

COME TO JESUS AND DRINK

John 7:25-52

Key Verse: 7:37

“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.’”

In the first part of chapter 7 we learned from Jesus how to make a right judgment. We can make a right judgment when we have the word of God in our hearts as the basis of truth. We can make a right judgment when we have decided to obey the will of God unconditionally. We can make a right judgment when we have a pure desire to glorify God alone.

Today we want to study the remaining part of chapter 7. It is a continuation of Jesus’ great effort to help the people of Israel open their eyes to see him as the Messiah while at the Feast of Tabernacles. In this part Jesus gives a gracious invitation to all thirsty people to come to him and drink. When we accept this invitation we can find true satisfaction for our souls.

First, Jesus knows God because he came from God (25-31)

Verses 25-26 tell us how the people in the crowd responded when Jesus challenged them to make right judgments. They admitted that the Jews were trying to kill Jesus. Previously, they had denied this. But now they admitted it. Their hearts had begun to open and they expressed what they really thought. What was going on in their hearts? They were surprised that the authorities did not stop Jesus from teaching. They began to seriously consider if the authorities had concluded that Jesus is the Christ. Here we see their problem. They were waiting for the authorities to make a decision for them. They did not want to make their own decision and face the consequences of it. They wanted to go with the flow of the establishment under the control of the religious leaders. There are so many people like this. We must know that believing in Jesus requires a personal decision of faith to stand on the side of God. This week in Bulgaria three persons were baptized into the name of Jesus Christ. Among them, Anita has come out of a Muslim background. She made a personal and public profession that she believes in Jesus Christ as her personal Savior and Lord. Her family members are all Muslim. She knows that she may very well be misunderstood and persecuted. But she made a bold and clear confession. This is necessary for anyone to be a real Christian.

Look at verse 27. “But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes no one will know where he is from.” The crowd really did not want to believe in Jesus. Simply speaking, it was because they did not want to obey the word of Jesus. So they said that they could not believe in him because they knew where he was from. They couldn’t imagine that the Christ would come and live among them so humbly like Jesus did. They thought he must come in some kind of mysterious way that was beyond human perception. Indeed, the grace of Christ’s incarnation, the humbleness of his coming into this world, has always been a source of wonder to mankind. Is it really true that the Almighty Creator God became a man and lived for a while among us? The Bible says it is. John 1:14a says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

In helping this crowd, Jesus dealt with the fundamental issue of how we know what we know. Look at verses 28-29. “Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, ‘Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.’” In these verses the word “know” is repeated four times. Jesus acknowledged that the crowd knew something about him; they knew his name and address. We can learn a lot about a person by knowing his name and address. But it does not tell us what is inside a person. Judgments based on superficial knowledge often lead us astray. This is especially true when we are looking at Jesus. Then what is it that we must know about Jesus? It is that Jesus came from God. When we see Jesus we must see God who sent Jesus. We can find a good example in Simeon (Lk 2:28-32). He took the baby Jesus in his arms at the time of his circumcision. Moved by the Holy Spirit, he saw God in Jesus and he saw God’s salvation for the whole world in Jesus. With his human eyes, he saw only a baby. But when he had spiritual insight through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he saw God. While at the Feast, the people in the crowd saw the grown up Jesus and heard his powerful Bible message. But instead of seeing God in Jesus, they despised him based on their human knowledge of him

Here we must admit that superficial knowledge leads us astray. We must not put too much confidence in our superficial knowledge of things. What we know by our sensual perception and human reason is indeed limited. There is the story of four blind men who touched an elephant. Each one touched a different part. One touched the tail and said, "It is like a snake." Another touched the leg and said, "It is like a tree." Another touched the belly and said, "It is like a huge cow." Another touched the tusk and said, "It is like a stick." They all thought they were right. But none of them saw the whole picture.

