

LIVING WATER

What John's Gospel Says about the Holy Spirit: Living Water Bursting Forth John 7:37-39

Introduction

I want to say something from this text in John 7:37-39 about the living water promised to believers. I am pleased to say something about the Holy Spirit, an overlooked, ignored theme. This living water is within us and flows out of us. Jesus said that thirsty people can come to him and drink. By extension, the living water in believers today is for a world hungering for the truth. He says that streams of living water flow from within. In this, he was referring to the Holy Spirit which would later be given to those who believe in him. He also says that the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified, that is, he had not yet died on the cross.

This force and power, the stream of living water in us, is for the world. This is reason for prayer—prayer for the evangelism and mission of the church into the entire world. The purpose of God, and our purpose, is to carry to the world this living water. We carry it to the world by making sure it is in us. We carry it to the world which is thirsting for the truth.

Three essential concepts in the text of John's Gospel

→Water in John's gospel: water, living water, appears in every chapter in John 1-6.

→Holy Spirit in John's gospel: less emphasis in John's gospel in comparison to others, but interesting. In John's gospel, HS is not a miracle worker, but has other roles and functions. Sometimes read Bible for what it doesn't say. Consider John 5, witness list does not include HS

→Glorified, Jesus had not yet been glorified; this theme is common in John's gospel.

Glory appears 17 times in John, 12 from text to end of book.

Glorified/glorify appears 7 times from text to end of book.

Here is what we will do....

First, understand progression in John's Gospel; stories/paragraphs/logical chapters

- Chapter 6 is a turning point, seen at end of chapter, as in all of the gospels, feeding of 5000 is beginning of rejection
- Chapter 7 at Feast of Tabernacles, ID of Jesus, ID will be clear when the HS comes.
- 8:12, on another occasion
- 9:1, another account
- 10:40, returns to place of his baptism
- 11:1, Lazarus story
- 12:1, anointing of Jesus
- 12:12, Triumphal entry

Second, consider the context of John 7

1-13 The Feast of Tabernacles: to go or not to go, identity of Jesus

14-24 Teaching at the feast, identity of Jesus

25-44 Is Jesus the Christ?

Third, Understand the Feast of Tabernacles

Jesus is at the feast, Feast of Tabernacles, October, there is a long context, focused on the identity of Jesus. Who is Jesus? On the last day of the feast, Jesus speaks, and his words convince some that he is the prophet, others that he is the Christ. Difficult to know the source of the quote Jesus uses (Isa 58:11?).

We must understand the context. On each of the seven days, the High Priest would go to the Pool of Siloam and draw out water in a golden vessel. This water would then be poured out on the altar where the parts of the sacrifice were arranged. As the water was poured out, the people sang unto the Lord and shouted for joy. It was a time of great celebration and worship for the people. This kind of celebrating continued for seven days. The eighth day was called the great day of the feast. On this day, sacrifices were again offered, but there was no singing and no shouting, this was known as a solemn day of repentance before the Lord. Another element was missing on this day as well; there was no water poured out on the eighth day. It was against this backdrop of silence and symbolism that Jesus stood up and proclaimed Himself to be the Fountain of Living Water. When He spoke, thousands would have been present to hear Him, and everyone who heard him would have instantly understood what He meant.

Fourth, consider the fact of the HS within the believer

There is a question: Is the reference to the believer or to Christ?

The rest of the passage suggests a reference to the believer—see v. 39. The believers will receive the Spirit, who is apparently the source of the streams of living water flowing forth.

- Nicodemus, HS for all, all born of water and Spirit
- no partial spirit (without limit does not have to mean limitless power, it more likely refers to no limits on the reception, perhaps not limited to Jews, can go to all)
- For all believers, text
- Luke, Acts 5:32

Fifth, what will the HS do for the world?

What the HS does for the world....

