



# STOP ENDURING RELIGION

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





# Stop Enduring Religion

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# Stop Enduring Religion

**SERMON REFERENCE:** John 7:37-39

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1882

Most of us have had all the religion we can stand; what we actually need is a personal, vital relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We need to stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.

John 7:37-38 says, “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

There are four simple steps to deeply drinking in the satisfaction of Jesus Christ.

## **First, we must understand the subjects—those who thirst.**

Jesus was not speaking to everybody, rather only to thirsty people. If we’ve been filling ourselves with shallow things like self-love and worldliness, we will not long for the living water of Jesus Christ.

## **Second, we must understand the source of this living water—Jesus Himself.**

We don’t find living water in rituals or religion or rules, rather, we receive it through Jesus. We will never live “right” until we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Adrian Rogers says, “Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness. We don’t work our way to the Way; He is the Way.”

## **Third, we must recognize the secret: “Come to Me and drink.”**

This living water is free, but it costs everything within us. We must let it sink into our hearts so that we claim Him so deeply that we believe in Him and appropriate His promises.

## **Finally, we must remember the supply.**

Ezekiel 47 prophecies what we, as believers, are to look like today: a mysterious river, flowing past the altar, which represents Christ crucified.

This river’s mighty force brings life where there was death and success where there was failure. This living water brings fruitfulness where there was barrenness and health where there was sickness.

When we are filled with the Spirit, our lives will overflow with joy, praise, and service. Not only will there be an income, but there will also be an outflow. We will become springs of revival and rivers of blessing.

## **Life Application**

Have you experienced the living water bubbling up from within? Have you experienced satisfaction in Jesus Christ? Don’t wait until you’re better or stronger; bring Him your failures and heartaches. Come to Jesus.



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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) John 7:37-39
  - i) In verse 38, “out of his belly” is referring to his inner most being.
  - ii) The background for this passage of Scripture:
    - (1) The Jews had many ceremonies and feasts, but one feast that outdid them all when it came to joy, hilarity, and festivity.
      - (a) It has been said that if someone has not seen the Feast of the Tabernacles, then they do not know what rejoicing in hilarity truly is.
    - (2) The Feast of the Tabernacles was a great feast that the Jewish people would perform.
      - (a) At the climax of this feast, the priest would go down to the Pool of Siloam and fill a golden pitcher with water.
      - (b) He would bring the water back, and the people would follow him.
        - (i) They would be leaping, dancing, and praising.
      - (c) The priest would pour the water out at the altar.
        - (i) As he did this, all hilarity would break forth.
    - (3) As Jesus watched this ceremony, He saw the people’s joy, hilarity, dancing, and praising.
    - (4) Jesus who was normally quiet, could contain Himself no more.
      - (a) Matthew 12:19
      - (b) The Bible says that He stood and literally shouted, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.”
        - (i) John 37:7
- b) Jesus saw the ceremony.
  - i) The people were chanting from Scripture.
    - (1) They were chanting, “With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.”
      - (a) Isaiah 12:3
    - (2) Jesus Christ Himself is that well of salvation.
      - (a) Every Old Testament ceremony and feast prophesied about the Lord Jesus.
        - (i) All of it portrayed and pictured the Lord Jesus.
  - ii) Jesus, the very Water of Life, was right in their midst; and they paid Him no attention.
    - (1) They didn’t even understand Him.
    - (2) They were going through their ritual and going on with their religion, but in the midst of it all was Jesus.
- c) Jesus knew that after all of their rejoicing, they would go back to their homes and it would all be a memory.
  - i) They would go back to their old heartaches, tears, fears, faults, and failures.
  - ii) It would only be a religious exercise, only a ritual that gave joy for a moment but would not last.
- d) John 7:37
  - i) Jesus was saying that it is time to stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.
- e) Most people don’t need religion.



