

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

John 7:37-39

(John 7:37-39), "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. {38} He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. {39} (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"



S A CERTAIN AURA accompanies our thoughts in regard to rivers. **YOU PROBABLY HAVE SOME SPECIAL MEMORY** associated with a river. Perhaps our own **COLUMBIA RIVER** is one that stands out most to you.

S RIVERS HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE for **inspirational SONGS** and **POEMS** throughout history. One does **not have to look far** to find someone's thoughts regarding some river.

(1) **MARK TWAIN** was fascinated with the **MISSISSIPPI RIVER**. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* would not be the same if it were not for the Mississippi River.

(2) One summer while in college, I preached several weeks of revivals in Oregon and Washington State. One revival was in the little town of Klickitat, Washington. It was a small community that flourished because of the timber industry. I remember well the beautiful **KLICKITAT RIVER** that ran through that little village. Its source was the melting snow and glaciers of Mt Adams. We drove about five miles upriver and floated back in inner tubes. The water was so cold that our bodies were a dull blue color when we finally got out of the icy cold water. In spite of the cold, that beautiful river made a memory that has not yet been forgotten.

S THE REASON FOR MAKING SUCH ADO ABOUT "RIVERS" IS JESUS USED THE WORD "RIVERS" IN OUR TEXT:

C (V. 38), "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow **RIVERS** of living water."

C Jesus had **grown up** not too many miles from **THE JORDAN**

RIVER. He was **baptized** by John the Baptist in the Jordan river. It is quite possible that Jesus had **walked** the entire length of the Jordan river between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The fact that Jesus had **thought** about rivers is evident by His use of the word *rivers* in our text.

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH JESUS MENTIONED RIVERS IS IMPORTANT.

(V. 10), "... Went he also up **UNTO THE FEAST**, . . . "

S "THE FEAST" that Jesus went up to WAS THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. BASED ON SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, WE CAN DRAW SEVERAL CONCLUSIONS that enlighten our understanding of John 7.

- 1) Jesus spoke the words found in our text during the months of **SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER**. The **winter months** would have been rapidly approaching. The crops would have been harvested. The farmers would have been praying for the winter rains to come soon.
- 2) JERUSALEM WOULD HAVE BEEN **PACKED FULL OF WORSHIPERS**. The feast of Tabernacles was **ONE OF THREE PILGRIMAGE FEASTS** in which every male of eligible age was required to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast.
- 3) **THE HILLS** surrounding Jerusalem would have been **COVERED WITH TENTS** because it **was required** that all worshipers live in tents during the feast of Tabernacles. The purpose for living in tents was to remind them of their **ancestor's forty-year journey** through the wilderness (Lev 23:43).
- 4) THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES WAS MARKED BY **GREAT JOY, HAPPINESS and CELEBRATION**. *Tabernacles* is **the only feast** where God **commanded** His people to "rejoice before the LORD" (Lev 23:40; Deu 16:14-15). The feast was intended to **remind them of GOD'S PRESENCE** and **PROVISION** during their forefather's wilderness wanderings. It was during those forty years that God actually tabernacled among His people. God led Israel with the cloud of His presence by day and the pillar of fire by night. Moses

literally talked with God in the tabernacle.

- 5) The feast lasted **SEVEN DAYS** and was followed by **an eighth day** called a *Sabbath* (Lev 23:35-36). On the eighth day, Israel was called to gather for **a solemn assembly** (Numb 29:35). The first day of the feast was a Sabbath and the eighth day concluded with a high Sabbath (Lev 23:39; Num 29:12).

CONTEXT:

(V. 14), “Now **about THE MIDST OF THE FEAST** Jesus went up into the **TEMPLE**, and **TAUGHT**.”

(V. 30), “. . . **THEY SOUGHT TO TAKE HIM:** but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.”

(V. 32), “**THE PHARISEES heard** that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests **SENT OFFICERS TO TAKE HIM**.”

(V. 33), “Then **SAID JESUS** unto them, **Yet a little while am I with you**, and then I go unto him that sent me.”

- S** Jesus knew **the level of hostility** against Him was rising to a feverish pitch. He understood that only a short period of time remained until He would be arrested and crucified. In actuality, Jesus would be nailed to the cross months during the feast of Passover a short six months away.

