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# Living Water

## Part 1 - The Source

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Over the next several weeks we are looking at a series entitled 'Living Water' and will discover the significance of our name and who God is calling us to be as Riverlife.

### Water and God

- + He compares the life in Him (which ultimately becomes the life in us) to water, calling it a well, a fountain, a stream, a river and rain.
- + He uses peaceful water to paint a picture of the rest He desires to give us (Psalm 23:2)
- + He mentions the river of delights and "a river who streams make glad the city of God" (Psalm 46:4)
- + He speaks of the passion of love using such phrases as "a garden spring", "a well of fresh water" and "streams flowing from Lebanon" (Song of Songs 4:15)
- + He even compares His Word to water (Ephesians 5:26)

God chose to talk about something that we would all be familiar with in many different ways.

### Feeling Thirsty?

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

JOHN 7:37-38 (NIV)

### Setting the Scene

The setting of Jesus' words amplifies their meaning. The occasion was the Feast of Tabernacles, the third in a series of Jewish Feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles was a Thanksgiving Feast (Leviticus 23).

- + A time to remember God's faithfulness of provision in the wilderness wanderings.
- + A Feast of celebration around the harvest of oil and wine.
- + At the heart of the Feast was a daily procession involving priests and water that was collected from the pool of Siloam and taken back to the Temple to be poured out on the altar with shouting and celebration.
- + This procedure went on for seven days, but on the last day the procedure was repeated with two significant exceptions.
  - + First, the Priests would march around the Altar seven times
  - + Secondly, the Priests would go to pour out the water but the pitcher was empty. No shouting – just silence.

At this moment of silence – this moment of bewilderment, emptiness and meaninglessness – Jesus cried out.

## **The Condition Described**

'Anyone who is thirsty' – that's the condition, that's who is qualified to come to Jesus.

Thirst is a consciousness of an unsatisfied need. Thirst expresses desperation.

The problem is that people know they are thirsty but haven't found the thirst quencher. People all over are trying to find substitutes for Jesus.

Jesus knows our deep and inner thoughts. He is encouraging you to pinpoint your deep inner need and bring it to Him.

## **The Invitation Given**

Notice that the invitation was not to attend church or a program or a meeting or a Bible study. It was an invitation to come to a Person! Come to 'me', Jesus said. He is the source of what we need – He is the living water – His Holy Spirit alive in us.

## The Promise Jesus Made

“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

JOHN 7:38 (NIV)

Jesus did not promise a trickle or a stream or a flow...He promised a river. The Holy Spirit is like a mighty rushing river...a life-giving river.

## Response

How relentlessly would you pursue God if He said your relationship with Him hinges on your thirst?

Your ability to know Him, experience His presence, and hear His voice will be defined in large part by the intensity of your longing. He rarely speaks to the apathetic, but to those who long for Him, crave for Him and seek Him with all their hearts, will be rewarded. If you want to hear Him, know Him, be satisfied in Him, then keep on thirsting. Let your longings drive you towards Him.

If we are to be a people who live up to our name then we must never give up on coming to Him to drink – that’s where life is found – in the river of God which comes from Jesus. He will reveal Himself clearly to those whose thirst settles for nothing less.

Perhaps today you have realised a great need. Perhaps today you have realised that you have been thirsting and have been looking in all the wrong areas, tasting all the wrong substitutes and never having your thirst quenched by Jesus. Today you can accept the invitation to come to Jesus the source of living water.

- + First of all, we are to come to Jesus.
- + Second, simply acknowledge His presence and tell Him of your heart’s thirst.
- + Third, let me suggest that you ask Him for forgiveness for how you have looked for various substitutes for your thirst and the various consequences this has had.

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you dream about the impact being if we as a church were to live out our name 'Riverlife'?
2. The condition to Jesus' invitation in John 7: 37-38 is to be thirsty. How do you or others you know regularly substitute Jesus when thirsty?
3. How relentlessly would you pursue God if He said your relationship with Him hinges on your thirst? How do we maintain a thirst for Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
4. Jesus promised rivers of living water. Pray about what that would look like in your life.