

That You May Believe & Drink the Water

John 7

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, July 22, 2018

Well, good morning everyone. You can go ahead and turn in your Bibles with me to the Gospel of John. And as you're doing that, I just want to let you know we had a great time at Lake Day last weekend with Mission Bible Church. As matter of fact, we had such a good time that some of the people from Mission Bible Church came over here today. So, some of our brothers and sisters from Mission are here.

But in case you weren't able to be there, last Sunday afternoon, several of us went to Harrison Hot Springs for a time of worship and fellowship with Mission Bible Church. We got to enjoy some music and some baptisms as well. I found out afterwards they don't have a baptistry at the facility there, the church facility. And so, what Mission does is they do the baptisms at Lake Day every year.

Afterwards, I was driving home and I thought about the fact that the first adult baptisms in the Reformation were done at a lake in Geneva, Switzerland in January. And they actually had to break ice to do it. One Swiss believer turned to the other and said, "Hey, I think I need to be baptized." And they said, "Okay, well, let's go do it." And they took a hammer and broke the ice. So, I want to tell Brian Giesbrecht, if you really want to be serious about this, you need to go back in the wintertime. But it was a real privilege to be there, and I think those who were there enjoyed it.

Then our young people went to Squamish for Youth Camp with Church on 99. We did that last year with them, but Tuesday through Thursday, for three days, we got to go hiking and camping and played games at the camp grounds there. Our young people have a passion for water balloon fights. I don't know if you knew that or not. But we're talking about the living water this morning. I don't think that has anything to do with this passage.

But they got to listen to preaching as well. The theme of our camp was the Lordship of Christ. And David Corrente preached on Mark 2, where it says Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath and Lord of all creation. And I talked about Luke 9:23, where it says, "If anyone would come after Me, He must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." And we talked to the students about what that means. And we had a great time with them as well.

If you would like to hear some more of that, those sermons should be online probably this week, I think. And so, you can go on our website and listen to what the young people heard. I'll tell you, I know from listening to David, we didn't dumb it down for them. They heard the full counsel of God and had a great time.

All these events this week reminded me of the bond that we share with these churches in Christ. The unity that we have in the Spirit. We haven't known Church on 99 or Mission Bible Church that long - at least I haven't known them that long. It's been a short while, but we have a common Saviour, amen? And we have a common Lord. And that brings us together.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne pastored St. Peter's Church in Dundee, Scotland for seven years until his death in 1843. He actually died at the age of 29, because he worked himself to death. If you know the story of Robert Murray M'Cheyne, he never made it out of his 30s because he died of exhaustion and doing the work of the ministry. But he said he did it out of love for Christ. That's what drove him. He did it out of his affection for his Saviour.

In a letter to a friend, he said, "I'm tempted to think that I'm an established Christian now. That I've overcome this or that sin, this or that lust, and now there's no reason to fear it." He said, "That's a lie of Satan." He said, "One might as well speak of gunpowder resisting fire so as not to catch a spark." He said, "I need Jesus Christ." He said, "As long as He dwells in my heart, He deadens me to sin and He carries me through temptation. But if Jesus would leave me, I would become like gunpowder and one spark of temptation would blow up my life." We would all say amen to that.

We need Jesus, we sang about that this morning. You guys sang great because you feel that, don't you? When you sing those words. You can't make it through life without Christ.

M'Cheyne had another quote that I think is wonderful. He said, "For everyone one look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ." When temptation comes, when sin comes crouching at your door, when your last flare up and the gunpowder gets lit, you don't look to yourself for help. You look to Jesus Christ. That's what binds us together with these churches. That's what binds us together here at Grace Fellowship.

You know, in 2013, Time Magazine published a list of the 100 most significant people in history. And you know the one who stood at the top of the list was? It was Jesus Christ. Right above William Shakespeare and Muhammad and Napoleon stood Jesus. Because Time Magazine said, He had more of an impact on the world than any other person in history. And I would say that if a secular magazine would say that about Jesus, how much more could we say it in the church? Jesus is everything to us. We would be nothing without Him.

One author said, "If you had a thousand crowns, you should put all of them on the head of Jesus. And if you had a thousand tongues to sing, every one of them should sing every day for His praises, for He's worthy."

