

**SERMON NOTES**  
**John 7:1-52**  
**“Streams of Living Water”**

**Intro:**

- *Do you live most of your life trying to fill an inner emptiness – or do you live most of your life out of the overflow of an inner fullness?*
- Is most of your service for Christ inwardly driven by an inner spiritual passion – or externally motivated by the expectations of others or by a desire to please others or be appreciated by others – and often done while running on fumes?
- *One of the key indicators of spiritual health and becoming a spiritually dynamic Christian is that you live and serve from an inner spiritual fullness and an internal spiritual passion*
- You live your Christian life and you practice the spiritual disciplines and you witness for Christ and you serve in the church and you love your neighbor as yourself and you give generously of your money and time to the cause of Christ – *because of an inner **want to** – not because of an external **ought to or have to** imposed upon you from others*
- Though clearly there are occasional times for all of us when we need to fulfill our duties out of a sense of responsibility rather than inner desire or passion – *if we are routinely motivated more by a sense of **ought to** than **want to** – if you live most of your life that way you will end up feeling resentful / put upon / sorry for yourself / unappreciated / bitter / and generally sour and negative toward life*
- **If we are to become spiritually dynamic Christians and a spiritually dynamic church body – then we will need to live our Christian lives and serve others out of an inner spiritual fullness**
- So the question becomes: *Where does inner spiritual fullness come from? Where do internal desire and passion and motivation and commitment come from?*
- **Wouldn't it be nice if making a significant impact in vulnerable families became a passion that energized you rather than a duty that drained you?**
- *Wouldn't it be nice to **want to do** most of what you're **supposed to do** in the Christian life?*
- *How do we become spiritually dynamic Christians and a spiritually dynamic church body?*

**John 7:37 - 39 (NIV)** <sup>37</sup>On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”** <sup>39</sup>By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- *This inner spiritual fullness and vitality and energy and passion – described by Jesus as streams of living water flowing out from within – is available to everyone who believes in Jesus and is indwelt by the Spirit*

## I. BELIEVE IN JESUS

- ***Whoever believes in Jesus, streams of living water will flow from within him***
- ***Who is Jesus, that we may believe in Him and have life?***
- ***Some people believe that Jesus was a good man // others that he was a prophet // others that he was a wise and dynamic and courageous and compassionate religious leader***
- ***Some people – in his day – and now – think that he was a false prophet and a deceiver and even a deluded madman – because He claimed to be God***
- ***And some people believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God and Savior of the world***
- ***Is Jesus whoever anyone wants him to be – or are there certain truths that must be believed about Jesus in order to be saved and be his follower?***
- ***Who is Jesus according to the NT?***
- ***The events of John 7 take place during the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem during the fall – about 6 months before Jesus’ death***
- ***Jesus was a very controversial figure – and the Jews were deeply divided among themselves as to whether or not Jesus was from God***
- ***There were three key questions that were debated in this chapter:***  
***(1) Where did Jesus get his education? (2) Where is Jesus from? (3) Where is Jesus going?***

### ***(1) His Heavenly Authority***

**John 7:14-18** Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and preached openly. <sup>15</sup>The Jewish leaders were surprised when they heard him. “How can he know so much when he’s never been to our schools?” they asked.

<sup>16</sup>So Jesus told them, **“I’m not teaching you my own thoughts, but those of God who sent me. <sup>17</sup>If any of you really determines to do God’s will, then you will certainly know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. <sup>18</sup>Anyone presenting his own ideas is looking for praise for himself, but anyone seeking to honor the one who sent him is a good and true person.”**

- *Similar to the biblical and theological training expected of pastors today, Jewish Rabbis in Jesus’ day were expected to be educated in the Law of Moses at established theological schools, and many also received advanced training under a Rabbinic scholar – such as Paul who studied under Gamaliel*
- *So when Jesus was teaching in the Temple courts, the Jewish leaders wanted to know: Where did this man go to school to get such knowledge of God and the Scriptures?*
- *Some said this with amazement and admiration at Jesus’ spiritual authority and understanding*
- *Jesus’ critics were more inclined to think: Who does this man think he is to claim to be able to teach the Scriptures to our people when he doesn’t even have the right education or credentials?*
  
