and debate. Many are partially correct because they see and they believe

Jesus is the long awaited prophet. This is the one from Deuteronomy 18, who would have been the prophet greater than Moses that was promised to come. And others are partially correct in seeing he's the Christ.

But both groups seem to be saying it's an either or situation. Maybe he's the prophet, maybe he's the Christ, but it's a both and. He is that prophet and he is the Christ. And he's so much more than they even see in these moments. But they're on the right track. They're accepting who Jesus is saying he is. But many are rejecting it outright. There's this division between the people because many can't get past the fact that Jesus should be from Bethlehem, not from Galilee. And you can see the irony of this situation, this irony that John is creating here, because in fact, Jesus is from Bethlehem. On more than one occasion, I've had conversations with my wife like this, where she'll ask me like to make sandwiches for the boys. And I'll respond something like, well, how can I make sandwiches without bread? And she'll sweetly and kindly respond, Andrew, the bread is where it always is. You have everything you need. And I think it's similar with this. The people are asking this question, how can we believe in you when you're not from

Bethlehem? And it's just ironic because they're so wrong, like he is from Bethlehem. But I think it's also ironic because they're just totally missing the point.

It's clear they've got sinful, hard hearts. Jesus is saying more than any town, he is from God, he's saying. And he's saying he can meet their deepest needs and offer them God, the Holy Spirit, to dwell in their hearts. And they're over here wondering, well, which town are you from?

[22 : 54] They're missing the big point. They're kind of like hikers going and analyzing the dirt to see if they've made it to Mount Everest when all they need to do is look up and see the mountain looming over them. And again, if you're not a believer in Christ, don't be like that hiker. Don't be like these people so sucked into your unanswered question that you miss the mountain of evidence that's standing in front of you. You may have a good question. It may be an important one, but don't let that confusion on that one question distract you from what is clear, that Christ is the one, Jesus is the one all of Scripture has been waiting for. He offers the greatest gift. Don't be distracted with your unanswered questions that you're unwilling to come to him. And I think for us believers in here, this is a helpful reminder as well in our evangelism.

So often people feel like, well, I don't know the answer to some question. It's like, I need to have the answers to all the questions before I really start to call people to believe in Jesus. But that's missing the point too. You don't have to have all the answers to evangelize. You simply need to know Jesus and the wonderful gospel he offers and he preaches. You don't need to be able to analyze dirt samples. You simply need to tell people to look up and see Christ looming over them in his glory and in his grace. There's a lot of confusion in our world today, a lot of questions. So when we ask, how will I respond? I would just, I'd encourage you, keep coming back to Christ. Keep pointing people back to Christ, to trust in him and in the offer he has given to all people. But as we can see in John 7, that doesn't always mean people are going to believe. Just because you point them to Christ, often the invitation of the gospel actually leads to division and even ridicule. So our final question is, how will you respond to the ridicule? In verses 45 through 52. So Jesus gave the people this greatest invitation in existence. But many of them respond by wanting to arrest him. And the next time he's in

Jerusalem, they will try to stone him. And the next time they will crucify him. But for now, the religious leaders settle for ridiculing him and all who trust in him. Look down with me at verse 45. And just for context, verse 1 in chapter 7 says that Jews were seeking to kill Jesus. And then in verse 32, the Pharisees send officers to arrest Jesus. And now they're returning empty-handed. So look down at verse 45. The officers came to the chief priests and the Pharisees who said to them, why did you not bring him?

The officers answered, no one ever spoke like this man. The Pharisees answered them, have you also been deceived?

Have any of the authorities of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed. Nicodemus, who had gone to him before and who was one of them, said to them, does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does? They replied, are you from Galilee too?

[26 : 31] Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee. You can kind of see the way, at least in my view, the Pharisees are responding with intimidation and name-calling, something like what you'd see on the middle school playground. And just like middle school bullies aren't very great at debate, I think these Pharisees are making some of the same mistakes. I don't know if you ever took debate class growing up or anything, but if you did, maybe you'd recognize the Pharisees are making a logical fallacy called appeal to authority. They're arguing that Jesus is not the Messiah because none of the authorities of the Pharisees have believed in him. And what's more, they insult the crowd. The people who have believed in him, they insult them as ignorant. They don't know the law and they're under God's curse. They're just calling names for this crowd that they're supposed to be caring for and leading.

But this type of argumentation, it occurs all the time today. People say, look, Christianity, it can't be true because like only 33% of scientists believe in a God. And so they go on to say, and the people who do believe in God, they're uneducated, they're unintelligent. And so clearly, Christianity must not be true. I think the issue is that the Pharisees in our passage and the people today making these arguments, they're elevating themselves as the standard of truth. They say they are the standard of truth instead of God's word. And they're really saying, Jesus can only be the Messiah if we say so. That's what it comes down to. But Jesus has spoken. All of scripture has pointed to him. And I think we can learn to trust God rather than man. I would just encourage you, don't let these arrogant claims of those who are seeking to shake your faith, don't let them, as they seek to disprove

Christ, as they make similar arguments like the Pharisees here, don't let it shake your faith in Christ. The word has spoken. The infallible word of God has spoken. And we can trust God rather than man who raised themselves up as if they are the ultimate source of truth. But next, the Pharisees appeal to faulty information. They respond to Nicodemus, search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.

