

# The Spirit's Role in your Worship

John 7:37-39

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**John 7:37-44** <sup>37</sup> Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. <sup>38</sup> "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" <sup>39</sup> But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified

**Introduction:** Does coming into the building for an hour constitute worship? Does the worship stop when we are finished singing? Is it possible to worship when there is no organized attempt to do so? Do you know when you are worshipping? Is there anything we can do to increase our true devoted worship of Christ?

**Why am I preaching this sermon:** What is plain from Christ's proclamation is that the water flows outward. The work of The Spirit is not just for our benefit. The Spirit creates a spring of something that flows out of your inner most being. What is it for? Why would we need it? Why would God do it? These are all questions that believers need to answer. We need to be aware of The Holy Spirit's stated purposes are in our lives. Let's plunge in then and look at three things Jesus said:

- Christ alone satisfies the thirst of the inner man [37]
- Christ alone opens up a spring of satisfaction in the inner man [38]
- Christ sent the Holy Spirit to be the source of that satisfaction [39]

## Christ alone satisfies the thirst of the inner man [37]

**John 7:37** <sup>37</sup> Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

**Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast:** The feast and its festivities lasted 7 days beginning on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month of the year. The last day was something like a closing ceremony. The preparations of special food and all the other activities that went into this festive week long celebration were brought to a conclusion on the eighth day. God instructed Moses how it should be done saying....

**Leviticus 23:34-36** <sup>34</sup> "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. <sup>35</sup> 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. <sup>36</sup> 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.

Throughout the week the people were more dispersed in and around the city but on “the last day...The great day of the feast,” they were gathered and Jesus would have had the greatest exposure as He cried out to the crowds.

**Jesus stood and cried out:** Two things are noteworthy here. The normal posture for teaching in Israel was seated. Jesus observed this custom during his teaching ministry.

**Matthew 5:1** When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He **sat down**, His disciples came to Him.

**Matthew 13:2-3** <sup>2</sup> And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and **sat down**, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow;

But now he stands. Actually the Greek says He “was standing.” He had not apparently been teaching but was with the crowd moving to the great climactic gathering of the feast.

He shouts at the top of His voice....”He cried out.” This is actually the first thing recorded that Jesus taught at the feast. Up until now He has just been answering accusations and dodging attacks from the Jews. So this is the scene; Jesus has waited until the great gathering at the very end of the feast to deliver a loud and urgent message to the people of Israel. The time...like the time of His crucifixion is chosen for maximum exposure, impact and significance.

**”If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink..:”** There are several important reasons that Jesus has chosen this metaphor of water at this moment. The supply of water by means of rain was a major point of praise during this feast. It was celebrated right after the harvest. The words of Psalm 118 were recited during the festivities.

**Psalm 118:23-29** <sup>23</sup> This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup> This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. <sup>25</sup> O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!

There is both a praise for the gift of the harvest and a prayer for the coming one. It is about water then. Water and life are bound to one another.

Water and life are inseparable and God is the source of both. To make this point to the worshipers every day of the feast a priest would go the pool of Siloam with a golden pitcher and bring water back to the altar. It was poured into a bowl beside the altar where a tube would carry it to the base. It was a drink offering...a libation and it was done in thanksgiving for life giving water from the rock in the wilderness and from the heavens upon the crops of Israel. These words of Isaiah were quoted during that ritual.

**Isaiah 12:3-5** <sup>3</sup> Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation. <sup>4</sup> And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make *them* remember that His name is exalted." <sup>5</sup>

Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth.

On this day there was no procession to the pool for water. The celebrating had largely ended and the people were gathering. They have spent a week thinking about and thanking God for physical water to meet their physical needs for food and drink. Water was equal to bread for the sustaining of their lives. Jesus claims to be BOTH the water and the bread of life. He waits until there is no physical water in view to offer Himself for the thirst of the human soul. Yes...physical water is from God and will satisfy the physical needs of men, but Jesus makes three appeals to your inner man in one sentence...