(V. 37), “**IN THE LAST DAY, THAT GREAT DAY** of the feast, Jesus **STOOD** and **CRIED**, . . . ”

- S** **MUCH DEBATE** exists as to whether *the last day* was the **seventh day**, or the **eighth day**. After reading many different commentaries, it is safe to conclude that we will know for sure whether it was the seventh or eighth day, when we get to heaven.
- S** **THE RITUALS** associated with **the Feast of Tabernacles** were **significant** and **detailed**.

EACH DAY OF THE FEAST, a procession of priests would lead worshipers to **THE POOL OF SILOAM**. This took place after the morning sacrifice. One priest would **DIP A GOLDEN PITCHER** into the pool of Siloam and fill it with water. He would then lead the procession of priests and worshipers back to the temple amidst much **singing, shouting and waving of branches**. The priests would enter the temple court through **THE WATER GATE** at which time they were greeted with the blast of the **SHOFAR** (the ram’s horn).

DON’T FORGET the purpose of the feast of Tabernacles was to remind Israel of God’s **presence** and **provision** during Israel’s forty years in the wilderness. One of God’s provisions during those forty years was **the conquering of** the fortified city of **JERICHO** (Joshua 6). God instructed Israel to conquer Jericho by the priests leading a procession around the city for seven days. The first six days they marched only **one time** around the city and then returned to camp. On the seventh day they marched **seven times** around the city and then shouted and blew the trumpets. God blessed their obedience by causing the walls of Jericho fell.

EACH DAY of the feast of Tabernacles, the priests would march **one time** around the altar of burnt sacrifice and conclude by pouring the water from the golden pitcher on the altar of burnt sacrifice. **ON THE FINAL DAY OF THE FEAST**, the priests would **WALK SEVEN TIMES** around the altar of burnt sacrifice as the crowd sang **THE HALLEL** (Psalms 113-118). After completing the seven trips around the altar, the priest climbed the ramp to the top of the altar. He would then lift the golden pitcher high into the air as the crowd shouted, “**Lift up thy hand**.” The higher he lifted the pitcher the better. As he poured the water onto the altar, the people chanted the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa 12:3).

IT WAS NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT JESUS MENTIONED *WATER* IN JOHN 7. The worshipers use of water reminded them of God’s provision of water in the wilderness. Exodus 17 tells us that “Israel journeyed from **the wilderness of Sin** and pitched their tents in **Rephidim**: and there was **no water** for the people to drink” (Exo 17:1). The people became angry with Moses and spoke of stoning him. Moses cried out to God and God told him to take his rod and strike a certain rock with it. Moses obeyed and God miraculously provided water from the rock. The use of water during the feast of Tabernacles **REMINDED THEM** that God provided water out of a rock in the middle of a barren and dry desert.

By the way, the Rock that Moses hit is mentioned in the New Testament.

(1 Cor 10:4), “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

OUR TEXT:

(V. 37-38), “**IN THE LAST DAY**, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, . . .”

S **OUR GOAL** in this message is to take what Jesus said and attempt to understand and apply it to our lives.

S JESUS' WORDS SPEAK OF:

- I. AN ESSENTIAL RESTLESSNESS**
- II. A REQUIRED RESPONSE**
- III. A UNIVERSAL RESULT**

I. AN ESSENTIAL RESTLESSNESS

(V. 37), “If any man thirst, . . .”

S CONSIDER **THREE KEY WORDS**

#1. “IF”

S The promise associated with this passage IS **CONDITIONAL**. Some of God's promises are **UNCONDITIONAL**. Unconditional promises do not depend upon certain actions on our part in order to come to pass. For example, God promised that while the earth remained, there would always be seasons (Gen 8:22). That is an unconditional promise. It doesn't matter what people do, or do not do, as long as the world remains, there will be **seedtime** and **harvest**, and **cold** and **heat**, and **summer** and **winter**, and **day** and **night**.

S **OTHER PROMISES OF GOD ARE CONDITIONAL**. In other words, certain demands have to be met on our part for the promise to be experienced. **OUR TEXT IS A CONDITIONAL PROMISE**. If a person fails to meet the conditions spelled out, then the promise is not received.

#1. “IF”

#2. “ANY”

(V. 37), “If **ANY** man thirst, . . .”