- i) We have enough religion.
- ii) We need a personal and a vital relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- iii) We need true salvation with joy.
- f) Matthew 11:28
- g) John 7:37-38
  - i) Jesus was talking about more than salvation.
    - (1) He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, whom we receive when we believe on the Lord Jesus.
      - (a) Then there will be in us a well of water springing up unto eternal life.
- h) Is there in you a satisfaction because you have drunk deeply of Jesus?
  - i) But more than a satisfaction, are you being a blessing?
  - ii) Is your life overflowing with blessing?
- i) Many people are trying to find “the answer”.
  - i) Some think that the answer is intellectual.
    - (1) They think they just need to learn more facts or more theology.
    - (2) They go from church to church with their heads getting fuller and their hearts getting emptier.
      - (a) But they know the answer is not intellectual.
  - ii) Some think that the answer is in activity.
    - (1) They think they just need to do more and work harder.
    - (2) They think a busy Christian is a happy Christian.
  - iii) Some think that the answer is emotional.
    - (1) They think that if they have some great emotional experience, then that would be the answer.
      - (a) For a while, they may have an ecstasy, but tomorrow they only have a memory.
      - (b) It takes more and more to get back into that state of emotionalism.
      - (c) So, they try to get back to that state of emotionalism they were once in.
  - iv) The Pharisee thinks the answer is in the way that he lives, primarily in the things that he does not do.
    - (1) So, the proud Pharisee becomes a bitter, hard Pharisee.
    - (2) He has religion, but he doesn’t have reality.
- j) Many today do not know that they have religion.
- k) In today’s message, we will look at how to stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.
  - i) It’s time we understand what the great heart of Jesus longed for in John 7.

**2) UNDERSTAND THE SUBJECTS**

- a) Jesus was speaking to thirsty people.
  - i) John 7:37
  - ii) Are you thirsty, or are you simply satisfied?
- b) There are not a lot of thirsty people today.
  - i) There are people who come to church on Sunday morning like they have done God a favor, but they don’t come seeking God.
    - (1) They don’t come with a burning thirst.
  - ii) Some might have a shallow thirst.
    - (1) Those who have a shallow thirst will get a shallow satisfaction.
  - iii) Many are not thirsty at all.



- (1) They are filled with the stagnant waters of self-love and worldliness.
- c) We have all of God we want.
  - i) It's not our job to persuade God to fill us.
    - (1) He wants to fill us.
      - (a) Matthew 5:6
  - ii) If you do not have any more, then it is because you do not want any more.
    - (1) It is not because God has neglected you; you have neglected God.
- d) If you are not thirsty:
  - i) You need to analyze your life.
  - ii) You need to pray that God will help you get things in order.
  - iii) You need to pray that God will help you see reality.
  - iv) You need to pray that God will give you the big picture.
  - v) You need to pray that God will grant you a burning thirst.
    - (1) You need to be done with religion and thirst for that which is real.

### 3) UNDERSTAND THE SOURCE

- a) John 7:37
    - i) Jesus was talking of Himself.
  - b) We come to the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - i) We do not come to religion.
    - ii) We do not come to rituals.
    - iii) We do not come to rules.
    - iv) We do not come to resolve.
    - v) We do not even clean up our lives and then ask the Lord to fill us.
      - (1) This is one of the biggest mistakes we make.
      - (2) Sometimes we get the idea that we want more of God.
        - (a) We want the fullness of the Spirit.
        - (b) We want the Living Water.
        - (c) We want that reality.
        - (d) We think if we can just clean up our lives, get right, pray enough, study enough, or work enough, then we will be a candidate for a blessing.
          - (i) That is works' righteousness, and we will never make it.
            - 1. It is like a man in quicksand.
              - a. The more he struggles, the deeper he sinks.
- c) Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness.
  - i) We do not work our way to the Way; He is the Way.
  - ii) We cannot live right until we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
    - (1) If we could do all of those things in order to be filled, then why would we need to be filled anyway?
- d) It is grace; come to Jesus.
  - i) Don't wait until you are better.
  - ii) Don't wait until you are stronger.
  - iii) Bring to Him your weakness, your fears, your failures, and your heartaches; bring it all to Jesus.
    - (1) This is not saying to come clinging to your sin.



- (2) This is not saying to come to Him and, at the same time, intend to cling to Satan and this world.
  - (a) Let go of everything, and come to Jesus.
- e) The source is Jesus Christ Himself.

