

John 7:30-44

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[0:00] This booth was one of three great pilgrimage feasts of Israel. Every Jewish male was expected to go up to Jerusalem for these three feasts. It occurred in the fall after the harvest, and it lasted seven days followed by a solemn eighth day.

It was a day there was an offering and a feast and they took apart the booths on that day. During this feast, the people of Israel lived in temporary shelters or booths, again, tabernacles.

You could think in terms of tents made of branches. They did this to remember how their fathers had lived in tents during the wilderness wandering after the Exodus.

So people set these up in the streets and on the houses, the roof of their houses, all over the city. But this feast was more than just a history lesson. It was a celebration of God's provision, of God's presence, and of God's promise.

It looked backward to the wilderness where God provided food from heaven and water from the rock. It looked upward in thanksgiving for the harvest God had just given.

[1:14] It looked forward in hope to the day when God would again dwell with his people in glory. It was a week that was just packed full of meaning.

You could not avoid it if you were in Israel in this day. The Old Testament gives few instructions for what this feast must look like. But they had developed some tradition that had rich ceremonial meanings, taking place about 600 years before Jesus came on the scene.

Two rituals in particular dominated the celebration. The first is the significant one for us to think about before we read the text. This one was a water ceremony.

Each of the first six days, a priest would draw water from the pool of Siloam. You may remember that pool from chapter 5 where Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath and starts the trouble that he finds himself in.

They would draw a pitcher of water and they would lead a procession back to the temple. People would gather and follow the high priest back to the temple. And as they approached the water gate on the south side of the inner court, a shofar would be blown three times as a pronouncement of joy.

[2:31] And the people would recite Isaiah chapter 12 and verse 3. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. So every day for the first six days, this would happen.

They'd go into the temple. And while the people watched, the priest would march around the altar while the singing of the Hallel was led by the temple choir.

People would join in and the Hallel, the word means praise. And this is Psalm 113 through 118. So those five, six, six psalms is what they would sing together.

So again, I'm setting the stage for you, right? So this is happening every single day across this week. On the seventh day, they're going to go around the altar more times.

It's a more significant, but the same thing is being done on that seventh day. And so I want you to mark John 7 in whatever way you like to do that.

[3:31] And I want you to turn with me to Psalm 113. I want to read these psalms to you. They're not terribly long. These songs are the songs they would have sang while they're going through this process.

This is Feast of Booths every single day. Setting the stage for what Jesus is going to do when he's there. So Psalm 113.

I wish I had the tunes to these. I probably wouldn't sing them if I did, but I wish I had the tunes.

Praise the Lord. Praise, O servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens.

Who is like the Lord our God who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes with the princes of his people.

[4:39] He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord. Psalm 114. When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.

The sea looked and fled. Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. What ails you, O sea, that you flee?

O Jordan, that you turn back? O mountains that you skip like rams? O hills like lambs? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.

Remember, they followed the water back to the temple. Psalm 115. Psalm 114. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.

For the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness, why should the nation say, where is their God? Our God is in the heavens. He does all that he pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

[5:54] They have mouths, but do not speak. Eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear. Noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel. Feet, but do not walk.

And they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them. So do all who trust in them. O Israel, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield.

O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. The Lord has remembered us.

He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel. He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the Lord, both the small and the great. May the Lord give you increase, you and your children.

May you be blessed by the Lord who made heaven and earth. The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man. The dead will not praise the Lord, nor do any who go down into silence.

[6:55] But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Psalm 116. I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy.

Because he has inclined his ear to hear me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. The snares of death encompassed me. The pangs of Sheol laid hold of me.

I suffered distress and anguish. Then I call on the name of the Lord. O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord and righteous.

Our God is merciful. The Lord preserves the simple. When I was brought low, he saved me. Return, O my soul, to your rest, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believe even when I spoke, I am greatly afflicted.

[7:52] I said in my alarm, all mankind are liars. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. O Lord, I am your servant. I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people in the courts of the house of the Lord in your midst.

O Jerusalem, praise the Lord. Psalm 117. Praise the Lord, all nations. Extol him, all peoples. For great is his steadfast love toward us and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord. And finally, Psalm 118. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

[8:56] Let Israel say, his steadfast love endures forever. Let the house of Aaron say, his steadfast love endures forever. Let those who fear the Lord say, his steadfast love endures forever.