S THIS PROMISE IS **UNIVERSAL** IN ITS SCOPE. It is **ALL INCLUSIVE**. Jesus spoke this promise to all people, of all races, of all ages. He said, “If **any** man.”

(1) THE **RICH** and THE **POOR**

(2) THE **JEW** and THE **GENTILE**

(3) THE **YOUNG** and THE **OLD**

(Mark 10:14), “. . . Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”

(4) THE **STRONG** and THE **WEAK**

(Mat 11:28), “Come unto me, **ALL YE** that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

(5) THE **RELIGIOUS** and THE **PRODIGAL**

(John 6:37), “. . . Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

(2 Pet 3:9), “The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

S **ANYONE MAY COME** – **(V. 37)**, “If any man thirst . . .” God shows **NO FAVORITISM**. The ground **at the foot of the cross** is level.

#1. “IF”

#2. “ANY”

#3. “THIRST”

(V. 37), “If any man **THIRST**, . . .”

S **THE PRECONDITION FOR THIS PROMISE IS SUMMARIZED IN ONE WORD** – “**THIRST**.”

S **THIRST IS one of the STRONGEST DRIVES** known to man. Thirst drives us to drink water several times a day. **A HEALTHY HUMAN BODY REQUIRES WATER** on a regular basis. People have lived as long as **sixty days** without **food**, but a person cannot survive much longer than **five days** without water.

S JESUS USED **PHYSICAL THIRST AS AN ILLUSTRATION FOR SPIRITUAL THIRST**. As the human body is **driven** by *physical thirst* to drink water several times every day, so our *spiritual thirst* should cause us to continually drink of God.

S AN INTERESTING THING ABOUT SPIRITUAL THIRST IS GOD DEALS WITH US AT THE LEVEL OF OUR THIRST. The greater our spiritual thirst, the greater the spiritual supply. The less our spiritual thirst, the less the spiritual supply.

JESUS SAID IT THIS WAY:

Ⓒ **(Mat 5:6)**, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: **FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.**”
(That means those without *thirst* will not be filled.)

JEREMIAH SAID IT THIS WAY:

Ⓒ **(Jer 29:13)**, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

GOD SAID IT THIS WAY TO **JOSHUA** BEFORE HE CONQUERED THE PROMISED LAND:

Ⓒ **(Josh 1:3)**, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.”

Ⓒ **THE SIZE** of Joshua’s inheritance was **in direct proportion** to his size of his desire. **LITTLE DESIRE** meant little supply. **GREAT DESIRE** meant great supply. God met Joshua at the level of Joshua’s desire (thirst).

S TO US THAT SAYS THAT BIG THIRST results in big supply, and **LITTLE THIRST** results in little supply. **If** we are **shallow** with God, God will be shallow with us. **If** we are **deep** with God, God will be deep with us.

S SOME PEOPLE experience little blessing from God because their thirst is so small. **OTHER PEOPLE** experience great blessing from God because their desire is so great.

DAVID HAD A GREAT THIRST FOR GOD

Ⓒ **(Psa 42:1-2)**, “As the deer panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. {2} My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

Ⓒ **(Psa 63:1)**, “. . . O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;”

S PAUL HAD A GREAT THIRST FOR GOD

Ⓒ **(Phil 3:10)**, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”

S MOSES HAD A GREAT THIRST FOR GOD

Ⓒ Moses drank of God when he saw the **BURNING BUSH**. He drank again when he called down **THE TEN PLAGUES** on Egypt. In the wilderness he saw **THE CLOUD** by day and pillar of fire by night. Every morning for forty years in the wilderness he was privileged to eat the supernatural provision of God called **MANNA**. He stood before the **RED SEA** when it opened up and a passageway was made. He saw God provide **WATER** from **THE ROCK**.

Ⓒ AFTER ALL THAT, MOSES STILL SAID TO GOD: **(Exo 33:13)**, “. . . I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: . . . ”

Ⓒ We might have been tempted to say, “**MOSES, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH**. You have already experienced so much, why do you keep asking for more?” The reason Moses kept asking for more and more was that the very nature of thirst demands continual supply. **THIRST** has to be quenched again and again.

S (V. 37), “If any man **THIRST**, . . . ”

I. AN ESSENTIAL RESTLESSNESS

II. A REQUIRED RESPONSE

(V. 37), "... Let him come unto me, and drink."