**If anyone is thirsty:** This is the highlight of the year in Jewish culture. It is the equivalent of "The Holidays" for us. It is a celebration of Thanksgiving, prosperity, family, community and religion. After these there are not many things left to think and care about in our world. What are the times of year when the most cases of deep depression and suicide occur. The holidays...the celebrations of all that makes up life. Why is this so? Because men and women, you and me and our children and neighbors are not just physical beings. We have an inner man with inner hunger and Yes...as Jesus well knew....we are thirsting for something to satisfy that part of us. You can be a Christian and still be thirsting for it, because you have been looking for it in the wrong place. SO.....Jesus cries out to the crowds, to the generations..."Is anyone still thirsty???? If so....

**Let him come to Me:** The people have been to a festival celebrating crops, water, and physical prosperity.... If any are still thirsty...let them come **TO ME!!** Here is a source of water that will satisfy the thirst that the physical world cannot. But just coming is not enough. Mark tells of a rich young man Jesus encountered who came...

**Mark 10:17** <sup>17</sup> As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Coming to Christ will not do you any good if you only come. When Jesus told this man to take what He offered and trust Him with life, Mark records....

**Mark 10:22** <sup>22</sup> But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

He "**owned much property**" and yet He still hungered and thirsted. The physical world can hold even believers in its snare. Jesus offers to fulfill the deepest longings of your inner man. So Jesus adds this crucial third appeal.

**And drink:** Take the water and swallow it. Do not say like the rich young ruler...."Good Teacher...teach me." If you are going to come to Christ then you need to eat the food and drink the water He offers. He claims to be the solution to our deep abiding hungers and thirsts. After you have everything you need in this world you will still have the thirst of the inner man. Most of us will never know this by experience because there will always be something we cannot get that we think will satisfy our souls.

Solomon, on the other hand, was a man who had everything and was able to get anything he wanted or imagine. Here is what he observed:

**Ecclesiastes 1:2-8** <sup>2</sup> "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity." <sup>3</sup> What advantage does man have in all his work Which he does under the sun? <sup>4</sup> A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever. <sup>5</sup> Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; And hastening to its place it rises there *again*. <sup>6</sup> Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns. <sup>7</sup> All the rivers flow into the sea, Yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, There they flow again. <sup>8</sup> All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell *it*. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing.

**Ecclesiastes 12:1** Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them";

**Ecclesiastes 12:13** <sup>13</sup> The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person.

So Jesus makes another appeal to those who are needy. Humans were similarly needy 500 years before Christ and remain so today. It is a timeless call to return to God.

**Isaiah 55:1-3** "..... Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. <sup>2</sup> "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. <sup>3</sup> "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *According to* the faithful mercies shown to David.

The offer is for eternal and abiding life and fulfillment. The entire metaphor of satisfied thirst cries out to be understood this way. Not just salvation someday...when you die, but life now with purpose and joy. In this next verse Jesus explains what it means to "Drink!"

## **Christ alone opens up a spring of satisfaction in the inner man [38]**

**John 7:38** <sup>38</sup> "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

**He who believes in Me:** This is modern man's problem too. He believes that Jesus existed. He believes that He said and did many things, maybe even His miracles and resurrection, BUT...He does not trust Jesus to be the source of life and satisfaction that He claims to be. Men trust the world. That is what we can see, feel and interact with. The world also promises to satisfy your hunger and thirst. Jesus' appeal is to believe Him rather than the world. This is saving faith. You have it when you decide to trust Jesus with your precious life, both here on earth and in eternity.

**As the Scripture said:** Jesus is summing up a scriptural teaching in His own authoritative words.

**Isaiah 58:11** <sup>11</sup> "And the LORD will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.

**'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.:** The water, again, satisfies the inner man. It can refresh you when it is scorched on the outside...as Isaiah said. It can give joy in times of sorrow, peace in times of turmoil, comfort in times of fear and grief and love in times of hatred and hostility. Nothing in this world can stop its flow because it does not come from this world. It is from God.

The thirsty one who comes to the source of The Water of Life, now becomes a channel of that water. Like a pure artesian stream it begins to bubble up in his or her own life. God has not just given a onetime drink. He has given an eternal spring that wells up in your life. From it you will be eternally satisfied. Because of it many others will be blessed. Let me illustrate this if I can:

- Because God has shown you undeserved forgiveness you now have a welling spring of it for others who have mistreated and hurt you...many maliciously. Gracious forgiveness is a spring welling up inside.
- Because God has shown you infinite patience and love while you have sinned, you now have an infinite river of the same thing flowing in your inner person.

The more you know about what God has done for you the more you will be able to let the waters of it spill out on others in your life.