Out of my distress, I called on the Lord. The Lord answered me and set me free. The Lord is on my side. I will not fear. What can man do to me? The Lord is on my side as my helper.

I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. All nations surround me.

In the name of the Lord, I cut them off. They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side. In the name of the Lord, I cut them off. They surrounded me like bees. They went out like a fire among thorns.

In the name of the Lord, I cut them off. I was pushed hard so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my song.

[9:55] He has become my salvation. Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous. The tents of the righteous. The right hand does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord exalts.

The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. I shall not die, but I shall live and recount the deeds of the Lord. The Lord has disciplined severely, but he has not given me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness that I might enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord. The righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we pray, O Lord. O Lord, we pray, give us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

[10:54] The Lord is God and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords up to the horns of the altar. You are my God and I will give thanks to you.

You are my God. I will extol you. O give thanks to the Lord for he is good for his steadfast love endures forever. Right? Seven days in a row they have sung these songs which are just absolutely ripe with messianic ideas foreshadowing pressing toward what this feast was really all about. Again, not commanded these psalms to be sung but they had begun this tradition and boy did it serve to this wonderful end. At the conclusion of the singing the people would all cry out three times give thanks to the Lord and the water was poured onto the altar.

This ceremony commemorated the water God provided in the wilderness and expressed hope for the coming messianic age when God would pour out his spirit. Second, this is the water ceremony. Second there was the illumination ceremony. Massive lamps were lit in the temple courts casting light over the city and this recalled the pillar of fire that guided Israel through the wilderness and symbolized the hope that God's glory would again shine upon his people.

[12:27] Jesus is going to call himself the light of the world soon in the text. So the feast of booths it was a celebration of light and life and provision and divine presence.

And it's into this setting charged with expectation saturated with symbolism overflowing with religious meaning that Jesus steps.

I hope that wasn't a waste of time for you. There's a lot going on across this week and Jesus is going to speak into it. We'll see here in a moment.

What makes John 7 so striking is that Jesus does not merely attend the feast but he interprets it. He takes the central symbols of Israel's hope and he claims that he himself is their fulfillment.

But here's the tragedy of John chapter 7. The people are celebrating God's past salvation while rejecting God's present savior.

[13:40] They're remembering the wilderness while standing face to face with the one who led Israel through it. They're singing about light while

turning away from the light of the world.

John MacArthur notes that this feast which should have produced the greatest clarity instead produces great confusion. Some say we'll see Jesus is good others say he deceives the people the leaders want him dead the crowds whisper no one speaks openly fear seems to rule the day. There's much confusion in John 7. In the middle of it all stands Jesus teaching confronting exposing hearts.

does that here and works that purpose for us today. John 7 is not just about controversy it's about revelation and responsibility.

It answers the question what happens when the glory of God stands in front of religious people who think they already know him. Who's sight of that fact?

[14:57] All of this is happening right? to worship God Yahweh they think they know him they think they're doing what they need to be doing and they're missing they're missing it.

The answer is just sobering some marvel some argue some reject some perhaps begin to see that Jesus is the Christ and this chapter forces every hearer to ask the same question that the crowd had to face what am I to do with Jesus who he claims to be you can't avoid the question it's the most important question perhaps you could ask yourself this morning what am I to do with Jesus in John chapter 7 verse 30 through 44 let me pray for us before we read the text father as we've set the stage for what we're going to see Jesus do here I pray that you would work in all of us belief whether for the very first time understanding who Jesus is the fulfillment of all that the scripture has said the Messiah would be our way back to you or once again we might find ourselves with weak faith this morning having been distracted by the world drawn away by it we would again return in faith to the person and work of Jesus

Christ and we pray this in his name amen beginning in verse 30 so they were seeking to arrest him but no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come yet many of the people believed in him they said when the Christ appears will he do more signs than this man has done the Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him Jesus then said I will be with you a little longer and that I'm going to him who sent me you will seek me and you will not find me where I am you cannot come the Jews said to one another where does this man intend to go that we will not find him does he intend to go to the dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks what does he mean by saying you will seek me and you will not find me and where I am you cannot come 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 been given because Jesus was not yet glorified 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 over him some of them wanted to arrest him but no one laid hands on him now our text once again is chiasmic notice that it begins so they were seeking to arrest him but no one laid a hand on him and the reason John gives is because his hour had not yet come and it ends verse 44 some of them wanted to arrest him but no one laid hands on him I just want to point that out to you the central part of the text in this case are these two things that Jesus says on two different days so he has this language about going where they cannot come and then he has starting verse 37 on the day of the feast and the things that he says at that time so