**4) UNDERSTAND THE SECRET**

- a) John 7:37
  - i) We drink by faith.
- b) John 7:38
  - i) We drink into Christ.
    - (1) We appropriate, or assimilate, Jesus by faith.
- c) The problem today is that many people say they are thirsty and that Christ is the answer, but they never take what He promises.
  - i) Somehow it gets into the head but never gets down in the heart.
    - (1) It is never appropriated.
- d) We must appropriate (drink) that which God has for us, and we do it by faith.
  - i) Drinking is not passive; it is active.
  - ii) There comes a time when we take the Lord Jesus Christ by faith.
    - (1) We claim all that He has for us and believe in Him.
- e) Suppose a person has been in the desert for several days.
  - i) He is perishing for water, and he knows that he needs water.
    - (1) No one has to explain to him what water is.
    - (2) No one has to tell him that he is thirsty.
  - ii) Suppose someone comes to him with a glass of lifesaving, life-sustaining water.
    - (1) What would he pay for that water?
      - (a) Price would not be an object.
        - (i) If he has it, he'll pay it.
        - (ii) All that a man has, he will give for his life.
          - 1. That is the mark of a thirsty man.
          - 2. When someone is truly thirsty, price is not an object.
      - (b) The water of life that Jesus gives is absolutely free, and it costs everything.
        - (i) We have to give everything to Jesus, yet it is absolutely free.
  - iii) Suppose the man in the desert does not drink the water offered to him.
    - (1) He looks at it and studies it, but he will not drink it.
    - (2) Why would he not, by faith and obedience, appropriate that which is offered to him?
      - (a) People come to church on Sunday morning with no intention of doing what the minister asks them to do.
        - (i) They just come, sit, and watch.
- f) There comes a time when we need to drink.
  - i) We need to believe Him and say, "My heart is thirsty for the blessing. I will receive the Lord Jesus. I take Him now. I take Him by faith."
    - (1) We appropriate.
    - (2) We assimilate.
    - (3) We believe.
    - (4) We receive.

**5) UNDERSTAND THE SUPPLY**

- a) John 7:38
  - i) Not only will there be an income, there will also be an outflow.
    - (1) There will spring up in us a river of revival and a river of blessing.
  - ii) Jesus was quoting Scripture here.
    - (1) Jesus was referring to a number of verses found in Ezekiel 47.
  - iii) When someone is saved and filled with the Spirit, their life will overflow with joy, praise, testimony, and service.
- b) The average Christian is not the normal Christian.
  - i) We will find the normal Christian in the Bible.
  - ii) We will find the average Christian on Sunday morning in church.
- c) A normal Christian:
  - i) One who has stopped enduring religion and has started to enjoy salvation.
  - ii) One who is having his own needs met and is meeting the needs of others.
    - (1) He has not become merely a reservoir, but he has become a river.
- d) Ezekiel 47:1
  - i) This is a vision that Ezekiel saw.
  - ii) The house that he is talking about is the temple of God.
    - (1) The Old Testament temple was a picture and a prophecy of the believer today.
      - (a) The Bible says that we are temples of God.
      - (2) In the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people.
      - (3) In the New Testament, God has a people for His temple.
      - (4) The Old Testament temple is a picture of things to come and of spiritual things.
- e) The mysterious source of this river.
  - i) It is coming out of the temple and flows past the altar.
    - (1) The altar speaks of Christ crucified.
  - ii) If we want that river of living water to flow out of us, then it will forever flow past the altar (past the cross).
    - (1) The cross is a gigantic "I" that has been crossed out.
      - (a) No longer I, but Christ.
- f) The marked course of this river.
  - i) Ezekiel 47:2-6
  - ii) The river keeps getting wider and deeper, and it has no tributaries.
    - (1) It just keeps rising.
      - (a) First the water is ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, and then it engulfs and overwhelms.
  - iii) "Hast thou seen this?"
    - (1) Is there a river of revival flowing out of you?
    - (2) We will never get more of the Spirit, but He needs to get more of us.
- g) The mighty force of this river.
  - i) Ezekiel 47:7-8
    - (1) John saw the temple and saw a river come up and flow past the altar.
    - (2) The river flowed down through the desert and to the Dead Sea.
    - (3) There will be life where there was once death when the river begins to flow out of us.





- ii) Ezekiel 47:10
  - (1) There will be as many fish in the Dead Sea as there are in the Mediterranean.
  - (2) There will be life where this is death.
  - (3) There will be success where there was failure.
    - (a) Many want to be fishers of men, but we are fishing in deadened waters.
      - (i) The problem is not with the Dead Sea but with us.
        - 1. We have not poured into it a river of living water.
  - (4) There will be fruitfulness where there was barrenness.
    - (a) Ezekiel 47:12
    - (b) Is your life a fruitful life or a barren life?
      - (i) Galatians 5:22-23 speaks of the fruits of the Spirit.
    - (c) Is there a river flowing out of you that causes fruitfulness where there was once barrenness?
  - (5) There will be health where there was once sickness.
    - (a) Ezekiel 47:12
    - (b) This old, sick, and deadly world needs life.
      - (i) It needs the fruit of the Spirit.
      - (ii) It needs healing.