- ***Where did Jesus go to school? Heaven***
  
- ***Where did Jesus get his authority to teach about God? From God***
  
- ***“My teaching is not my own – it comes from God who sent me from heaven to earth”***
  
- *The Jewish Rabbis received their authority from tradition – from teachings handed down from one Rabbi to another through the generations*
- *They got their authority from quoting well-respected Rabbis and rabbinical writings from the past*
  
- ***Not so with Jesus***
- *He didn’t get his teaching authority from other Rabbis or scholars or biblical commentaries*
- *Nor did he claim that his wisdom came from himself or his own thoughts*
- ***Rather, Jesus’ authority came directly from God***

- ***This question must be answered by anyone claiming to teach the truth – especially the truth about God: whether a science teacher or a college professor or a syndicated columnist or a radio talk show host or an author or a religious guru or Christian pastor:***
- ***How do you know that what you teach is true?***
- ***Are you teaching your own ideas? Or the ideas of other men? Or are you teaching truth that comes from God Himself?***
- **The teachings of Jesus conflict with many popular beliefs and values in our day – and many people disregard the teachings of Jesus and cling to their own ideas or whatever ideology they have chosen to adopt**
- **To believe in Jesus is to believe that his teachings come from God and therefore are the final authority on every subject: *whether God or salvation or life after death or coming judgment or marriage or sexuality or money or possessions or giving to the poor or spreading the Gospel to the nations***
- **To believe in Jesus is to accept his words as truth – including these words:\**

**John 14:6 (NIV) <sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

- ***To believe in Jesus is to believe that His teaching authority comes from God and that all his words are the words of God and are absolute truth***

**John 7:17 (NIV) <sup>17</sup>If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.**

- **Our confidence in the truth and wisdom of Jesus’ teachings increases with our obedience - *The more we obey – the better we understand spiritual truth***

## **(2) His Heavenly Origin**

**John 7:25-29** <sup>25</sup>Some of the people who lived there in Jerusalem said among themselves, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? <sup>26</sup>But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Can it be that our leaders know that he really is the Messiah? <sup>27</sup>But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from.”

<sup>28</sup>While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, **“Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I represent one you don’t know, and he is true. <sup>29</sup>I know him because I have come from him, and he sent me to you.”**

- **Everyone knew that Jesus was raised in Nazareth of Galilee – and that the Messiah would not come from there**
- **The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem – but then many Jews believed that the Messiah would just sort of come out of nowhere to begin his ministry and usher in the Kingdom of God**
- **It is true that Jesus came from Nazareth – the son of Mary and Joseph –**
- **The people didn't know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and that Joseph was not his biological father**
- **But neither Nazareth nor Bethlehem is where Jesus was from**
- **Jesus was from heaven**

**John 3:13** <sup>13</sup> **No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.**

**John 16:28** <sup>28</sup> **I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”**

- *Where is Jesus from?*
- Again and again, Jesus gives the disturbing answer people do not want to hear: ***I have come down from heaven. Unlike every other man born of woman – I am not of the earth / I am not from this world – I came from the Father and entered the world – and then I will leave this world and go back to the Father***
- What do you do with a man who says crazy things like that?  
--There are only two intelligent and reasonable responses:  
(1) *Denounce him as an evil, demon-possessed, insane, deceiving blasphemer*  
(2) *Humbly surrender your life to him as your God, and obediently and submissively and reverently and joyfully follow him as your Lord*

### **(3) His Heavenly Destination**

**John 7:33-36** <sup>33</sup>But Jesus told them, **“I will be here a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me. <sup>34</sup>You will search for me but not find me. And you won't be able to come where I am.”**

<sup>35</sup>The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. “Where is he planning to go?” they asked. “Maybe he is thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands, or maybe even to the Gentiles! <sup>36</sup>What does he mean when he says, ‘You will search for me but not find me,’ and ‘You won't be able to come where I am’?”