Lord willing I want to pick up some of this text as we close out our study of John 7 in just a couple of weeks I want to come back into it so I'm going to neglect a little bit of it this morning but I want you to know I intend to wrap it into the end of chapter 7 but today I want to spend the rest of our limited time on Jesus' invitation and explanation found in verses 37 to 39 I want to give this ample time this morning so picking up on 37 on the last day on the last day Jesus' day Jesus stood up and cried out that's what I want to spend the rest of our time focusing on so he makes this intention this invitation first he makes this invitation he cries out if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink right this is on the last day of the feast here John calls it the great day and no one knows for sure if this invitation occurred on the seventh day or on the eighth there's a lot of argument about there out there on it the most faithful commentators just say we're not sure if it was the seventh day or on the

eighth day certainly could be argued either way not incredibly important if it happened on the eighth day it would have happened with all of the rich meaning of the preceding seven days still ringing in the people's ears it would have been there on their minds as they're starting to clean up from the week's festivities if it happened on the seventh day a day that had a bit more pomp than previously described seven times around the altar it was a longer procession that took place they would have been likely in the middle of expressing the rich meaning right then there on that seventh day so [21:06] I like that day I'm telling you but only because I like it I'm just telling you that's my opinion because I like it I like the seventh day for this reason picture all of that happening everything that I said takes place and as that water is being poured out on the altar!

It's at that time I like to imagine that Jesus stood up and cried out with that audience gathered together watching that water be poured out he made a bold invitation rabbis in his day did not stand and teach they sat everybody else stood to hear them place of honor for the teacher how interesting but he stood up he wanted to be seen and he wanted to project this was a loud thing that he said a bold invitation an invitation that careful readers of John will know was prompted by God the father that he's only doing what God the father tells him to do only saying what God the father tells him to say so this moment strikes and he stands up and cries out if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink this invitation is made up of three parts and we do well to note all three first he says if anyone thirsts and we know that

Jesus here is speaking metaphorically he's not speaking of physical thirst he's talking about spiritual thirst it is not the first time that he has done so concerning water speaking metaphorically in this way do you recall his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well back in John chapter 4 he says through there in verse 13 and 14 everyone who drinks of this water the water of the well will be thirsty again but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty!

again the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life that phrasing and much of the other things he has to say about being living water in chapter 4 should be going off in your brain as you hear this invitation if anyone thirst we understand right this is the spiritual thirst Jesus is talking about our souls are parched apart from him parched apart from him everyone is looking for satisfaction for their thirsty souls everyone feels down at their core whether or not they acknowledge it to be true down at their core they know that they were made for something more than this temporal life has to offer us something is missing people talk about the God sized hole in your heart right

I like this metaphor better Jesus metaphor dry thirsty souls so we set ourselves to the pursuit of passions trivial and temporal comforts the fulfillment of sinful desires and we foolishly think that we will find satisfaction for our thirst nothing in this world that will satisfy the thirst of our souls God says of the Israelites in Jeremiah chapter 2 verse 13 my people have committed two evils they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters and secondly they have hewed out cisterns for the water they have forsaken the source of living water and they are attempting to hold water with a thing that can hold no water this is so tragic so epically tragic the delusion to think that ultimate satisfaction will come from anywhere but the maker of all things thirsty soul recognize your thirst recognize it if anyone thirsts says yes

[25:36] I am thirsty recognize it and come to Christ for he offers to those who recognize their thirst eternal life giving water it's the second part of this invitation if anyone thirsts come to me he's the only source of this eternal life giving water what do you do with Jesus he's making these astounding claims about himself he's the one that gives that grants life eternal life giving water nowhere else come to me he says he'll say in John 14 in verse 6 I'm the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me if anyone thirsts come to me and drink drink