## 6) CONCLUSION

- a) The Lord Jesus said that if you thirst, then come to Him and drink, and you will be satisfied.
  - i) John 7:37
  - ii) But more than that, there will be in you a river of living water.
    - (1) Where there was death, there will be life.
    - (2) Where there was failure, there will be success.
    - (3) Where there was barrenness, there will be fruit.
    - (4) Where there was sickness, there will be health.
- b) Stop enduring religion, and start enjoying salvation.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16



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Turn with me please to John chapter 7 and I begin reading in verse 37; John chapter 7 and verse 37. I love to hear the rustle of those pages. Sounds like angel wings fluttering when I hear you turning those pages. That's wonderful. You'll get significantly more out of any message if you'll keep the Bible in front of you. "In the last day," this is John chapter 7 verses 37 through 39, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly,'" that is out of his inner most being, "'shall flow rivers of living water.' But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Now, let me give you the background for this passage of Scripture. The Jews had many ceremonies and many feasts, but there was one that outdid them all when it came to joy and hilarity and festivity. As a matter of fact one said, "If you have not seen the feast of tabernacles, you don't even know what rejoicing in hilarity is." This feast was a great feast that the Jews would perform, and in the climax of that feast, the priest would go down to the pool of Siloam. And he would fill a golden pitcher with water from the pool of Siloam, and then he would bring that water back and the people would be following him and they would be leaping and dancing, playing cymbals, and chanting, and praising. And the priest would come with that water from the pool of Siloam, and he would pour it out there at the altar. And as he did, all hilarity would break forth. Now Jesus is watching this. Jesus sees this ceremony. Jesus sees their ecstasy, their joy, their hilarity. They're leaping. They're dancing. They're praising, and on the last day, right in the midst of all of that, Jesus, who was normally quiet. The Bible says of Him in Matthew 12:19, "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall His voice be heard in the streets." And yet at this time, Jesus could contain Himself no more. And the Bible says in John 7:37 that He stood and He literally shouted, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

Now what's all of this about? Well, Jesus saw that ceremony. He saw them chanting from the Psalms. Isaiah 12:3 reads, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," and Jesus Christ Himself was that well of salvation. Every Old Testament ceremony, every Old Testament feast, all of it, prophesied the Lord Jesus. All of it portrayed the Lord Jesus. All of it pictured the Lord Jesus. And there He was, the very water of life, right in their midst; He was right there. They're paying no attention to Him. They didn't even understand Him. There they were, going through their ritual. There they were going on with their religion. There they were having their feast, and in the midst of it all was the very water of life.

Now what Jesus knew was this, if after it was over, after all that hilarity, after all that rejoicing, after all of that singing and dancing, Jesus knew that then they would go back to their homes, and all of that would be a memory. They would go back to their own, back to their old heartaches, back to their own tears, back to their own fears, back to their own faults and failures and foibles, and it would all be gone, only a memory, only a religious exercise, only a ritual that gave joy for a moment but would not last. A pitcher of water poured out on an altar. And Jesus said, "If you're really thirsty, come to Me and drink." What Jesus was saying is, "It is time to stop enduring religion, and start enjoying salvation." Now most people in America don't need religion. We've got enough religion. What we need is a personal, vital relationship with Jesus Christ,



the Son of God, true salvation with joy. “Shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation?” What a wonderful, wonderful lesson there is for us here today. Jesus says, “Come unto Me and drink.”

I have an evangelist friend who was on an airplane one time, and a little stewardess came by and said, “Sir would you like a drink?” Now, she’s talking about alcoholic beverage. I think it’s a crying shame they serve that on an airplane. I think it’s a crying shame that young ladies and gentlemen have to serve it. But she said to him, “Do you want a drink.” His name was Mike, and I like what he said to her. Mike said to her, “No thank you.” He said, “I had drink a number of years ago that satisfied me completely.” She said, “You did, must have been some drink.” “Oh,” he said, “it was.” She said, “What was it?” He said, “Well, you serve all these other people and come back, and I’ll tell you what it was.” So she served everybody else, and came, and sat down beside him, strapped herself in, and said, “Tell me about it.” And he did. That drink is the Lord Jesus, who says in Matthew 11:28, “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest. Come unto Me and drink.” But Jesus is talking here about salvation, yes, but more than salvation. Because the Bible says that He was speaking of the Holy Spirit that when people believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they will receive the Holy Spirit. And then there will be in them a well of water springing up, unto eternal life. There will be in them rivers of revival. And Jesus said in John 7 verse 38, “Out of that person will flow, out of his inner most being will flow a river of living water.”