That brings us to the Gospel of John because this is what John says. John says, "Jesus Christ is worthy of our praise." He says, "We couldn't make it through life without Him." If you're joining us for the first time this morning, we're in the middle of a series called the "That You May Believe" series. Because John says he wrote this book so that you may believe.

I'll just read this to you, but John 20:30-31 says, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name." John says, "There's more I could have written in this book," he says, "There's more I could have said, but these things have been written so that you would believe and trust in Christ and be saved."

I actually had a young person come up to me last Sunday after the service and tell me how many times I use the word "Jesus" in my sermon. He was 11 years old, and he counted up every time

he heard the word “Jesus”. He made a little mark on his paper. And he told me it was 65 times. I said the name “Jesus” 65 times. And I said, “That's great, because I think that's what John would have done.” And that's how John writes this book. He says the name “Jesus” 65 times, 100 times, 1,000 times to show that He's worthy.

He's done it several different ways as we've seen. So, for instance, if you've been with us these past couple of weeks, we're covering a chapter a week. And John does this by telling us how Jesus interacts with strangers - that's kind of how the book starts. You remember it begins with Jesus talking to several strangers like Nicodemus, the Pharisee in John Chapter 3. Or the woman at the well in John 4. He talks to the nobleman in chapter 5 or the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in chapter 5. He had never met them before. They were total strangers.

Jesus was a traveling evangelist. He went to different towns, preaching the Gospel. And as He did, He ran into people He had never met before, and John tells us about several of those conversations in chapters 3 through 5. Then you come to chapter 6 and that changes because now Jesus talks to His disciples.

That's the next thing that happens in the Gospel of John. Now He talks to people He had met before; to people that were familiar with Him. And the interesting thing about this, if you were here with us last week, is that He sets them off, doesn't He? He makes them mad. You would think when He talked to strangers, He would make them mad, right? In chapter 6, Jesus makes His friends mad. The tone changes in John chapter 6. As a matter of fact, it's going to stay changed until you see Him on the cross.

But if you remember the story from last week in this chapter, in John chapter 6, Jesus feeds 5,000 people with the lunch of a little boy. That was the setting for the event. In fact, the number was more like 15 or 20,000 because John 6:10 says that 5,000 men were there, and verse 4 says they were heading to the Passover feast. Which means they would have brought their families with them because the Passover was a family event; you brought your wife and kids with you.

So, if there were 5,000 men, there would be something like 15 or 20,000 people at this event. This was an enormous crowd. It was a staggering amount of people. I asked David Currente this week, “How big is Squamish?” And he said, “20,000 people.” So, this is the population of Squamish Jesus is feeding here in John chapter 6.

He does it (verse 8 tells us) with five loaves of bread and two fish. The word for bread there refers to the barley bread that you would feed to cattle. You know, you go to Subway, “Would you like a white or wheat bread?” That's not what this is talking about here. This was course bread - not very tasty. The word for fish in Greek is *osparion* which means “little fish” or “fish sauce”. It was the kind of thing you put on your bread for an appetizer or for taste.

So, Jesus feeds 20,000 people here with some course grainy bread and some fish sauce. It's an incredible miracle. And the day afterwards, a handful of people come to Jesus asking for more bread. It was an unusual thing to be full back then. Most people never experienced that because there wasn't enough food. So, these people had a taste and they wanted more. And so, they come to Him the next day asking for more bread, asking for a handout. You know, “Do it again Jesus.” And He says in John 6:53 ... and I'm building up to ... our chapter is chapter 7 this week, but

this is important for the background.

He says in John 6:53, He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.” In other words, “Unless you come to Me like you're coming to bread, unless you come to Me with the same intensity and interest that you come to food and drink, you can't be saved. You can't go to heaven.”

Just to sum up what happens in this chapter, they leave. That's the climax of John chapter 6. Jesus offends these people so badly that they walk away and they never come back. The strangers didn't do that, the disciples did. The newcomers didn't leave Him, but His own followers did. The 12 stayed behind, that's what you see at the end of the chapter. But by the time you get to the end of John 6, that's all He has left as far as we know, is the 12.