Human beings have many ideas about God. They say many things out of their human observation and reason and speculation. But Jesus is different. Jesus knows God. Jesus was sent by God. Jesus came to us so that we can know God. When we simply accept Jesus we can know God truly. Shepherd Ruslan of Bulgaria grew up in a difficult human situation. So he turned to Buddhism to find a way out. Though he did all that Buddhism requires, he did not find God. One day he met Missionary John Jung who began to teach him about Jesus through one-to-one Bible study. Jesus brought him to God. Now Ruslan knows God because he knows Jesus. He is sure that he knows God because he knows Jesus.

If the crowd had accepted Jesus' words they could have come to God and they could have known God. But their human pride was hurt when Jesus did not credit their human knowledge. They got angry at him. Look at verse 30. "At this they tried to seize him, but no one could lay a hand on him, because his time had not yet come." Perhaps Jesus was surrounded by strong Bulgarian weight lifters who all looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger. They fully intended to arrest him and teach him a lesson. But when they came near Jesus, suddenly all the strength drained out of their bodies. They felt faint. At the same time, Jesus began to look very strong. Jesus' biceps seemed to have atomic power in them. The strong men suddenly felt convinced that they would all be badly beaten by Jesus in a wrestling match. So they stood frozen around Jesus and no one laid a hand on Jesus. John says it was because his time had not yet come. Here we learn that God absolutely protects his servants who live by his time schedule.

Look at verse 31. "Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, 'When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?'" Some people in the crowd, on a person by person basis, put their faith in Jesus. They were moved by Jesus' words and by Jesus' courageous faith. They remembered the miracles he had done. In this part we learn from Jesus. Jesus came from God. Jesus knows God. When we accept Jesus we can know God. Moreover, when we proclaim this message by faith, there are many who will believe. May God help us to proclaim that Jesus is the way to God on all of our campuses this semester.

Second, Jesus' gospel message to the religious leaders (32-36).

The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering about Jesus. They were deathly afraid that the crowd would accept Jesus as the Messiah. They saw this as a political defeat that would devastate their business. They resisted it as a matter of life and death. They were not interested in truth, but in living a prosperous life in this world. So they sent the temple guards to arrest Jesus. How did he respond? Jesus used this opportunity to preach the gospel to the religious leaders.

Look at verses 33-34. "Jesus said, 'I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.'" Jesus was talking about his upcoming death and resurrection. Very soon he would be hung on the cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He would die and on the third day rise again. Then he would go back to the Father in heaven and sit at his right hand to reign in glory forever. No one can go there except through Jesus. The time for Jesus to leave this world was soon to come. The opportunity for the religious leaders to be with Jesus and to learn from Jesus was soon to pass. Jesus used this precious time to preach the gospel to them. But he did not speak to them literally. Jesus spoke to them in a way that piqued their curiosity. Jesus wanted them to remember his message after his death and resurrection. Here we see that Jesus preached the gospel to the religious leaders with the love of God. Though they wanted to arrest Jesus and put him in prison, Jesus loved them and used all his creativity and wisdom to help them somehow accept the gospel message. Jesus never retaliates. Jesus always preaches the gospel with the love of God.

We see the religious leaders' response in verses 35-36. "The Jews said to one another, 'Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, "You will look for me, but you will not find me," and "Where I am, you cannot come?"'" Though they had decided to do away with Jesus, they were caught by Jesus' words. They could not but try

to figure out what Jesus was talking about. Jesus' gospel message was effective even to his enemies. We must learn from Jesus how to preach the gospel to enemies.

Third, come to Jesus and drink (37-44).

Look at verses 37-38. "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'" The Feast of Tabernacles lasted eight days. They say that on the last and greatest day of the Feast there was a water pouring ceremony. This ceremony commemorated the event when God made water come out of the rock for the people to drink when they were in the desert (Ex 17:1-7). At that time, the people were so thirsty. As we know, human beings need to drink water regularly. Without water we cannot survive long. After several days without water, a person's body begins to crave water as a matter of life and death. This is why the people of Israel were so distressed that they grumbled in the desert. We need water. We are very fortunate in Chicago. We have excellent drinking water. But if we travel to another country in which we cannot drink the water freely we will soon discover how precious water is. God had mercy on the people of Israel and made water come out of a rock. It was an abundant supply of fresh and pure water. They drank as much as they wanted and their thirst was completely quenched.