Convict world of sin, identity of Jesus, necessity of believing in Jesus, HS points to Jesus
Convict world of righteousness/justice, Jesus' resurrection and ascension shows his righteousness, the need for righteousness, the inability to be righteous by one's own power; HS points to Jesus
Convict world of judgment, prince of world (Satan) is condemned in light of the Jesus' story; leads away from alignment with Satan; HS points the world to Jesus

Sixth, what will the HS do for believers?

What will the HS do for the believers....

- John 14:17-18; He is with us. Be with them forever, live in them, be in them, represent God's presence. What mean?
 - Presence, ability to know him, understand him
 - Comfort
 - Affirms for us life

- John 14:26-27; He teaches us. Teach all things, remind of Jesus' teachings, guide into all truth (16:13). What mean?
 - 2 Tim. 3:16-17
 - HS will say the same things Jesus said, Jesus is superior—not the HS. Purpose of HS is to point to Jesus, as he does for the world.
 - The word of God is truth (17:17), Jesus lived consistent with that truth and is thus that truth (14:6), so also the HS will point to the same truth.
- John 15:26; this teaching validates, testifies about Jesus. Testify about Jesus, Jesus' ID
 - Another way of saying what we have said. HS points to Jesus, testifies about Jesus
 - Can do that after he comes, is not in list of John 5.
 - The time of the HS had not come, the HS had not yet been given, but when he comes, he will testify about Jesus.
- John 15:27; empowers our own testimony. The HS gives the people the power to testify about Jesus (although 15:27 may be primary reference to apostles, given the qualifications of Acts 1). Application is then by extension, secondary. Reminder of Jesus' promise: the words you need to speak will be given you.
 - We are empowered to testify about Jesus
 - This testimony keeps us faithful; the HS has a part in our faith, so it will not fail.
- John 16:13-15; this teaching secures the promise of our future. The HS will speak of future, things yet to come.
 - What the HS says about the future will be the same as what Jesus said.
 - The HS will bring glory to Jesus by continuing the task and purpose of Jesus, so do we.
 - The HS will bring glory by making Jesus known

Seventh, Principles for living out the reality of the HS in our lives

These grow out of understanding who Jesus is

- God/Jesus deserve all the honor, 7:16-18
 - God/Jesus deserve all the praise/adoration, focus
- God is worthy of knowing, 7:28-29
 - Our lives should call attention to Jesus
- HS gives testimony, empowers our testimony, 15:26-27
- God/Jesus deserve all the glory, 7:39

Summary

→The purpose or REASON for the living water—people are thirsty. The world needs to be pointed to Jesus. One can say that the reason of the living water is SALVATION. The HS works in the world, but his work is to convict of sin, righteousness, judgment. (Acts 24:25: see the reference to righteousness, self-control, and judgment).

→RECOGNIZING the living water—the source of the living water is Jesus; the presence of the HS depends on the story of Jesus. Jesus in this text says the living water refers to the HOLY SPIRIT.

→RECEIVING the living water—thirsty, believing; one cannot receive the living water without believing on Jesus. Reception of the Holy Spirit is dependent upon acceptance of the great truth about Jesus, Acts 2:36-39. Obedience is necessary to the reception of the HS, 5:32.

→RESULT of the living water—living out the reality of who Jesus is, thus is Jesus glorified...HS in us brings glory to Jesus. We can give testimony about who Jesus is, what he has done for us, what he continues to do for us. The result of the living water is that we are faithful; the Holy Spirit testifies to us that we are children. We want to be faithful, we want to glorify Jesus; we want to move his cause forward. The result of the living water is not sinlessness but faithfulness. Even as God protects us and seeks our holiness, we stray and wander; the HS helps that process, the awareness of the presence of the HS within us and with us.

→REWARDS of the Living Water—the HS is promised, then he secures the promise, he is our seal, the guarantee, Ephesians 1:13-14.

Conclusion

- This living water is a part of the life of every Christian; it is the power for sowing the seed, giving testimony about Jesus.
- It can be part of your life if you are thirsty and if you believe.
- This living water, the Holy Spirit, is given to the obedient. You can receive the HS through baptism.
- This living water is not a trickle, but is a river gushing forth.