And it was actually interesting as I was studying this, actually, the town Jonah was from was in Galilee. And likely the town Nahum was as well in Galilee. So these prophets have come from Galilee.

And I think it's just, again, John loves to use this irony. It's making it so ironic because the Pharisees are saying, you got to search the scriptures and you'll find it out. And they're calling out that the crowd doesn't know their scriptures. But all the while, they're the ones missing it. They're making clear mistakes. And ultimately, they are the ones who miss the one, the Christ, who all of Scripture is about. It's just highlighting this irony. And really, all of these insults as they're calling people deceived and Galileans and even accursed, all their insults and faulty arguments, they're just showing the glory of Jesus even more. He calls for the crowd to come to Him. And the Pharisees call the crowd ignorant and accursed. Jesus offers the Holy Spirit. They simply hurl insults. Jesus is the culmination of all of Scripture. But the Pharisees have just been picking and choosing which Scriptures they are going to believe and which laws they are going to follow. It just shows that Jesus is the great shepherd, the great leader of His people. He's unlike anything we have seen, you or I have seen.

[30 : 40] He's a great leader. And it's just so clear when you compare Him with the Pharisees here. And again, I just want to say the insults and the arguments in John 7, they still exist today.

People are still making these insults and arguments today. And I think the glory of Jesus puts it all in perspective for us. If we're ridiculed, we can rejoice that we have been counted worthy to suffer insult for the sake of Christ. Why should we concern ourselves with what opinions of man are saying when we know Christ has called us and He has sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts?

I think anytime there's ridicule, there's this temptation for us to kind of mellow and become a little bit less excited. For example, maybe you have a favorite restaurant and you love to talk about how fantastic this restaurant is, but then one day you hear your friends just ridiculing it and saying, oh, it's terrible. Never go there. That restaurant's awful. And in that moment, you can be tempted to say, well, maybe I won't. I mean, I was going to recommend it to you, but maybe I'll just maybe I'll be a little quiet. Maybe I won't see, talk about how great it really is. And I think we can be tempted to do this with Christ. When people are hurling insults at Christ and at His people, it can be easy to mellow and say, well, maybe Jesus isn't really like all that great. Maybe I don't need to make such a big deal of Jesus here. I'm just saying, don't let the insults of the world cool your affection and your praise for Christ. There's nobody like Him. He offers salvation.

He offers the gift of the Holy Spirit. He offers life. And He is worthy of following and of all the praise that we could give to Him. So don't let it mellow your praise of Christ, your affection for Him.

But I should say, if you are considering coming to Christ in faith, I think you should know this may happen to you. People may hurl insults at you. They may call you ignorant, just like the Pharisees did here in John 7. But once again, I think this is just another attempt to distract you from what is most important. Christ has called you to come. He's offered you life and blessing and security through the Holy Spirit dwelling in your hearts. Why turn that down on account of some passing insults?

[33 : 19] And I would just say, if you're here and you haven't believed in Christ, hear the words of Christ for you. Come to Him. Come to Him. And drink. Come and believe and receive life. And if you want to know more, please come talk to me or one of the pastors here. We'd love to talk to you more. But finally, for my brothers and sisters in Christ here, when we kind of look back at this passage, we're reminded of the time when we were invited by Christ to come in faith. And we should respond in praise and thankful.

You will never understand the depths of His gift to you. Because how could we fathom the greatness of having the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts through faith? God no longer remains outside of us, but in our hearts, causing us to overflow with life. If you have fruits of the Spirit, that's His work in you. You praise Him for it. Notice the greatness of the gift we have been given in the Spirit.

And believer, when you're faced with the confusion of this world, all these opinions on the internet, all these arguments, come back to Christ and His offer of life. And even when you are ridiculed, and you hear the insults that people may make about Christianity, about those who really believe the Bible and believe the Bible and all that Christ has said, come back to what the officers said in verse 46.

I think it's beautiful. No one has ever spoken like this man. No one has ever spoken like Jesus. He's given us the words of life. And so continue to come to Him and trust in Him and find life in His name. Let's pray.

Father, I just pray that you would impress on our hearts the greatness of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[35 : 27] You promised to seal us with the Holy Spirit, which guarantees that we will be with you in heaven. He will preserve us and keep us. Before we were filled with our flesh. Now we are filled with the Spirit who bears fruits of love, joy, peace.

Thank you. Help us not take that for granted. Help us see the greatness of the gift of the Spirit in our hearts. And in all the confusion, help us come back to Christ. In all the ridicule, help us come back to Christ and see that there's no one like Him.

Jesus, we praise You. All of Scripture has been longing for You. Our hearts have been longing for You. And we praise You. There is no one like You. Thank You for calling to us, even though we are unworthy, to come and drink.

We praise You. We praise You. We thank You for Your many good gifts to us. And help us go out and live like that's true. And live our gratefulness out to You.

And tell others about it too. We pray that You'd be glorified in our lives. And we pray all of this in Your name. Amen.