Is that your experience? Is there in you a river bubbling up? Is there in you a satisfaction because you have drunk deeply of Jesus? But more than a satisfaction are you being a blessing? Is your life overflowing with blessing? It’s an amazement to me how many people today are trying to find the answer. Some people think that the answer is intellectual. They think if they can just learn more facts, if they can just learn more theology, if they can just learn more history, if they can just learn more of this or that. And so they go from class to class, and church to church with their heads getting fuller and their hearts getting emptier. They know that the answer is not intellectual.

Others think that the answer is in activity. If they can just do more, if they can just work harder, if they can just stay busy doing church work, a busy Christian is a happy Christian, so go to work. And people wear their fingers to the bone, and sometimes even ruin their domestic tranquility, by never being at home, doing this thing and doing that thing. Trudging to church every time the doors are open, but still no reality in their lives.

Others think that the answer is emotional. We’ve got this going now. There are people who are going to meetings and literally falling on the floor and laughing hysterically, or even roaring like lions, barking like dogs, writhing on the ground, lying prostrate, thinking, “Man, if I could have some great emotional experience, maybe that’ll be the answer.” And for a while like those people on the last day of the feast, they have an ecstasy, but tomorrow they have a memory, that’s all, trying to get back to that state of emotionalism that they were once in. And like a person on narcotics, this time it takes a little bigger dose to get as high as they were yesterday.

Is the answer intellectual? Is the answer in the activities that we do? Is the answer in emotionalism? And then there’s the answer that the Pharisee has. He thinks that the answer to life is the way that he lives, primarily noted by what he doesn’t do. I don’t do this. I don’t do that, and I don’t this, and I don’t do that. And so the proud Pharisee as he trims his limbs, he strengthens his root, becomes a bitter, hard Pharisee. He has religion, but he doesn’t have reality. He does not know what Jesus Christ is talking about. And there are many in America who do not know they have religion. It’s time they stopped enduring religion and started



enjoying salvation. It is time that they came to understand what the great heart of Jesus longed for. When Jesus, on that last day, stood up and cried and said to them what He's saying to you, "Are you thirsty? Come to Me and drink. And out of your inner most being will flow a river of living water."

Now four simple steps, I want you to see what they are. First of all you've got to understand who **the subjects** are that He's speaking to. To whom is He speaking? He's not speaking to everybody. He's speaking to thirsty people. There's a big "if" here in John chapter 7 and verse 37. Look at it, Jesus stood and cried saying, "If any man thirst." That's all prefaced by this, "Are you thirsty?" "Well," you say, "God knows I'm empty." I didn't ask if you were empty. I asked, "Are you thirsty." My car has been empty many times, never once been thirsty. I mean, I'm talking about the gas tank. Are you thirsty, or are you simply satisfied?

You see, there're not a lot of thirsty people today. There're people who come to church on Sunday morning like they've done God a wild favor, but they don't come seeking God. They don't come with a burning, blistering thirst. Oh, some might have a shallow thirst. Those who have a shallow thirst will get a shallow satisfaction. Many are not thirsty at all, because they're filled with the stagnant waters of self-love and worldliness. But I'm going to tell you this, I don't know how much of God you have, but I'll tell you, you have all you want. It's not your job to persuade God to fill you; He wants to fill you. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. For they shall be filled." If you don't have any more, it's because you don't want any more. It's not because God somehow has neglected you; you've neglected God. And if you're not thirsty, I would suggest that the very first thing you do is to analyze your life, and pray that God would help you to get things in order, that God would help you to see things in reality, that God would give you the big picture, that God would give to you and grant to you a burning, blistering thirst. That you would say, "I'm done with religion, I want reality. I am thirsty today for that which is real." The subject's the thirsty ones.