Jesus goes from 20,000 followers in one day to 12. I mean how's that for church growth strategy? Right? I asked the folks at Harrison Lake, I said, “How many of you would hire a pastor who had this on his resume?” And you would think as you're reading through the Gospel of John, you would think that that would end His ministry right there, right? I mean you would think it would probably finish after John chapter 6, you can't come back from that. I mean this would end anybody's ministry. It would make anybody call it quits.

But the next chapter tells us otherwise. John chapter 7 picks up the story this way. If you read in verses 1 through 2, this is the next thing John says after that very sorrowful story. John 7 says, “After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.

Verse 1 starts off with the phrase “after these things” which is a familiar one to us in the Gospel of John. Because you see that in John chapter 6 and in chapter 19 and chapter 21. It just refers to an indefinite period of time or an uncertain amount. Now, John is not giving us a comprehensive account of Jesus' life, He's just telling us some highlights and this highlight occurred after these things.

Then verse 2 tells us, “Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.” Now I'll say a little more about the Feast of Booths in a moment, but that feast was held in the fall of every year - just to give you some kind of idea of what time this is. It was a harvest feast held in the fall. It was also called the Feast of Tabernacles. Some of you remember the Feast of Tabernacles. But it happened around our month of October. Which is helpful because the Passover in John 6 happened in the month of April. It was a springtime event, around our Easter time.

Which means that half a year has passed between John chapter 6 and John chapter 7. Six months have gone by in the life of Christ. And during this time, verse 1 says, “Jesus was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.” Judea was down south where the Jerusalem was. It was the headquarters of the chief priests and the rabbis and the pharisees; Jesus' enemies. So, He avoided that place and He stayed up north in Galilee because these guys were trying to kill Him.

Now, John doesn't say why they were trying to kill Him, but you can bet that a man who could command 20,000 people was a very scary man in Israel. I mean with the force of 20,000 people, with a town of Squamish, you could arm that mob and take over Jerusalem. You could stage

your own revolt, people did that in the First Century.

As a matter of fact, scholars tell us in the First Century, there were no less than ten false Messiahs that popped up in Israel. I mean every couple of years, there's another revolt popping up; a new Messiah. And these guys were scared to death of Jesus. They were also probably jealous because someone who could command a crowd like that, they couldn't do it.

If you look in verses 3 through 5, it goes on to tell us a little more about the background of this event or at least the beginning of it. Verse 3 says, "Therefore His brothers said to Him ..." Jim mentioned these are His blood/step brothers; Joseph and Mary's sons.

3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

John 2:12 mentions Jesus' brothers, but we haven't heard about them since then. They've kind of fallen off the scene. Matthew tells us that their names were James, Joseph, Simon and Jude. And you would think of all people that would support Jesus, His brothers would be the first. You would think of all people who would appreciate what He's trying to do, but they would be at the top of the list. But verse 5 says His own brothers did not believe in Him.

Some of you have been rejected by your families for following Christ. Just be encouraged, Jesus experienced that here. They didn't think He was the Messiah. It's an interesting story because Acts 1:14 says they will believe in Him later. As a matter of fact, two of Jesus' step brothers will go on to write books of the Bible; James and Jude.

So, this is going to change. But right here, they don't believe. In fact, they mock Him if you look in verse 4. They say, "Leave here and go into Judea, go down where the priests are, so Your disciples also may see Your works which You're doing." In other words, "Why are You hanging out in Galilee?" Galilee was the land of the fishermen. It was way up north where the farmers were. "Why are you hanging out here?" They say, "If You're so special, if You do these things (implying they don't think He does them), show Yourself." It's kind of a mocking question or a mocking statement. "Leave the fisherman alone, go to the priests."

You know, it's interesting after you read John 6, they could be saying this because of what just happened. "Jesus, we hear You lost 20,000 disciples, what's wrong with You?" You guys would have that conversation with your brothers, right? "We hear You only have 12 left, what did You do? Why don't You go to the feast and clear all that up? Show Yourself to the world." And in verses 6 through 8, Jesus says, "My time is not yet come" or "My time to make the kind of entrance you're talking about."