S CONSIDER THREE KEY WORDS

#1. "COME"

(V. 37), "... Let him **COME** ..."

- S **"COME"** IS SUCH A SIMPLE WORD that we sometimes pass over it without considering its meaning. **IT IS AMAZING HOW MANY TIMES "COME"** is used in Scripture to describe a **person's proper response** to God's invitation.
- S TWO VERSES IN THE BIBLE USE THAT WORD "COME" THREE TIMES:
- C (Isa 55:1), "Ho, every one that thirsteth, **COME** ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; **COME** ye, buy, and eat; yea, **COME**, buy wine and milk without money and without price."
- C (Rev 22:17), "And the Spirit and the bride say, **COME**. And let him that heareth say, **COME**. And let him that is athirst **COME**. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
- S GOD'S WORD TO ONE AND ALL IS **"COME!"**
- C (John 7:37), "... If any man thirst, let him **COME** unto me, and drink."
- C In the original language the verb is **AN IMPERATIVE**. That simply means that it is a **command**. If I were to stand before you and say *come*, I might just be making an illustration. I might not intend you to come at all. But **if I use the imperative**, it is more than an illustration, it is a **directive**.
- S Jesus used the imperative. HE SAYS TO ONE AND TO ALL – **"COME!"**

#1. **"COME"**

#2. "ME"

(V. 37), "... Let him come UNTO **ME**, ..."

- S **HAD JESUS SIMPLY** told His listeners to *come* to God, they might not have **taken such offense**. But Jesus told them **to come to Him**. Listen again:
- C (V. 37), "... If any man thirst, LET HIM COME **UNTO ME**, ..."
- S THAT WAS **NOT THE ONLY TIME** JESUS TOLD PEOPLE TO "COME" TO HIMSELF:
- C (Mat 11:28), "COME unto **ME**, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and **I** will give you rest."
- C (Mat 19:21), "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and **COME AND FOLLOW ME**."
- S IT WAS **AT THIS POINT** OF JESUS INVITING PEOPLE TO HIMSELF THAT **THE SPARKS** BEGAN TO FLY (VV. 43-44). **IF AN EVANGELIST** were to stand in this pulpit and tell people to come to himself, rather than come to Jesus, our reaction would be strong, too. **THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT JESUS DID**. He said, "COME UNTO ME."
- S **IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY** Jesus had the right to tell people to come to Himself. It would not be right for any other person to say that, but it was right for Jesus.
- S **THE OCCASION WAS THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**. **JESUS IS** the fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles.
- The fact is that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the seven feasts of Israel. Some example:
- #1 JESUS WAS **CRUCIFIED ON PASSOVER** – (Jesus was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. John 1:29)
- #2 JESUS WAS **BURIED ON UNLEAVENED BREAD** – (As bread without leaven pictures the absence of sin, so Jesus was the perfect lamb **without spot or sin**. Heb. 4:15)
- #3 JESUS WAS **RESURRECTED ON FIRST FRUITS** – (Jesus was the 1st fruits. 1 Cor 15:20, 23)
- #4 JESUS **SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT ON PENTECOST** – (The church was born. John 16:7)
- S **AS GOD DWELT** (*tabernacled*) among His people **in a tent** in the days of Moses, **SO GOD DWELT** among the people in Jesus' day through the person of JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF. Jesus was

God in human flesh **TABERNACLING AMONG HIS PEOPLE.**

C (**John 1:1, 14**), “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **THE WORD WAS GOD . . . {14}** And the Word was made flesh, and **DWELT** among us, . . . ”

C The Greek word for “**DWELT**” is “**SKENOO**” (skay-no'-o) which means “**TO PITCH A TENT**” or “**TO ENCAMP.**” IT COULD BE TRANSLATED “**TO TABERNACLE AMONG.**”

S **JESUS WAS NOT** just another evangelist come to town. Jesus was God! About that fact the Scripture is clear. Jesus was God in human flesh.