Something else you need to understand. You need to understand **the source**. Jesus said, "If you thirst, come to Me." He was talking of Himself. You come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now folks, you don't come to religion. You don't come to rituals. You don't come to rules. You don't come to resolve. You don't even clean up your life, and then say, "Lord, here it is. Fill me." It's one of the biggest mistakes we make. Sometimes we get the idea that we want more of God. We want that fullness of the Spirit. We want that Living Water. We want that reality, and we think "Well, you know, if I can just clean up my life, if I can just get right, if I can just somehow discipline myself enough, pray enough, study enough, work enough, leave, live clean enough, then I'll be a candidate for the blessing." All that is, is a work's righteousness, and you'll never, ever make it. You're like a man in quicksand. The more you struggle, the deeper you sink.

If I've ever learned anything, and God help me not to forget it, and to keep on learning it; and come up close, if you don't hear anything else in this message, I want you to listen to this. Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness. Write it on your heart right now. Holiness is not the way to Christ. You don't work your way to the Way, He is the Way; get on it. I mean, don't get the idea that if you could live right, God would fill you with the Holy Spirit. You can't be, you can't live right until you are filled with the Holy Spirit. I mean it, if you could do all of those things in order to be filled, why do you need to be filled anyway? Do you understand what I'm saying? It's like the banker. Do you want to borrow money? Do you know how you can get a banker to loan you money? Just go down there and prove to him you don't need any. Then he'll loan you some. Well friend, God's not that way. I mean it is grace. We come to Jesus, to Jesus.



“Just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me. Oh, Lamb of God, I come to Thee. I come.” “Come ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and worn.” Come to Jesus. Come to Jesus. Don’t wait ‘till you’re better. Don’t wait ‘till you’re stronger. Bring to Him your weakness. Bring to Him your fears. Bring to Him your failures. Bring to Him your heartaches. Bring it all to Jesus. Jesus throws open His arms to you today and says, “Are you thirsty? Come to Me. Come to Me.” Oh if we could only learn that. I’m not saying that you come clinging to your sin. I’m not saying that you come to Him with your fingers crossed behind your back. I’m not saying that you come to Him, and at the same time intend to cling to Satan and this world. Oh no. Let go of everything, but come, come to Jesus.

The subjects? The thirsty ones. The source? Jesus Christ Himself. **The secret?** “Come to Me and drink.” Look in John 7 verse 37, “In that last day,” the great day of the feast, “Jesus stood and cried saying, ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.’” Now what does that mean. How do you drink? You drink by faith. The next verse, verse 38, explains it. “He that believeth on Me, he that believeth on Me.” You drink into Christ. You appropriate, assimilate Jesus by faith. Come and drink.

Now the problem today is this; that many will come this far in this message and be with me 100%, but at this point, they drop out. Now they don’t mean to drop out. They just drop out. They say, “Yes, indeed I am thirsty. Yes, indeed Christ is the answer.” But they never really believe that they dare take what He promises. And so somehow it gets in the margin of the Bible, somehow it gets in the notebook, somehow it gets in the head, but it never gets down in the heart. It is never appropriated. You must drink. You must appropriate that which God has for you, and you do it by faith. Drinking is not passive. It is active. There comes a time when you take the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and say, “Yes, He is mine. I claim all that you have for me, Lord Jesus. I believe in you. I do.”

Suppose you’re on the desert. Let’s suppose you’ve been there for several days. Your body is dehydrated. Your tongue is dry. Your mouth is parched. Your lips are cracked. You’re perishing for water, and you know that you need water. Nobody has to explain to you what water is. Nobody has to tell you that you’re thirsty. You know that. And then somebody comes to you, out there in the dessert, somehow miraculously appears, and there he is with a tall glass of water. We’ll even put a couple of ice cubes in it. Put some little beads running down the side of it. Tall, cool, clear, sparkling, lifesaving, life-sustaining water. There it is. By the way, what would that man pay for that glass of water, a dollar, two, ten, fifty, one hundred, ten thousand? You name it. Price is not an object. If he has it, he’ll pay it, right? All that a man has will he give for his life.

You see, that’s the mark of a thirsty man. You see these people who’ve got these side issues and so forth, they’re not really thirsty. But when a man is truly thirsty, the price is not an object. So thank God this water of life is absolutely free and it costs everything. Now that’s what we would call a paradox. I mean you have to give everything to Jesus, and yet it is absolutely, totally free. There it is, that glass of water.