With this historical background, Jesus stood up and said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." This did not mean that Jesus had a bottle of water for everyone to take home with them to drink on the way. It had a spiritual meaning. The thirst Jesus refers to is spiritual thirst. Spiritual thirst is our longing for God to come and dwell in our souls. God made man for himself. Man is God's dwelling place. Man is happy and satisfied when he has God in his heart. But because of sin, man's relationship with God was cut off. When man lost God, he lost the life source for his soul. Man without God is thirsty. He tries to quench this thirst with the things of the world. Some think that human love can satisfy their souls. Many young people pursue human love as though it will solve all their life problems. But human love is very limited. Others think that human honor will make them happy. They are willing to invest their lives to gain honor. But it fades away too quickly. Some think that money will buy them happiness. But we know that this is not at all true. Still others, like the people at the Feast, turned to religious ritual and ceremony to find some kind of satisfaction. This too is very temporary. Jesus knows that we are thirsty and he knows why. In his grace, he invites anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink. Then how does Jesus satisfy our thirst?

Look at verse 38. "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." Jesus made a promise that streams of living water will flow from within anyone who believes in him. This fulfills what is written in the Scriptures. Isaiah 55:1-3 says, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight with the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David." The covenant of God's love satisfies our souls with the love of God. This satisfaction lasts forever. Yet Jesus does more than merely satisfy our own thirst. He makes the streams of living water flow from within us. This means we become a blessing to others.

Verse 39 says, "By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Until that time the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified." Through his death and resurrection, Jesus solves our sin problem. God accepted Jesus' sacrifice and will justify anyone who believes in him to be right with God. Then God is pleased to send his Spirit to dwell permanently in our souls. The Spirit gives life. The Spirit produces fruit in our inner person that pleases God and makes us a blessing to others. Galatians 5:22-23 describes this fruit. It says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

At the time of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples received the Holy Spirit. They were changed on the inside. Fear and uncertainty were driven out of their hearts and the love of God came in. Divine wisdom came in. They could preach the gospel freely to anyone in their native language. They became a blessing to the whole world and the gospel spread to all peoples of all nations through them. When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts the life of God and love of God transform us into children of God who can be a blessing to others.

One shepherd was trying hard to prepare his Sunday message. In the middle of the preparation, a young man came to him and wanted to talk about his personal problem. The shepherd felt a heavy burden to finish his message. But he denied himself and gave his attention to the young man with affection and deep concern. Then the Spirit of God that was in the shepherd went to the young man and gave him wisdom to solve his personal problem and the love of God came into his heart. Anyone can be blessed by God and be a blessing to others by the work of the Holy Spirit. When we come to Jesus he gives us the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' message was good news to all people. But the response to his message was divided. Some thought he was the Prophet or the Christ. But others despised him because he came from Galilee and their limited human knowledge restricted their hearts from accepting the truth of Jesus' words. The temple guards who had been sent to arrest Jesus were totally captured by Jesus' words and went back to their bosses praising Jesus' powerful message delivery. The religious leaders became all the more angry. They revealed their hatred and murderous spirit. They despised not only Jesus, but all the ordinary people who had simply accepted Jesus' message by calling them cursed people. Dr. Nicodemus tried to speak rationally to them. But they would not listen. They were determined to reject Jesus.

In this passage we hear Jesus' invitation to come to him and drink. When we simply accept Jesus' death and resurrection and put our faith in him, he gives us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit satisfies our souls and makes us a blessing to others. Please, come to Jesus and drink.