

## Living Water for those that Thirst

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Pentecost Sunday) is John 7:37-39. This takes place on either the seventh or the eighth day of Feast of Tabernacles (Booths). This feast lasted seven days but had a “closing assembly” on the eighth day. It looks ahead to Pentecost.

On the greatest and last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus proclaims this word designed to stem “the thirst” of those who seek “living water” God’s gift of life and hope.

The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) was the third yearly festival of Jewish people. The people celebrated this festival by building booths or huts from branches of fruit and palm trees. It was a week of celebration for the harvest; living in booths and offering sacrifices. It was to memorialize the journey from Egypt to Canaan; give thanks for the productivity of Canaan.

It was on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles on which the leaves of the willows and the other branches that had been used for the building of the booths were shaken off and the palm branches were waved against the altar, when the priests went around the altar seven times in a procession of thankfulness, and when a priest was commissioned to get a pitcher of water from the pool of Siloam and then pour it out at the side of the altar. The proclamation of Jesus at this point was therefore very important and significant. He not only applied the words Is. 12, 3 to Himself, but indicated that all other prophecies which were connected with this festival had found their fulfillment in Him. The water of the pool of Siloam was considered living water, since it was replenished from time to time by means of a natural siphon from a spring in the rock. But, after all, it was only earthly water, which could quench the thirst for only a short while. But those whose soul thirsts for God must go to the Savior for their soul's refreshment. For in the salvation earned through Christ's Passion and death there is full satisfaction for the desire of all humble souls for mercy and forgiveness. Jesus is the fountain of living water, for in Him there is true, everlasting life.

He applied the same image He had used to lead the Samaritan woman to faith at Jacob’s well (4:14). The Scriptures had predicted this truth (Isaiah 58:11; Zechariah 14:8). Those who come to Jesus and drink are those who believe in Him, as His next words revealed. And everyone who believes not only has received life-giving water, but “streams of living water will flow from within him.”

God’s Holy Spirit leads thirsty souls to Jesus. He works the faith that drinks the refreshment Jesus offers. The Spirit enters the heart of a believer, and the believer calls others to learn of Jesus.

On this day of Pentecost we recall the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who empowered the apostolic disciples. In this event they experience the fullest expression of Jesus’ power and comfort. It is hardly a coincidence that the verb *ekcheō*, “pour out,” is used both for the bestowal of the Spirit on Pentecost and for the bestowal of the Spirit through the “washing of rebirth and renewal” in Holy Baptism

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, bring refreshing showers of blessing each day of my life. Amen. (TLSB)