But...you say....I don't think I can do that. I find it hard to forgive. I am quick to judge those who don't live like I want them to live or do the things I want them to do. John gives the answer to this objection. We should heed it carefully.

### **Christ sent the Holy Spirit to be the source of that satisfaction [39]**

**John 7:39** <sup>39</sup> But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

**But this He spoke of the Spirit:** The Holy Spirit of God. He is the third person of the Trinity and is as fully God as the Father and the Son. It is only His role that is different and not His nature or essence. The Bible tells us that Christ came to make the Father known in His Glory.

**John 1:14-18** <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" <sup>16</sup> For of His fullness we

have all received, and grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Jesus then tells us that the Holy Spirit would be sent to Glorify, exalt or put on display Jesus Christ in the world.

**John 16:12-15** <sup>12</sup> "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. <sup>13</sup> "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. <sup>14</sup> "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. <sup>15</sup> "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

**Whom those who believed in Him were to receive:** This is Jesus' great prophecy of the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit to you and me and all those who trust in Christ. The Spirit and His ministry are typically ignored by Christians or distorted by them. The Spirit is seldom acknowledged as the source of Eternal life welling up in our inner persons. Let me try to bring this teaching down to a sentence or two.

**For the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified:** The Holy Spirit is eternally co-equal with the Father and the Son. His coming to indwell His believers and individually and collectively would happen on the day of Pentecost...50 days after Passover. The Spirit was always active in the Creation.

**Genesis 1:1-2** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

**Psalms 51:11** <sup>11</sup> Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Christ Glorification is a term describing His return to His full glory in heaven at the Fathers side.

**John 17:5** <sup>5</sup> "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

**CONCLUSION:** God The Holy Spirit does for you what you cannot do for yourselves. He is the channel through which eternal life flows to your finite, physical, fallen life. If you don't think you can live the Christian life then you are beginning to get the point. When God tells you to love your enemy....of course you cannot do that. When James tells us to rejoice when we face fiery trials of every kind....God knows you cannot do that. When He tells you to have patience in your trials it is a given that you will fail in that.

This is why Jesus said, I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." AND....you will never be able to bear them until you understand this simple truth.

God has done for you what you cannot do for yourself. If you could love your enemy then you can take a bow when you do. If you could have joy in the face of terrible trials then you deserve a pat on the back. We speak of salvation by grace....but what about the rest of our lives. Who gets the glory for that? For getting us through it? For making us rejoice and have peace and be loving and all the rest? Who shall we thank for that?

**Galatians 5:17** <sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Paul is speaking to brothers and sisters here. He is explaining how we come to maturity in Christ. We do not begin in the Spirit and then switch over to ourselves. In fact because we are physical [fleshly] we may not do the things that we want. He goes on...

**Galatians 5:22-23** <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Jesus offered to the men and women of Israel an internal fount of spiritual blessing that would well up inside of them for all eternity. IT would quench their own thirst and it would spill out upon their family and community. It would absolutely not be because they were “Christian” or “good.” It would be a spectacular work of The Triune God. God the Father sent God the Son into the world to pay for our sins and satisfy the justice of God on our behalf. God the Spirit came into the world to give us Eternal life and to become a river of Eternal life flowing in us....enabling us to live for Christ and even to worship Him.

I cannot think of anything that is more important to your daily life on this planet than this reality. What and how you think. What you say and how you say it. Your state of mind in trials and when under personal attack. Your love and affection for your spouse and children and parents...and yes your worship of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who came to “Glorify Christ.” Again...if we were able to do that ourselves then we should certainly take a bow. We are awesome because we have worshiped Christ.

We are going to serve bread and a cup. They are served for worship and not to impart some virtue to you. Jesus said that when they are passed around we are to remember Him while we eat and drink. But how will we remember what we have never known. Again...God the Spirit, indwelling us will bring Christ into our thoughts vividly...

**John 14:26-27** <sup>26</sup> "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. <sup>27</sup> "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

You cannot live for Christ or even worship Him apart from the work of the Spirit in you. May God bring Christ to our remembrance....to show Him to us in His splendor, beauty and love. May He cause us to offer Him true worship which happens when we assign all worthiness and praise to Him and keep nothing back for ourselves.

**Ephesians 3:14-21** <sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, <sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, <sup>21</sup> to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.