- *This was the fall of the last year of Jesus' life on earth*
- *During Passover of the next spring, Jesus would be put to death*
- *But Jesus did not view his impending death as a tragedy – but rather as an Exodus – a departure for his heavenly destination*
- *Jesus was to die as the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world // then he would be resurrected from the dead // and then after 40 days he would return to his Father in heaven – where he now reigns as Lord at the right hand of God's throne*
- *Jesus was soon going to return to heaven*
- *He did not mean merely that he was going to die and then his spirit or soul would go to heaven*
- *Jesus was returning to heaven in resurrection glory*
- *He came from heaven and soon would be returning to heaven in glory*
- *To believe in Jesus is to believe that He is the eternal Son of God who came from heaven to earth in human flesh – who spoke the very words of God in his teachings – who died on the Cross for our sins – who conquered Death and came back to life never to die again – and then ascended into heaven where he now reigns as Lord at the right hand of God*
- *To believe in Jesus as your Savior is to believe in THAT Jesus – the true Jesus – the only One who can save you from your sins and give you eternal life*
- *To believe in Jesus is to believe in His Heavenly Authority // His Heavenly Origin // and His Heavenly Destination*

## II. COME TO JESUS AND DRINK

**John 7:37 - 38 (NIV)** <sup>37</sup>On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”**

- *The context for this teaching of Jesus concerning the life-giving water of the Spirit in John 7 is the 7-day Festival of Tabernacles in Jerusalem*
- *Each day of the festival included a water ceremony in which a procession of priests descended to the south border of the city of Jerusalem to the Gihon Springs which flowed into the Pool of Siloam*

- There a priest filled a golden pitcher with water as a choir chanted Isaiah 12:3: ***“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”***
- The water was then carried back up the hill to the “Water Gate” while the Jewish crowd sang Psalms 113-118
- *When the priest arrived at the Temple, he would climb the altar steps and pour the water on the altar while the crowd continued singing*
- On the seventh and last day of the Festival – this procession took place 7 times
  
- This water ceremony was significant at multiple levels of understanding:
- *It was an acknowledgement of Israel’s dependence upon God to send rain for the crops*
- It was a reminder of the miracle in Numbers 20 when God brought forth water from a rock in the desert for the children of Israel
- *It also pointed to the prophetic visions of Zechariah and Ezekiel about rivers of life-giving water flowing from God’s Temple during the Messianic age of blessing*
  
- *It was on the final day of this Festival when seven water processions were making their way up the steep hill of south Jerusalem – that Jesus stood up and shouted to the festival crowd gathered in the Temple area: **If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink***
- *Those looking for the Messiah and the promised blessing of living water need look no further – **If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink!***
  
- *Jesus came that we might have fullness of life – Life in all its abundance*
- **Just as every living thing needs water in order to live – so also every human soul needs Jesus in order to live spiritually and eternally**
- *If anyone is spiritually thirsty or empty – let him come to Me and drink and be filled with True Life*
  
- How about you?
- *Are you feeling spiritually dry and thirsty and empty?*
- Have you been trying to quench your spiritual thirst and fill your inner emptiness in all the wrong places?
- *Are you discovering that neither sex nor money nor success nor possessions nor adventures nor work nor sports can provide lasting satisfaction and inner fullness?*
- ***If anyone is thirsty, let him come and drink***
  
- It is not enough just to believe that Jesus is the Son of God
- *You must come to Him and drink*

- You must take his living water into yourself by faith
- **You must acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Only Source of spiritual life and abundant and everlasting life**
- *You must turn away from all the broken cisterns – all the other dry wells – that you have been turning to for meeting the deepest needs of your soul*
- **You must come to Jesus and drink of His life-giving water by inviting the living Christ to live in your inner being and make you into the person He created you to be**