But He does go in secret and He interacts with the Jewish leaders. And He explains (if you want to just follow along just real quickly) in verses 10 through 24, He explains why He healed the lame man back in John 5. I mean that's been about a year ago and they're still stewing over it in Jerusalem. And He explains why He did that in verses 10 through 24. And then He defends His claim to be the Messiah in verses 25 through 36. That's kind of the flow of the chapter. He says, "Even though I lost that huge mob of people, I'm still the Messiah." And then He says something

very interesting that I want us to focus on this morning. If you look in verse 37, this is our verse that we're going to talk about today.

But if you look in John 7:37... We sang some songs about this this morning. But it says, "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From His innermost being will flow rivers of living water."'"

That's a very interesting thing to say at a feast. Because earlier in John 6, Jesus called Himself the bread of life, remember that? And everybody left. He said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves," and everyone walked away. Now, six months later, He says the same thing even stronger. Now He says, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." In other words, a way to sum up this verse, "I am the water of life. Not only am I the bread of life," Jesus says, "I'm the water of life. Not only am I food for you, but I'm drink." Verse 38 calls it living water. We'll talk about that in a moment. That's a stronger statement than in chapter 6, because you need water more than you need food.

I looked this up, scientists have determined that the average person can live up to 40 to 60 days without food. Depending on the size of your body and your diet beforehand and your health, you can live about a month without eating anything. Jesus Himself spent 40 days and 40 nights without food. Gandhi went several weeks without it in India. You can go a long time without food, but you can only last a few days without water. Doctors in this room, am I getting it right? Does that sound about right? One reason is that your body is made up of 65% water. More than half of your body is H₂O. And if you don't replenish that, you'll die. Your nose and mouth and throat will dry up. You'll begin to have trouble sweating and going to the bathroom. Your skin will get a doughy, soft texture to it. And eventually, you'll die without water.

With this in mind, Jesus says to this crowd at the feast, the crowd in a desert country, He says, "I am the water of life." He says, "You'll die without me. You won't last one week. Not only am I the Messiah and the Son of God, not only do I have the right to heal a man on the Sabbath, not only is my ministry not over, I'm life. I can quench your thirst and keep you alive." And let me just say, this would have been shocking to hear in the temple.

I told you guys a couple of weeks ago when we were in Israel, you know, the one thing they won't let you do on the temple grounds is have a Bible study or pray, because that could start a riot. It was that way back then. I mean you could say that kind of thing on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and you might get away with it. You could say it to some fishermen and some peasants, but you don't say it in the temple to a bunch of priests on a feast day. That's asking for a lot, a lot of trouble.

It was John Piper who said that Jesus is the most controversial person in the Bible. And he's right. I mean Jesus goes from one controversy to another here in John 6 and 7.

J. B. Philip said, "Of all the names that could be applied to Jesus, the word 'mild' seems to be the least appropriate." Jesus might be called meek in the sense of being selfless and humble, but you could never ever, ever call Him mild. I mean Jesus loses almost 20,000 followers in one night, and now here He is six months later, going at it again.

This is what I want to talk to you about this morning. And if you're taking notes, in John 7:37-39, I want you to see three declarations Jesus makes about this living water. We're going to focus in on this living water this morning, because this is kind of the crux of the passage or the highlight of it. Three declarations Jesus makes about this living water. I mean the Lord's going to preach on a subject that everyone is familiar with; the water. Everybody has to drink water. That's one of the reasons He talks about it. And He's going to do it in a controversial place which makes it even more interesting; in the temple. And He's going to give us three declarations about it.

The first one is this, Jesus declares what a person must have to get this living water. Jesus declares what a person must have to get this living water. If you read in verse 37, it says, "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast."

I mentioned the Feast of Booths earlier but let me say a few more words about it. This is the first time you read about the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles in the Gospel of John. The Jews had three Pilgrim feasts, where Jewish males all over the world had to come to the city to celebrate to Jerusalem. They had the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Booths, this one here.

Passover kind of started the feasts every year and the Feast of Booths ended it. And I think it was the most interesting feast just by the appearance of it. It lasted about a week and during this week, the Jews lived in tabernacles or tents made out of branches to remember the time that their ancestors lived that way in the wilderness. Now, if you can imagine a city of (I don't really have the number in front of me, how big it was) several hundred thousand people, all full of tents, that's what this was. We saw a campground full of tents this week. This is a city full of it.