I want you to hear the warmth of this invitation if anyone thirsts you recognize the state of your thirsty soul come come to me and drink and the metaphor here holds up come to Jesus and take hold of his person and work for you by faith appropriate who Jesus is and all that he's accomplished all of the promises of God that are yes in him by faith that's what it means to drink of Jesus take hold of him and believe in him for the salvation of your soul trust that he will be the source of that soul satisfaction that you so long for thirsty soul you won't find it anywhere else if anyone thirsts let

him come to Christ and drink and he goes on this is not the end of him crying out he says in verse 38 explanation whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water soul satisfying water will be provided by Jesus through the spirit

I read a lot of really dense argumentation across this past week that I want to totally spare you from there's a lot of argumentation about exactly where the punctuation belongs in verse 37 and verse 38 I found that both arguments really were kind of moot they essentially met in the middle the concern for some in the way that ESV has punctuated this is that people would think that me now as a redeemed man that I am the source of living water for others that's the concern for the way it's punctuated here that I myself am the source but I don't think that this punctuation necessarily requires us to think in that way Christ provides the living water by the spirit for me and through me this bountiful provision will well up in the believer for their sake and for the sake of others flows out of us for us and out of us for others note it is flowing and it is living water the spirit's activity in the Christian's life is for our good our soul satisfaction our growth and holiness our confidence to the end but the spirit's activity in the Christian's life is to be for also the benefit of others we're not meant to be stagnant would argue with you that if you are in fact in Christ you won't be stagnant this is a welling up water flowing living water it's going to come out of the life of the Christian we're supposed to be channels of living water to a thirsty world now there is no consensus on a specific scripture that Jesus is referencing in verse 38 he says as the scripture has said no consensus lots of different referencing it's likely that he's doing some biblical theology here where he's pulling together a statement on the old testament's teaching concerning the blessing of water he's pulling the theme together right the bible has taught this you've been singing about this that I am speaking of psalm 113 113 118 another example the text that we read earlier came to my mind this week as I was studying this text it records an eschatological vision a vision of the end of things that God gave to Ezekiel astounding this water that flows out of the temple and it builds and it grows and it blesses let me read it for us one more time Ezekiel 47 verses 1-12 then he brought me back to the door of the temple and behold water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east for the temple faced east the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple south of the altar then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around the outside to the!

[31:43] outer gate that faces toward the east and behold the water was trickling out on the south side going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand the man measured a thousand cubits and then led me through the water and it was ankle deep growing grace and mercy again he measured a thousand and led me through the water and it was knee deep again he measured a thousand and led me through the water and it was waist deep again he measured a thousand and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen.

It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said to me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then he led me back to the bank of the river.

As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on one side and on the other. And he said to me, This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into Ereba, a desert place, and enters the sea.

The Dead Sea. He's referring to here. When the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. Nothing lives in the Dead Sea.

It's too salty. The water becomes fresh, dead to life. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish.

[33:03] For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh, so everything will live where the river goes. Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engadi to Enegrayim, it will be a place for the spreading of nets.

Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. Those are two locations on the southern and northern part of the Dead Sea. I'm saying, the whole Dead Sea.

The whole thing is going to be brought to life. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh. They are to be left for salt. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food.

Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary, from the source, from the source of living water.

Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing. The Spirit does life-giving work in us, and in others, as we put our faith in Jesus on display, and proclaim his goodness toward us.

[34:17] If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Now, it needs to be said, I'm going to wrap this little section up together, where John notes, for as the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John is in no way suggesting that the Spirit doesn't have activity. This third part of the Trinitarian God is not active. We have many examples before this time.

The Spirit has not yet been fully granted. We're living in this in-between time. Jesus is going to promise to send a helper.

Once he's seated at the right hand of the Father, he's going to send the helper, and we'll get into that later in John's Gospel. Up to and at this time, people could have the Spirit upon them, but they did not have the Spirit in them.

[35:27] Brothers and sisters, we live in a blessed time. All those who place faith in Jesus Christ, dead to living, have the Spirit abiding within us.

this Spirit that he's talking about here, flow rivers of living water. What a glorious thing.

What a moment in Jesus' ministry. It's brought things to a high point, and we're going to see it'll pick up steam as we go on in our study.

Let me close. This quote's in your bulletin. A bit of a hymn by Horatio Bonner. I learned this week his good friends called him Horace.

Brother Horace said, I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely give. The living water, thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live.

[36:28] I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream. My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

Let's pray together.