### III. LET THE STREAMS OF LIVING WATER FLOW

**John 7:37 - 39 (NIV)** <sup>37</sup>On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”** <sup>39</sup>By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- *Several OT prophets looked forward to the day when God would dwell with His People, and God’s People would have access to rivers of living water flowing from the throne of God*
- The last chapter of the Bible – Revelation 22 – pictures the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb
- *Jesus is claiming here in John 7 to be the Source of that Living Water*
- ***Real Life flows from the Person of Jesus Christ***
- **There is no other Source of Eternal Life in the world – this is why we do evangelism – this is why we do missions – so that people who are spiritually thirsty and empty can come to Jesus and drink of His living water**
- And then Jesus says something absolutely stunning: ***Whoever believes in Me, streams of living water will flow from within him***
- ***When you accept Jesus Christ into your life as your Savior and Lord – then His life-giving water begins to flow from within you***
- **When you come to Christ and drink of His living water – then streams of living water begin to flow from within you!**
- How?
- **By means of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus gives to all who believe in Him**

- At the time Jesus spoke those words, the gift of the Spirit had not been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified – *meaning that Jesus had not yet finished his mission of dying on the Cross and rising from the dead and ascending into glory at the right hand of God*
- 40 days after his resurrection, Christ ascended into glory
- *And 10 days after that – on Pentecost – which we celebrate next Sunday – the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to believers*

**Acts 2:32 - 33 (NIV)** <sup>32</sup>God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. <sup>33</sup>Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

- And from that Pentecost Day on – everyone who comes to Jesus and believes in him receives the Living Water – the Holy Spirit comes to live within our inner being – *the Spirit produces the streams of living water flowing from within us*

### Show Picture of the stream and fisherman

- **This is the source of inner spiritual fullness and vitality and energy and passion and power -- this is God's provision for the ordinary Christian to become a spiritually dynamic Christian**

### Stop showing picture

- Jesus does not mention anything heroic that we need to do – he simply says: *If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink*
- *Whoever believes in Me – streams of living water will flow from within him*
- **Come – drink – believe** – that's what you need to do
- **Streams of living water will flow from within you** – that's the promise of God's Word
- **In fact – streams of living water flowing from within will be your Christian experience unless something is blocking or hindering that flow of living water or unless you are failing to appropriate that spiritual fullness by faith**
- Many Christians have the mistaken idea that salvation means God's provision for the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Christ – *and then it's up to us to try hard to live the Christian life in our own strength*
- But from the Day of Pentecost on – salvation has included both the forgiveness of sins AND the gift of the Holy Spirit

- *The gift of the Holy Spirit is the source of the rivers of living water flowing from within – the gift of the Holy Spirit is the source of inner spiritual fullness and vitality and energy and passion and power*
- *Where do you turn when you are feeling weak or discouraged or inadequate?*
- **You turn within to the Source of the rivers of living water flowing within you -- appropriating His fullness and His life and His power and His energy and His strength by faith**
- Many Christians live their Christian life dominated by a sense of deficiency – a sense of lacking what they need to be victorious and effective and fruitful
- *If only I had more of this or that – If only I had the gifts that so and so has –*
- **That perceived lack or deficiency is based on unbelief and lies – for the truth is: Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him**
- *If you believe in Jesus – then all the spiritual life // all the spiritual power // all the spiritual passion // all the spiritual energy and strength you will ever need is already within you*
- **Let it flow! Let the streams of living water flow!**
- How?
- *By staying connected to Jesus // By walking in the Spirit – relying upon His Presence and Power day by day and moment by moment // by devoting yourself to worship and prayer and Bible reading and the spiritual disciplines*
- *It is not that the spiritual disciplines cause the streams to flow by our effort – rather, the spiritual disciplines keep us connected to Christ and that connection allows the rivers to flow freely and fully*
- *You do not need to manufacture your own spiritual passion or power – if you believe in Jesus – the streams of living water are already flowing within you*
- When we visited Kyle and Erika in Denver – we did a half-day rafting trip down some Level 3 rapids on a mountain river
- *At a couple of points where it was safe – the guide allowed those who wanted to, to jump out of the boat and float down a couple of sets of rapids on our backs*
- Kyle and I jumped right in – it was quite a rush
- *We could feel the full power of the cascading river*
- We did not need to swim or kick our legs or paddle our arms – the river supplied all the power – we just needed to go with the flow