One scholar said it looked like a big picnic, you know, several million people living outside. Some of you would think that would be heaven, the rest of us I don't know. But they stayed in the fields, they stayed on the rooftops and they camped out in the streets. The way it worked was, the richer you were, the closer you camped to the temple. And the poorer you were, the farther away you were, was sort of the mentality.

It was an extremely popular feast. One rabbi said, "The man who has not seen this feast, does not know what a feast is." Josephus said it was the greatest feast of the Jews. It was the one time of the year when the rich and poor lived alike. I mean they lived one closer and one farther away from the temple, but they all leaved in the same kind of dwelling. And verse 37 says (this is helpful) that this event occurred on the last and greatest day of the feast, when everyone would be packing up and ready to go home.

They'd be tearing down their tents, they'd be saying goodbye to their friends. The feast would be drawing to a climax. And as it's doing that, Jesus wants to give these people something to remember Him by. Something to go home and think about. And verse 37 says, here's what He does, it says, "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, 'If anyone is thirsty.'"

That's also interesting - the whole chapter's interesting - I told you last week, the whole Gospel's interesting to me. In the first century, Jewish rabbis usually taught sitting down, and their students stood out of respect. Kind of the opposite of what we do today; I stand, you guys sit.

2,000 years ago, the teacher sat and the audiences stood. Synagogues even had a seat in them called the Moses Seat, where the teacher would sit up there and teach the people. Katie actually took a picture of me sitting in one in Capernaum in Israel. They must have been really tall people back then, because that thing was huge. But it was made out of stone, it was a stone chair up in the front of the synagogue. It's where the teacher would sit.

But if you notice in verse 37, it says that Jesus stood. It's an important detail to mention. Instead of taking the usual posture of a rabbi sitting and teaching, the Lord stands up so everyone can see Him. And it says that He "cried out". The word for "cried out" is *krazó* which means that He shouted so loud that His voice broke. The word *krazó*, it kind of has the idea of croaking like a raven.

As the feast is ending, Jesus abandons all the proper protocol for a rabbi, all the proper protocol for a teacher, and He stands up in the temple, and He yells at the top of His voice, "If anyone is thirsty." Why does He say that? In John 6, Jesus says, "I'm the bread of life." Right? Because everybody came asking Him for bread - that make sense. John 4, remember He talked about living waters there, because they were sitting by a well? Why does He say this here?

At the Feast of Tabernacles, the priest, the Jewish priest had several rituals they would do. And one of them was to go down early in the morning to the Pool of Siloam, about half a mile southeast of the temple and draw water with several golden pitchers. And carry it back up to the temple to pour out as a drink offering to the Lord. And as the priests entered the temple gates carrying this water, other priests inside the temple would blast their trumpets and quote from Isaiah 12:3, which says, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."

And as that is going on, or right afterwards we can assume, Jesus stands up and He shouts, "If anyone is thirsty." In other words, Jesus says, "The water from the Pool of Siloam won't be brought back to the temple again until next year, but if your soul is thirsty now, if you want to drink from the wells of salvation that Isaiah talks about now, if you want eternal life now," He says, "Drink from Me." He shouts at the top of His voice what a person must have to get this living water, he must be thirsty. You have to be thirsty. You have to want salvation in order to get it. You have to want forgiveness in order to receive it.

I told the youth this this week a man can't be saved or a woman can't be saved until they first realize they're lost. It's just the way it works. You can't get the water until you're thirsty for it.

In his book on the cross, Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes that, "If you think you deserve heaven, take it from me, you are not a Christian. But for the man who knows he deserves hell, there is hope." I want to read that to you again because that is so important for this passage. He says, "If you think that you deserve Heaven, take it from me, you are not a Christian. But for any man who knows he deserves hell, there is hope."

If you think you deserve God's grace, you're not going to get it. If you think you deserve mercy, it won't work either. Mercy and grace are for the undeserving. They're for those who have not earned it. Salvation is only for those who realize they deserve damnation.