C (**Mat 1:23**), “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall CALL HIS NAME **EMMANUEL**, which being interpreted is, **GOD WITH US.**”

C (**Phil 2:6**), “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be **EQUAL WITH GOD:**”

C (**1 Tim 3:16**), “. . . **GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, . . .**”

S **THAT IS WHY** JESUS SAID, “**COME UNTO ME.**” As God, Jesus had every right to tell people to come to Himself. He also has that same right today. The command to come to Jesus is AN **IMPERATIVE.**

#1. “**COME**”

#2. “**ME**”

#3. “**DRINK**”

(**V. 37**), “. . . Let him come unto me, and **DRINK.**”

S If I were to tell **THE CHILDREN** to *come* up here, no one would have a hard time understanding what I meant. If I were to tell the children to come up here and drink, it would be easily understood if I had something for them to drink. On the other hand, if I invited them to come and drink and had no liquid, what would I mean? Jesus told them to come and drink. What were they to drink? **THE**

ANSWER IS REVEALED IN THE NEXT VERSE:

(**V. 38**), “He that **BELIEVETH ON ME, . . .**”

IT IS ONE THING to come to a glass of water, **IT IS QUITE ANOTHER** to drink that water. In like manner, it **is one thing** to come to Jesus, it **is quite another thing** to drink of Jesus.

(1) **THE RICH YOUNG RULER** came to Jesus, but he did not *drink* (believe) of Jesus (Mark 10:22).

(2) **JUDAS** came to Jesus, but he did not *drink* (believe) of Jesus. Rather than drink of Jesus, Judas betrayed Jesus to the authorities for thirty pieces of silver.

S **ON THE FARM** we had the crude expression of “**You can lead A HORSE to the water, but you cannot make him drink.**” Crude as it may be, it is still a true statement. **It is possible** for a person to *come* to Jesus, and yet **NOT BELIEVE**(drink) in Jesus.

S **SOME PEOPLE** have come to Jesus, but they have never drunk of Jesus. Jesus tells us that **we must do both:** we must *come*, and we must *drink*. **Only after we drink do we** experience the conditional promise of John 7:38.

S THE GREEK WORD FOR *DRINK* IS **NOT PASSIVE.** It is **IMPERATIVE, PRESENT** and **ACTIVE.** It is a command that is to be carried out in a manner that is **ongoing.** We are **to drink and keep on drinking.** *Drinking* is a continual process. We are to **believe** and keep on believing.

S THIS REALITY IS **THE KEY** TO EXPERIENCING **THE ABUNDANT CHRISTIAN LIFE.** It is also **THE KEY** to understanding **why some folks never** seem to experience the deep blessings of God.

I. AN **ESSENTIAL RESTLESSNESS – THIRST**

II. A **REQUIRED RESPONSE – “COME & DRINK”**

III. A UNIVERSAL RESULT

(**V. 38**), “

(V. 38), "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

S CONSIDER **THREE KEY PHRASES** FROM JESUS' WORDS:

#1. "AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID"

(V. 38), "... **AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID**, ..."

- (1) **MANY O.T. SCRIPTURES COULD HAVE SERVED** as Jesus' reference point for these words (Isa 55:1; Zech 13:1; 14:8; Ezek 47:1; Joel 3:18; Isa 28:16).
- (2) **PERHAPS HE WAS REFERRING TO:**
(Isa 58:11), "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and **SATISFY THY SOUL IN DROUGHT**, and make fat thy bones: and **THOU SHALT BE LIKE A WATERED GARDEN**, and **LIKE A SPRING OF WATER, WHOSE WATERS FAIL NOT.**"

#1. "AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID"

#2. "SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER"

(V. 38), "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly **SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.**"

ALMOST EVERY WORD FROM THAT PHRASE IS FILLED WITH MEANING

- (1) **"SHALL FLOW"** means that the fruit of God's promise **is filled with movement and life.**
- (2) **"LIVING WATERS"** stands in contrast to **stagnant water.** Stagnant waters are **not refreshing** waters. The waters of God's promise are fresh and flowing.
- (3) **"RIVERS"** speaks of that which is in constant motion. **The characteristic of a river** is that **IT IS ALWAYS FLOWING.** If a river stops flowing, it is no longer a river. In order for a river to be a river, it must have **a continual supply of water.** Water must constantly flow into it. But in order for a river to be a river, it also has to continually give. A river continually **receives** and continually **gives.** Stop either one and it is no

longer a river.

If a body of water **ONLY RECEIVES**, but never gives, it becomes stagnant and it dies. The **DEAD SEA** is an example of receiving without giving.