Now suppose the bearer of that water says to this man, “I brought this for you. I want you to have it. Here it is.” Now suppose you were to get out your notebook, and you say, “Mmm hmm, let me get this down and ta, da, da, da, ta, da, da, da, ta, da, da, da. It’s water. It’s necessary. You brought it for me. There it is. You want me to drink.” And so forth and you begin to make notes and think about it and so forth. And he says, “Yes, but now drink.” “Oh,” you say. “Water, that’s what I need. Boy that sure is cool water, clear, ta, da, da, da, da, da.” “Well drink!” “Well I, you know I don’t think I’m qualified to do that. I don’t think I ought to do that.” And I’m wondering what’s wrong with this person. Why will he not by faith and obedience appropriate that which is offered to him?



People come to church on Sunday morning with no more intention of doing what the minister asks them to do than obeying what they saw portrayed in television on Saturday night. It's sort of something they watch. It's sort of something they just come, and sit, and watch. Folks there comes a time when you need to D-R-I-N-K, drink. There comes a time when you need to believe Him, and say, "My heart is thirsty for the blessing. I will receive the Lord Jesus. I take Him now. I take Him by faith. I appropriate. I assimilate. I believe. I receive. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. I receive You. I drink into You. I do, and I do right now."

Now, we've talked about the subjects, and the source, and the secret. Let's talk about **the supply**. I love this part. Listen, John 7 verse 38, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of His inner most being shall flow rivers of living water." Not only will there be an income, there will be an outflow. There will be springing up in you, a river of revival, a river of blessing. Now here's the problem. Here's the problem. The Bible says, "As the Scripture hath said." Jesus is quoting the Scripture. Did you know that you can get your concordance, and try to find this Scripture in the Old Testament, and you can't find it? That's interesting. Jesus said, "As the Scripture hath said, out of His belly, out of His inner most being shall flow rivers of living water." And yet you don't find that verse in the Bible. Does that mean that Jesus was wrong? Of course not. He's never wrong.

What He's referring to, I believe, is not a verse, but He's referring to a number of verses. And that's the sum total of them found in Ezekiel chapter 47. So just turn to Ezekiel chapter 47. Now if you've got a Bible like mine, that's page 1,101, other than that, you have to find it for yourself. Ezekiel chapter 47. Now I want you to turn to this, because all that Jesus is saying is based on this. "As the Scripture hath said, out of His inner most being shall flow rivers of living water." Jesus is saying that when you are filled with the Spirit, when you're saved and filled with the Spirit, your life is going to be overflowing with joy. It's going to be overflowing with praise. It's going to be overflowing with testimony. It's going to be overflowing with service.

Are you a normal Christian? I didn't ask if you were an average Christian, the average Christian is not a normal Christian; he's subnormal. Boy, we need to make a difference between the average, and the normal. You'll find the normal in the Bible; you'll find the average on Sunday morning in church. Are you a normal Christian? What is a normal Christian? A normal Christian, one who's stopped enduring religion and started to enjoy salvation, is one not only who is having his own needs met, but is able to meet the needs of others. He has not become merely a reservoir; he has become a river. Now, most folks come on Sunday just thinking, "Boy, if I can just get a blessing. I mean if I can just have my needs met. Boy, how wonderful it would be if I could just have my thirst assuaged!" How many of us say, "Oh God I want to be a blessing. I want the outflow of my life to be a river of revival. I want out of my inner most being to flow a river of living water."

Well, let's see if we can learn the secret in Ezekiel chapter 47. Here's a prophecy, I believe, of what we're talking about. This passage is very interesting. Here's a vision that Ezekiel saw, and I believe that Jesus was talking about here. Ezekiel 47 and verse 1, "Afterward he brought me again to the door of the house." Now the house that he's talking about is the temple of God. In every Old Testament temple, or the temple in the Old Testament was a picture and a prophecy of the believer today. The Bible says in First Corinthians 3:16 that "We are temples of God." Now remember this. In the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people. In the New Testament, God has a people for His temple. That Old Testament temple just like that Old Testament feast of tabernacles, it's a picture of things to come, and of spiritual things.