Several years ago, it's been quite a while now, I spoke at a Bible conference at a prison in South Dakota. And it was quite an experience for me. One thing driving through South Dakota (if

you've ever driven through there, you'll know what that's like) you have to time out your gas stations because there's nothing there. But I also had never actually been in a prison before, it was the first time. Not even to visit.

And I'll never forget when we first started this conference, the men came in and there was a guard in the room. And the men came in, they all wore the same thing, wore white t-shirts, and their sweat pants all said "inmate" on the side. It was about 60 guys in the room. And then the guard left. He just left. They gave us a little box called the squawk box, which if something bad happens, you pull a chord and it squawks. And in my mind, I was wondering, "Well, what's going to happen between the time that..." And it was interesting.

But I also remember that conference because the inmates listened. I mean they really listened. We did nine sessions with them in a day and a half. So, that's about 11 hours of teaching from Saturday afternoon to Sunday morning, and they listened. And they came up to us and asked questions. They were engaged in it. If they didn't like it, they told us that. And if they liked it, they told us that. But they were very transparent. They weren't saying, "When will this be over so I can go home?" Because they didn't have a home to go to. The prison was their home. Or they weren't saying you know, "When will this be over so I can go eat lunch?" They told us the food was bad. It wasn't what they were looking forward to. They were keyed in because they were thirsty.

I mean I was talking about the Gospel with them and maybe I misspoke, but I said, "Guys, come on, you know, you've done wrong, right? That's why you're here." They said, "Yeah." And they wanted mercy, they wanted a drink from the water. I don't know about all of them, but a lot of them did.

That's what Jesus is describing here. "If anyone is thirsty, if anyone wants this water, if anyone needs it, come to Me and I'll give it to you." And I don't know where everyone's at this morning on this issue of grace and mercy and salvation, but I'm guessing some of you may not believe this. You may not think you've done anything wrong, anything this wrong. And if that's the case, I want to tell you that you are farther away from God than those prisoners were. The man who is close to God is the man who is thirsty. As a matter fact, the closer you get to God, the thirstier you become, and He provides.

That leads to a second thing Jesus talks about in regards to this living water. The first declaration is this: He declares what a person must have to get this living water. You must be thirsty. You must have thirst. The second thing He does is this: He declares what a person must do to get this living water. All right, if you have thirst, if you're thirsty, then what? How do you get it? What actions or what steps do you have to take? And that's what Jesus talks about next. He tells us what a person must do to get this living water, and He tells us three things. So, three steps to take to get this living water, and these are very simple.

The first step is to come. You have to come to the living water. God will come to you, God will draw you, but you have to come yourself too. If you read in verse 37, it says, "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me.'"

After describing what a person must have, which is thirst, He describes what a person must do; he must come. I mean it probably goes without saying this, but you can't drink water from a distance, can you? I have some water up here, you have to drink it close up. That's what Jesus is saying here. You have to draw near to Him. You have to embrace Him. You have to accept His teaching.

I've told our people this before, but that was kind of a physical thing in the first century because they didn't have the internet, they didn't have books, they didn't have radio. So, if you wanted to follow Jesus, you had to literally walk behind Jesus to hear Him. There was no other way. But even in a spiritual way, it's a similar idea. You have to accept the pleasant things He said and you have to accept the unpleasant things He said to be saved. You have to embrace the lovely Jesus, sweet little baby in a manger and you have to embrace the Jesus that made everybody mad in John chapter 6. You have to accept it all.

Which leads to a second thing you have to do to get this living water, and that is to drink. You must drink to have this living water. You can't just hold it in your hands, you can't just play with it, you can't just look at it, you have to drink it. He says, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." To drink something is to ingest it, right? It's to make it a part of you. Just like you can't drink something from a distance, you can't drink something without making it a part of you, without making it personal. And so many people approach Christianity impersonally. It doesn't ever change them, that's not what this is talking about. Drinking is a very personal intimate thing. You can't half heartedly drink something, right? You either drink it or you don't.

It's the same way with Christ, you're either all in or you're all out, there's no in between. We could say this way; any doctor would tell you, you are what you eat, you are what you drink. I mean nothing affects you like your diet.

