

Rivers of Living Water

John 7:32-39

Thought for the Day: Jesus came to give the gifts of the Holy Spirit and eternal salvation to all who believe in Him as Lord and Savior.

There was a great deal of confusion and controversy concerning the identity and authority of Jesus Christ. Some were convinced that Jesus was the Christ, the prophesied Messiah of the Old Testament; others were just as convinced that He could not possibly be the Messiah. What they didn't know, or refused to believe, was that Jesus came from heaven, and that God was His Father. So, Jesus explained, "If you really knew me and where I am from, then you would know that I am the Son of God who came from Heaven!"

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.

- In the minds of the Jewish religious leaders, things were getting out of hand—it was time to shut Jesus down!
- The "officers" were Levites who served as temple guards and acted as a kind of police force. They were responsible for maintaining order in the temple grounds.

33 Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me.

- In just a few months, at Passover of the following spring, Jesus would be arrested and crucified. Three days later, He would rise from the dead and later ascend to the Father in heaven who sent Him.
- "Take advantage of the opportunity to come to Me while you still can!"

34 You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come."

- This warning from Jesus stands in stark contrast to the promise He makes to His followers in John 14:1-6.
 - To those who place their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, He promises that "Where I am you may be also." But to those who refuse to believe in Him, He tells them, "Where I am you cannot come."
- "In a coming day, the Pharisees would seek Jesus and would not be able to find Him. There would come in their lives a time when they would need a Savior, but it would be too late. He would have gone back to heaven, and because of their unbelief and wickedness, they would not be able to meet Him there. The words of this verse are especially solemn. They remind us that there is such a thing as the passing of opportunity. Men may have the opportunity to be saved today; if they reject it, they may never have the opportunity again." (*MacDonald, p. 2127*).
- If we have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, today is the day of salvation! (2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2)

35 The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?"

- The Dispersion or Diaspora is a technical term referring to the large number of Jews who

were "dispersed" (or scattered) throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

- The Jews thought Jesus was talking about going on a preaching tour, ministering to the Jewish people scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

36 What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"

- "The Jews here illustrate the blindness of unbelief. There is no heart as dark as the heart that refuses to accept the Lord Jesus. In our own day, we have the expression "there are none so blind as those who will not see." This was exactly the case here. They did not want to accept the Lord Jesus, and therefore they could not." (*MacDonald, pp. 2127-28*).
- "Tragically, these scoffers missed Jesus' point completely. Like Isaiah, who wrote, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6), Jesus was warning His opponents not to delay conversion until it is too late. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (2 Corinthians 6:2); and the writer of Hebrews pleaded, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7; cf. 3:15)." (*MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)

37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."

- Over the centuries of observing the Feast of Booths, the Jews had developed a tradition of carrying water from the Pool of Siloam and pouring it out by the altar of burnt offering on each of the first seven days of the Feast.
- On the eighth day, for whatever reason, this was not done. And, it was at this point in the ceremony, as the people were preparing to return to their homes, that Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."
 - Jesus invited them to come to Him for spiritual satisfaction, which they had not found in the observance of the Jewish ceremonies.
 - Religion is no substitute for relationship; ceremonies cannot replace Christ Himself.
- "His gospel was a universal gospel. There was no one who could not be saved if he would simply come to Christ. But notice the condition. The Scripture says, "If anyone thirsts." "Thirst" here speaks of spiritual need. Unless a person knows he is a sinner, he will never want to be saved. Unless he realizes he is lost, he will never desire to be found. Unless one is conscious of a great spiritual lack in his life, he will never want to go to the Lord to have that need supplied. The Savior invited the thirsting soul to come to Him—not to the church, the preacher, the waters of baptism, or the Lord's Table. Jesus said, "Let him come to Me." No one or nothing else will do. "Let him come to Me and drink." To "drink" here means to appropriate Christ for oneself. It means to trust Him as Lord and Savior. It means to take Him into our lives as we would take a glass of water into our bodies." (*MacDonald, p. 2128*).

38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

- A comparison of verse 37 with verse 38 shows that to come to Jesus and drink is to believe in Him, to place our faith in Him. And when we believe in Him for salvation, verse 39 says that we receive the Holy Spirit, who according to John chapter 3, imparts eternal life to all who believe and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (Cp. Romans 8:9)