And so, Ezekiel 47:1, "Afterward he brought me again to the door of the house," the temple, "and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood



toward the east, and the waters came down from under the right side of the house at the south side of the altar." Now notice the mysterious source of this river. It's coming out of the temple. There comes a mysterious river, and it flows right past the altar. It always does. The altar speaks of Christ crucified, and if you want that river of living water to flow out of you, it will always, forever flow passed the altar, passed the cross. What is the cross? It is a gigantic "I" crossed out. No longer I, but Christ, and out of my innermost being, out of the house of God, which house I am, out of the temple, will flow a river. That's the **mysterious source** of it.

I want you to notice the **marked course** of it. Look at Ezekiel 47 verses 2 through 5, "Then he brought me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me by the way unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went for the eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. And he measured a thousand cubits, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. And he measured a thousand and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." What a mysterious river. It keeps getting wider, and deeper, and it has no tributaries. It just keeps rising up. This is the course of the river.

In five hundred yard increments, first of all the water is ankle deep; then it's knee deep; then it's waste deep; and then it's water that engulfs and overwhelms, water to swim in. And then the writer of this passage of Scripture says in verse 6, "Son of Man, hast Thou seen this?" Is there a river of revival flowing out of you? At first, ankle deep, then knee deep, then up to the waste, and then a current that picks you up, and sweeps you along. You'll never get more of the Spirit, but He needs to get more of you. I mean some of us are ankle deep. Are you satisfied? I hope you move to knee-deep. Some are knee-deep. Are you satisfied? I hope it'll move up to you loins. And some of you have seen this up to this far, but I pray God today there will be a river flowing out of your life that will engulf and sweep you and all that comes with it along with it.

There's the mysterious source of this river. There is the marked course of this river. There is the **mighty force** of this river, and I wish I had more time for all of these. But I want you to see what happens when this river begins to flow. Look if you will now in Ezekiel 47 verses 7 through 9, "And when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said unto me, 'These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and into the sea which brought forth, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters will be healed.'"

Now those of you who've gone with me to Israel, you're going to be blessed right now, because this is going to make more sense to you than anybody else. But if you were to go the temple mount, and if you were to stand and face the east, you would be looking out to the desert, and you would be on the Mount, Mount Moriah, 2,700 feet above sea level. And then the terrain would begin to drop down, down, down, down, down, down, down to sea level but it would keep on dropping, down, down, down, down, down to the lowest spot on Earth, 1,300 feet below sea level, the Dead Sea, with it's dead, leadened waters.

Now this is what he's talking about. He said, "I saw the temple. I saw a river come up. It flowed passed the altar, and it began to go down through the desert, down through the wilderness, down, down, down, down, down to the Dead Sea." That's what he saw. And I believe that Jesus Christ was talking about this when He said in John 7:38, "As the Scripture said, out of His inner most being will flow rivers of living water." And what He is saying is this, and please listen, "There will be life where there was once death when the river begins to flow out of you."





And then look if you will in verse 10, look at it now in Ezekiel chapter 47 verse 10, “And it shall come to pass that the fisher shall stand upon it from En Gedi even unto En Eglaim and they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.” There’ll be as many fish in the Dead Sea as there are in the Mediterranean! There will be life where there is death! There will be success where there’s failure. How many of us have wanted to be fishers of men. But we’re fishing in deadened, leadened waters. And the problem is not with Dead Sea, the problem is with us, because we’ve not poured into it a river of living water!

Thirdly, there’ll **be fruitfulness where there was barrenness**. Look if you will in Ezekiel 47 verse 12, “And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary.” Is your life a fruitful life or a barren life? Galatians 5 verse 22 speaks of the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Is there a river flowing out of you that causes fruitfulness where there was once barrenness?

And last of all, **there will be health where there was once sickness**. Look in the last part of verse 12, “And the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” Well, I’m telling you this old sick, deadly world, this barren desert needs life! It needs the fruit of the Spirit. It needs healing. Folks, look at your Pastor now. Our world is sick. There is a dead sea out there, and Jesus said, “If you thirst, come to Me, and drink, and you’ll be satisfied. But more than that there’ll be in you a river of living water. “And where there was death, there’ll be life. Where there was failure, there’ll be success. And where there was barrenness there’ll be fruit. And where there’s sickness, there’ll be health. “Son of Man, have you seen this?” Let’s pray.

Oh God, seal the message to our hearts. And I pray today that many thirsty souls will come to Jesus and drink.

Now, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you’re not certain that you’re saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, “I’ve come that you might have life.” Could I lead you in a prayer? We’ll call this prayer the sinner’s prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? “Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen.”





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