If a body of water **ONLY GIVES**, but never receives, it becomes like a **FARM POND** that eventually dries up in the heat of summer.

S THE ABUNDANT LIFE that God offers those who believe in Jesus **IS LIKE A RIVER.** It is a bountiful supply that constantly **receives** and that constantly **gives.** **GOD'S SPIRITUAL RIVER** is **alive, abundant and flowing.** In other verses of the Bible, THE WORD TRANSLATED **"RIVERS"** is translated as **"FLOOD"** (Matt 7:25, 27; Rev 12:15-16). A flood pictures an **abundant and plentiful supply.**

S ONE ELEMENT OF GOD'S ABUNDANT SUPPLY IS "JOY."

- C (Psa 16:11)**, "... In thy presence **is fulness of joy**; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."
- C (1 Pet 1:8)**, "... Ye rejoice with **joy unspeakable and full of glory:**"
- C (Psa 1:3)**, "... He shall be **like a tree** planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."
- C (Gal 5:22)**, "But the fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE, JOY, PEACE,** . . ."

#1. "AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID"

#2. "SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER"

#3. "OUT OF HIS BELLY"

(V. 38), "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **OUT OF HIS BELLY** shall flow rivers of living water."

S The words, "out of his belly" sound crude to our ears. As crude as they may be, that is an accurate word-for-word translation from the Greek. The equivalent of those words in our culture would be **"out of his inmost being,"** or **"out of his heart."**

S JESUS WAS DESCRIBING THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER.

The source is **INTERNAL**, not external. The source is not *out there somewhere*. The source of **the river of God's blessing** comes from within the believer's spiritual heart.

S JESUS WAS REFERRING TO **THE HOLY SPIRIT** who takes up residence in the life of a person when they place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(V. 39), "(But this spake he of **THE SPIRIT**, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

C **(John 16:7)**, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, **THE COMFORTER** will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

C **(John 14:17)**, "... He dwelleth with you, and **SHALL BE IN YOU.**"

C **(Eph 5:18)**, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT;**"

C **(Gal 5:16)**, "This I say then, **WALK IN THE SPIRIT**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

S **WHEN WE STOP** walking in the Spirit, the flow of God's river through our life is greatly diminished. The *river* must be allowed to continually flow without an impediment. The only way it can flow is for it to continually *receive* and to continually *give*.

C **A LADY** stopped serving and began to shrivel spiritually as a Christian. When she began ministering to others, she began to flourish again.

C **A MAN** did nothing but give to others. The problem was that he did stop receiving from the Lord. He gave, but he did not receive. It was only a matter of time until he **burned out**. I commented to his wife on one occasion that it was good to see him in church. She said that he was there in body, but not in spirit.

LISTEN AGAIN TO JESUS' WORDS:

(V. 37), "... IF ANY MAN **THIRST**, let him come unto me, and drink."

- S** I. AN **ESSENTIAL RESTLESSNESS – THIRST**
- II. A **REQUIRED RESPONSE – "COME & DRINK"**
- III. THE **UNIVERSAL RESULT – "RIVERS OF LIVING WATER"**

S **THE KEY WORD IS "THIRST."** We **will never** experience the deep supply of God's bountiful blessing of *living water* apart from a deep and abiding *thirst*. We **will never** drink deeply of God's supply unless we have great thirst.

S **SO THE QUESTION IS – HOW IS OUR THIRST FOR GOD?**
Do we long for God with a great longing?

GOD SAYS:

C **(Jer 29:13)**, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

C **(Mat 5:6)**, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for **THEY** shall be filled."

DOES OUR HEART **AGREE WITH DAVID'S HEART?** DAVID WAS CALLED BY GOD AS A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

C **(Psa 42:1-2)**, "As the deer panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. {2} My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

C **(Psa 63:1)**, "... My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;"

S **ONE REASON** THE RIVER IN SOME CHRISTIANS RUNS SO SHALLOW **IS THEIR THIRST IS SO SMALL** and as a result they **DRINK SO SPORADICALLY.**

- I. AN **ESSENTIAL RESTLESSNESS**
- II. A **REQUIRED RESPONSE**
- III. THE **UNIVERSAL RESULT**

(Isa 55:1), "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."