I've recently, in the last couple of years, developed a condition called acid reflux. Some of you here have experienced that as well and you're praying for the end to come along with me. But my body's not breaking down food like it should, so I hiccup and do...it's gross. So, I'm won't go into the details. But the thing the doctors told me, one of the things that causes it is what I drink, right? Just imagine anything you want to drink, you're not supposed to drink that. That's the idea. I used to love drinking Dr. Pepper. I don't know if you guys enjoy Dr. Pepper? I had two or three of those things a day, and I had to stop because it was hurting my body.

Spiritually speaking, it's the same way. Drink of Christ and you will be saved. Drink of anything else and you won't. There's a computer expression called GIGO; garbage in garbage out. Same way in your spiritual life. Put the Scriptures in, the Scriptures will come out. Put sin, the world, the flesh in, the flesh will come out.

Which leads to another thing you must do to get this living water. You must come, drink - third thing is this, you must believe. You must believe. Come and drink are synonymous with believe. It's all kind of saying the same thing from different angles. But if you read on in the passage, it says, "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried out, saying, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. For he who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water."'" And we'll talk about that in a second.

That's the third thing in the list; you must believe. You must acknowledge Jesus to be the Son of God, the Messiah, all the things He said He was. Another thing, probably goes without saying, you can't drink something you don't trust or believe in. Some of you have been in other countries and they put something in front of you like a poutine. Is that the Canadian thing? Am I saying that right? Yeah, they put that in front of you and you say, "I don't know if I trust that" or not, you know. You can't swallow something you don't trust, right? You got to have trust, you've got to believe it.

The story is told of a daredevil who gathered a crowd around Niagara Falls in New York and he stretched a rope across the falls. And he pulled up with a wheelbarrow and he said, "How many of you think I can push this wheelbarrow across that rope?" And the crowd just went nuts; cheering, you know, high-fiving, that kind of stuff. Then he said, "How many of you would like to get in the wheelbarrow?" Nothing. See, they didn't believe it. They weren't all in.

Jesus says, "If you want to be saved, you have to believe it, you have to be all in. You have to get in the wheelbarrow." And I think the point Jesus is making here, or one point behind all of this, is that salvation is an active thing. It is an active thing. While you don't earn it, while it's earned by someone else, while it's all of Christ, you do have to act on it. If you're saved, you will live it out. You'll come and drink and believe. You'll get in the wheelbarrow and be all in. You won't try to drink from a distance.

Matthew 7, Jesus says, "You'll know the tree by its fruit. Grapes are not gathered from bushes nor figs from thistles. So, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit." In other words, Jesus says you can tell someone is a Christian by what comes out of their life. You are what you drink. You are what you put into your soul. Living water goes in, living water goes out. Clean water goes in, clean water goes out. I told our young people this week, you know, "If it has webbed feet and feathers and quacks and hangs out by a pond, it's a duck." Well, how do you know that? Well, because it looks like a duck, smells like a duck, hangs out with ducks. It's kind of the same idea.

And I hope this encourages you, because if you're wondering, "Am I saved? Am I truly following Jesus?" well, then ask yourself, are you coming to Him? Are you drinking of Him? Do you believe in Him? Do you love to read what He said? Do you love to hear His words? Do you love to pray to Him? Do you love coming to church? Not because you're perfect and have it all together, but because you're not perfect and you don't have it all together and you love fellowship with those who just draw you closer to the Saviour?

I talk to a lot of people who say, "Man, I can't come to your church. I can't come to church because I'm not perfect." And I say, "You don't have the conversations I have every week." We're not perfect, we're imperfect. That's why we're here, we need each other. And the older you get, the more you're drawn to Jesus. And the older you get, the more you come to Jesus. And the more water you want to drink, there's no threshold here.

If you're experiencing all that this morning and doing it out of sincere motives, be encouraged because Jesus says it's one way to know you're saved. You're drinking of the living water. If not, you should be concerned. You know, James 2:17 says, "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead." Dead works means a dead faith, no works means no faith, is the idea. Martin Luther said,

“A smoke rises from a fire, so works or sparks fly off a Christian.” We don't make the fire, God makes the fire and we just smoke and we burn.