## Show picture of stream and fisherman

- That is the picture Jesus is painting with his words: *Streams of living water will flow from within you*
- Unlike a pond where the water can get pretty stagnant – the water in a river or stream is always dynamic – *as you stand on a riverbank, the water flowing past you today is different from the water that flowed past you yesterday or even a few minutes ago*
- **So it is that the living water of the indwelling Spirit is always new – changing – dynamic – powerful – renewing – revitalizing – energizing**

## Stop showing picture

*This is how we become spiritually dynamic Christians and a spiritually dynamic body – by the dynamic power of the streams of living water flowing within us*

*Spiritual passion is divine life & energy flowing in and through and out of us from the Holy Spirit within as we remain vitally connected to Jesus*

- The Spirit doesn't give us spiritual life just once at our new birth – *rather, the Spirit continually renews the spiritual life within us like streams of living water*
- This is why it is to our advantage that Jesus ascended into heaven and sent His Spirit
- *When Jesus walked the earth in his flesh – He was the Source of Living Water – but that Source was external to the disciples*
- And Jesus could only be at one place at one time
- But now that Jesus has returned to heaven and sent His Spirit to live within us – **that Source of Living Water is now Internal! – within each of us**
- *It's the difference between going to an outdoor community well and having indoor plumbing and running water inside your house*
- *All we need to do is to tap into that Source of Life – **Come – Drink – Believe***
- *The rest of the Christian life is simply the outworking and overflow of that inner spiritual life and passion and energy and power – our obedience // our service // our giving // our loving // our spiritual commitment // our church involvement // our witness in the world – all of that is the overflow of the streams of living water flowing from within us by the Spirit of Christ*

*Spiritual passion is divine life & energy flowing in and through and out of us from the Holy Spirit within as we remain vitally connected to Jesus*

- **That spiritual passion is fueled by prayer – both individual and corporate – *prayer is the channel by which the rivers of living water flow freely through us and out from us to make a significant impact in vulnerable families***
- **Prayer increases the water pressure in a church body**
- *Park View residents will testify that the water pressure in Park View is inadequate to run water in the sink and flush the toilet and take a shower*
- Basically, you can only do one thing at a time with water
- Some churches are like that
- *The streams of living water flowing within that church to empower the life and ministries and activities of the church are restricted by the lack of prayer*
- There is lots of activity in the church – and plenty of people working hard serving in the church – but the spiritual water pressure has been reduced to a trickle by the lack of prayer
- *Resulting in lots of activity – but not very much spiritual fruit*
- ***Prayer increases the level of Holy Spirit activity – the spiritual water pressure – so that all the ministries and activities of the church are energized and empowered and made fruitful by the streams of living water***

**(Conclusion):**

- If you are spiritually thirsty – if you are longing for greater spiritual fullness and vitality and energy and passion and power – *if you want a deeper relationship with Jesus – and if you want our church to become a spiritually dynamic body empowered to continue the works and ministry of Jesus – then I’m going to urge you to pray this prayer to be filled with the Spirit:*

**Prayer to be filled with the Spirit:**

“Dear Father: I need You. I hunger and thirst for a more vital relationship with You. I admit that I have been in control of my life. As a result, I have sinned against You. *Thank You for forgiving my sins through Christ’s death on the Cross for me. I now confess and turn from my sins and surrender the control of my life to the Lord Jesus.* I believe in Jesus and I do now come to Him to drink of His living water – and I claim by the faith the truth that streams of living water flow from within me by the indwelling Holy Spirit. *By faith I invite You to fill me, control me and empower me by the Holy Spirit to live a victorious Christian life and to be Christ’s witness in the world.* I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ.”

**“Knowing You”**