

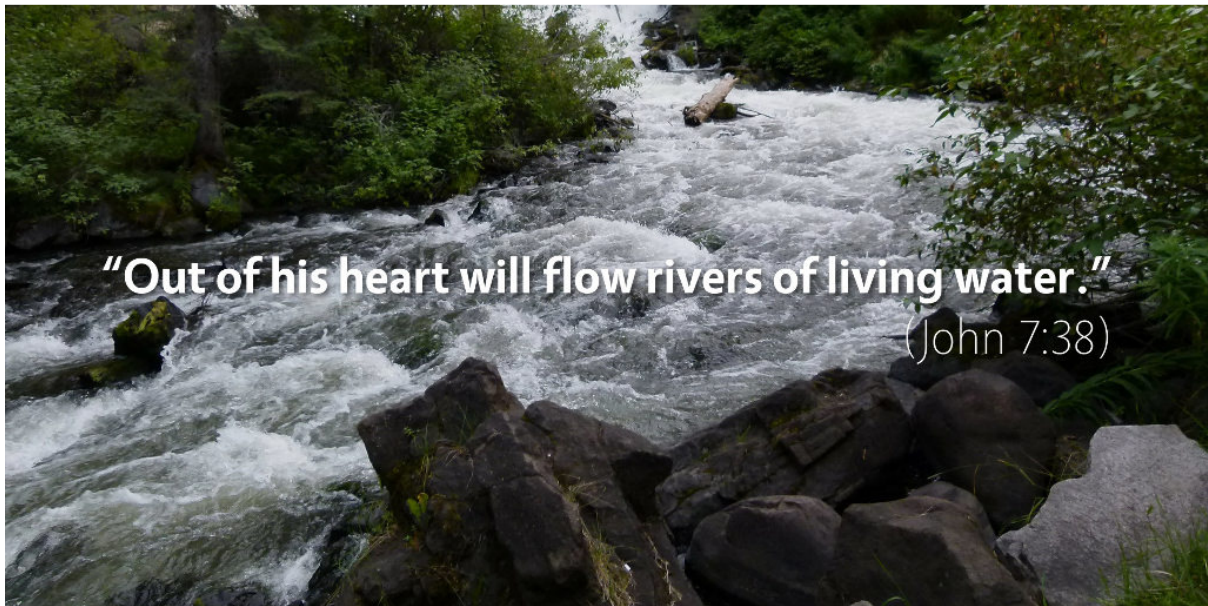
Sermon for 12<sup>th</sup> August 2018

“For those who are thirsty.

For those who walk in darkness.

Jesus!”

John 7



John tells us that Jesus is the Light of the World who gives life giving water, the one who is the Christ, the Holy One of God.

I want you to take special note of a few select verses from John 7 and 8 before we begin today.

Firstly John 7:37-39 New Living Translation (NLT)

“Jesus Promises Living Water”

*“37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” 39 (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)”*

Secondly, John 8:12 New Living Translation (NLT)

“Jesus, the Light of the World“

*12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”*

Whenever the bible speaks of “Living water “it is pointing in several directions.

Living water can mean fresh running water from a spring as opposed to seepage water into a well.

It can also refer to that which gives life and especially eternal life.

The key to understanding John chapter seven begins with an understanding of the festival identified with it.

John mentions in verse two; “Now the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.”

The inauguration of this festival is mentioned in two places in the Old Testament. Leviticus 23:33-43 and Deuteronomy 16:13-17.

We read from the Deuteronomy passage.

*“13 “You must observe the Festival of Shelters for seven days at the end of the harvest season, after the grain has been threshed and the grapes have been pressed. 14 This festival will be a happy time of celebrating with your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows from your towns.*

*15 For seven days you must celebrate this festival to honour the Lord your God at the place he chooses, for it is he who blesses you with*

*bountiful harvests and gives you success in all your work. This festival will be a time of great joy for all.*

*16 “Each year every man in Israel must celebrate these three festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. On each of these occasions, all men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he chooses, but they must not appear before the Lord without a gift for him. 17 All must give as they are able, according to the blessings given to them by the Lord your God.”*

God gave this festival to teach the people about himself and to help them understand the way of salvation.

Jesus used the rituals associated with this festival to show how he fulfilled them as Israel’s promised Messiah.

He used the two main symbols of the festival; water and light, to show that he is the light of the world who has come to giving living water to those who receive him as the Christ, the Son of God.

In chapter seven John focuses us on Jesus as the giver of living water.

On the last day of the festival, the day called the “Great Day”, a mardi-gras type procession left the pool of Siloam and wound its way through the streets of Jerusalem up to the temple.

One rabbi wrote, “Anyone who has not seen this event has never seen rejoicing before”.

The ceremony that was central to this procession was called the “Water Ceremony”.

It was done to thank God for the bounty of the harvest and to pray for the rain in the year ahead of the next harvest.

The "Water Ceremony "began with a priest filling two golden jugs at the pool of Siloam.

One contained water, the other contained wine. From there he carried them at the head of the procession to the temple.

When he reached the temple he poured the water and the wine into two silver bowls.

We assume that about this time Jesus stood up and spoke. John records his words in John 7:37-39.

We read them before but I shall read them again.

*"37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" 39 (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)"*

John has already mentioned this living water in the account of the woman at the well.

Just as water is the source of our daily life, Jesus is the source of our eternal life.

Just as the rain falling from heaven to the earth brought forth a rich grain harvest, the Holy Spirit is poured out on believers to renew, refresh and revive us and enable us to grow in grace and faith.

The second stand out feature of this week long celebration was the night time illumination of the temple precinct.

It was illuminated by 4 candelabras 25 metres tall with four branches on each.

Each branch was filled with about 40 litres of oil and set alight.

In a time when the only lighting people had at night were a few candles per house, this must have been a magnificent sight.

To add to this the musicians and choirs filled the night air with music and singing.

The whole thing was meant to remind the people of the Shekinah glory of God that accompanied the people in the wilderness and which rested over the tabernacle when they camped.

Imagine the impact when Jesus speaks the words of John 8:12

*“12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”*

John wants his reader to understand the incredible claims Jesus is making when he speaks of light and water.

Jesus is saying, “I am the I am God!” I am the source of life!” Follow me and live!”

How do the people react to all this?

Firstly the reaction of his brothers who treat his claims with amusement. We see it in John 7:1-5

Second, the reaction of the priests and Pharisees who hated him because he challenged their self-interest. We see it in John 7: 7 & 19.

Thirdly the reaction of the crowd who were curious about him. He evoked much debate and discussion among them. John 7:11, 12, 43

They came to a number of conclusions about Jesus; who he was and where he had come from and was going to.

- 1) He is a good man (John 7:12). But friend, he is more than a man.
- 2) He is a prophet (John 7:40). But he was more than a prophet.
- 3) He was possessed. (7:20)

4) He was a seducer leading the people astray. (John 7:47-49)

5) He was a dynamic personality (John 7:46)

Now there is one group we have forgotten about. We must return to John chapter six verses 68 and 69 to discover their verdict.

*68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. 69 We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."*

John would have us think seriously about our verdict. Who do you say that Jesus is?

John tells us that Jesus is the Light of the World who gives life giving water, the one who is the Christ, the Holy One of God.

Many miss it. Some people get it. We read again John 7:31

*31 Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. "After all," they said, "would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?"*

C S Lewis once said that Jesus who claimed to be the great I AM is either a Liar or a Lunatic or he is who he said he is. We are given no other options.

The choice is yours

If he is who he claims to be then we will want to become his fully devoted followers. Won't we!