

“Living Water” ©

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Associate Pastor Shaun Hardimon

Today is Pentecost and the Birthday of the Church. As you can see from the parments and several people wearing red today we are symbolizing the flames that appeared among the apostles in Acts Chapter 2 verse 3. In addition, to the red there is another symbol for Pentecost we may not hear so much about which is the wind taken from the noise the apostles heard as the Spirit descended upon them in Acts Chapter 2 verse 2.

Pentecost is considered the Birthday of the church and is one of the three most significant holy days for Christian along with Christmas and Easter. For Jewish people it is a time to celebrate or remember how ancient Jewish people celebrated the “Feast of Tabernacles” “Feast Day” or “Feast of the Booths”.

The Feast Tabernacles would last 8 days, which included many different ceremonies and traditions. A couple of these ceremonies or traditions was that people would be living and eating in booths made of sticks and other things they could make as a temporary shelter during the feast. This would remind them of their forefather's wilderness wanderings.

Another tradition each day of the feast is a water ceremony where a procession of priests descended to the south border of the city to the Gihon Spring which flowed into the Pool of Siloam. There a priest filled a golden pitcher as a choir chanted Isaiah Chapter 12 Verse 3 which is “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” The water was then carried back up the hill to the “Water Gate,” followed by crowds carrying tree branches (lulav in the right hand) in memory of the desert booths and ethrog in the left hand) a citrus branches in memory of the harvest. The crowd would shake these branches and sing Psalms 113–118. When the procession arrived at the temple, the priest would climb the altar steps and pour the water onto the altar while the crowd circled him and continued singing. In addition on this day people would be celebrating this year’s harvest and would be praying for rain next year’s crop.

On the last day of the festival we hear from the book of John chapter 7 verse 37 and 38 “That Jesus says” On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the

one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

So after hearing about Jesus offering living water from the book of John where do see yourself today with acting like the living water of Jesus?

Have you accepted this great invitation but have reached a certain time in your life where you have seen everything, you know what to expect when we come to church or what is expected of us once we leave Sunday worship. On top of this maybe you have figured out who God is and think you know what God is going to do in a situation or what God is not going to do. Maybe you need to be rehydrated.

Maybe are you the person who comes to worship with no really expectations to hear anything from God? You do your religious thing each Sunday by sitting in the same old spot in the church. Maybe you often to come to the communion table expecting nothing more than a tiny taste of bread and sip of juice? Or every time you come to the communion table or say the Lords Pray they are nothing more than a routine, nothing more than a memorial to a dead Christ. All I can tell you regardless of how well the sermon is prepared, whether the music is your taste or the people in the church go out of their way to have a great coffee hour nothing is going to happen unless you are open to be rehydrated.

Or maybe you know someone who has become so annoyed with something in the church they have stopped coming instead of trying to make change or talk through the issue. Maybe you are the person who has tried to make change and now you are burnt out or saying in your head why don't these people see what I see or what needs to be changed. Or an old but familiar saying if I didn't do this anymore then who is going to pick up the ball and run with it? To continue to make my point let me share an example of what I am talking about with a conversation between The Rev. Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad of the Evangelical of Lutheran Church in America and a fellow pastor. They were going back and forth telling each other stories about what had been going on in their churches. "'How's your building program going?" "Oh, we ran out of money before we got to the worship space," she said. I thought to myself, "What could be more important than the worship space?" But I

kept my thoughts to myself. "We renovated the basement," she said. "You know, we have a shelter there for homeless men. We put in new showers and renovated the old kitchen. The basement was so drab, and the showers-well, there was only one shower and it was lousy. On the Sunday before the shelter opened, the worship service began as usual in the sanctuary. When it came time for communion, the people carried the bread and the cup downstairs to the basement. The whole congregation gathered around the empty beds. They passed the bread and the cup around the circle. That night the shelter beds were full, and the worship space still needed a lot of work."

Regardless if you or you know someone in these stages of their relationship with Jesus or the church there is a way to get out of feeling this way. Become hydrated again. Serious become hydrated again.

I am sure we are all familiar with being thirsty. For some being thirsty is just needing a simple glass of water to drink before going to bed. For others we need some Gatorade and a cold towel because our mouth is dry, our skin is clammy and we have a headache from losing too much water from mowing the lawn or doing some type of exercise. Regardless of how we become thirsty or dehydrated we all need some cold water to drink.

Just as our physical bodies need a "drink" every now and then, our spiritual bodies need a constant flow of water to survive. Because everyone's spiritual needs are different this living water just like normal water has an amazing characteristic trait of being flexible. The molecular structure of water makes it a "shape-shifter" allowing the spiritual water to transform itself into whatever form is necessary, in order for it to reach its target for rehydration. One moment, water can separate itself and seep through cracks; while the next moment, water can collect itself and thunder over a Niagara Falls. In our scripture text for this morning, Jesus, was talking about the Holy Spirit when He was speaking of "Living Water"! The Holy Spirit or "Living Water" does for our spiritual bodies what plain old ordinary water does for our physical bodies!

The Holy Spirit fills our thirsty souls and fills us with all of the goodness and mercy of God. He overflows our souls with blessings and springs up from within

our soul as a river that will wash us, clean and make us whole again.

You may have walked into this building with a deep thirst for something. For some you don't even know what the thirst is from but know it have been there for a long time. Maybe it is something that you haven't been able to find, or something that will satisfy your search for the true meaning in life and bring joy to your heart.

Regardless why or what is going on in your life there is only one answer for the thirst down in your soul. There is only one person who can fill that void in your heart. The answer for your thirst is only found in Jesus Christ.

See Jesus has seen every mood or situation people are struggling with in their lives He understands this through his travels and interactions with different people who had sickness or a longing for something better in their lives. If this was not enough Jesus has been through several different struggle with his disciples to sharing living water with Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.

Right now believe it or not Jesus could be standing in front of you through the Words of this message, He is shouting to you, as the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

The water of the Holy Ghost is being offered to you right now. Jesus wants you to come to him and let Him pour out the Holy Ghost upon your soul. He will fill that emptiness with His power, His presence, His mercy and His grace. He won't leave you searching for something to fill the void. He will fill your life and your soul with His love. All of these things will fill your emptiness so much that your life will become a "river of living water". Everywhere you go; people will see Jesus in you. Everyone you meet will know that there is something inside of you that they don't have. That River of Living Water will flow from your soul to touch everyone you meet in some way.

Even if you continue to be rebellious Jesus will still love you. Because he loved the whole world he went to the cross and gave his life for you just as you are right now.

Come on take another chance and become rehydrated. Walk out of this building a new person this very morning. Let the river of living water begin to flow again through you. Your life will take on a real meaning again. Jesus will break the chains that bind you and set you free. So what will it be? What will you be doing with Jesus' invitation? Will you turn and go back to your own house, your own way and your own self-made eternal destiny?

Still not sure? Let me remind you one last time your thirst has been quenched and you are able to refresh and encourage the people around you by drinking and believing in Jesus. This is possible because of what our Lord Jesus did on the cross. When he was on the cross our Lord spoke these words, "I thirst". He became parched with our sins. He took our thirst and gave us life. From His cross the waters of forgiveness flowed freely. He invites us to drink from His well. He has made a promise, "Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them nor scorching heat. This is from Revelations chapter 7 verse 16.

So what will it be? Will you begin drinking the Living Water that Jesus or will you turn and go back to your own way and your own self-made eternal destiny?

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