It leads to a third declaration Jesus makes about this living water. This is the last one He'll make for us. But first He declares what a person must have to get it. You have to have thirst, you must be thirsty. Second, He declares what a person must do to get the living water. You must come and drink and believe. Salvation is an active thing, you have to get in the wheelbarrow. It leads to a third declaration Jesus makes about the living water. And that is this: He declares what a person will receive if he gets this living water.

As the feast is drawing to a close and it's coming to an end, Jesus stands up and He says with a loud voice what a person will receive if he gets this water. And if you read in verse 38, this is what He says. He says, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

That phrase “as the Scripture has said” is not a reference to one Scripture but several. Several Old Testament passages talk about the living water that would flow inside a believer. So, for instance, Isaiah 55:1 alludes to this. It says, “Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat.” Psalm 42 says, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you O God.”

A lot of verses talk about this in the Old Testament. And Jesus says here, “I am the fulfillment of those.” In other words, you can say it this way, reading verse 38, you don't just come to the water but the water comes to you. Talk about a gracious God, right? You don't just drink it, but it wells up inside of you.

We could say it this way, God is not a stingy God and He doesn't give you a puddle, He gives you a stream. He doesn't give you a drip or a drop of this, He gives you a whole ocean full of it, so that you never run out. Living water (we've talked about that in John chapter 4), but it's a reference to “running water” or “moving water,” water that's in motion. Like in a river or a stream. But it's also a reference to the Holy Spirit.

If you go on in the passage, verse 39 says, “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” If you notice, there's a progression of thought here. You come to Jesus for water and Jesus gives you the Spirit who makes the water flow within you.

A few months after Jesus says this, He'll be crucified and resurrected and He'll ascend into heaven. And right before He did that, He told the disciples in John 16 that “it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I did not go away, the Helper would not come to you.” That's what He's referring to here. When Jesus leaves, He sends a helper, the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us. Verse 38 says, if you notice, He's in our innermost being or in our soul. That's where He gives us the water, that's where it flows from.

And the word “flow” here gives the idea of abundance and continuance. I mean He gives you the word, if you notice, the word “rivers of living water” the word “rivers” is plural. It's not one river, it's many rivers. Rivers upon rivers upon rivers of living water. And they keep flowing and keep flowing and keep flowing is the idea. So, that when you wake up in the morning, the river is

there, and when you go to bed at night, the river is there. When you get up and go to work during the day, the river will be there. When you come home afterwards and the house is a wreck and a bomb went off in the living room, the river is there. His mercies are new every morning, right? So is the river.

I mean if you think of all the streams you could drink from today, of all the rivers in life you could turn to, they're all going to leave you dry, right? It may last a little while. Pick a nice sin (well, there's no nice sin), pick a sin, yeah, it'd be fun for a little while, right? And then it will dry up. Jesus says, "This will never run dry. This will quench your thirst, this will satisfy. You don't have to keep chasing after it and chasing after it, it'll always be there for you."

Which leads me to ask the question, will you drink from this water this morning? Will you believe in Jesus Christ? I just told you, you can't drink from a distance. You can't drink from 40 feet away. But let me add this, someone can't drink for you. You have to drink for yourself. And someone can't believe for you, you have to believe for yourself too.

Some of you are here I'm guessing because you think your parents will drink for you. You think they're going to believe on your behalf. Let me tell you, it doesn't work that way. It's great if your parents believe, but that doesn't mean that you believe. Some of you might be hoping your husband or wife will believe for you or your brother or sister or your friends. You know, you think, "I have really godly friends and they'll be godly on my behalf. I have Christian relatives, they'll be Christian on my behalf." It doesn't work that way.

This is a personal fountain, this is a private stream. You come one at a time. You're saved one at a time, and you come on your own behalf. Jesus says, "If anyone is thirsty," which is the hope of the passage because that word "anyone" means "anyone". But He also says, "Let him come," meaning it's personal, it's a singular word. So, will you do that today? Will you come to Jesus Christ?

Just to get your mind around this, I want you to notice how the chapter closes. In verse 40, John finishes by telling you how the people responded to Jesus. My take on Jesus from reading the first couple of chapters of John, is that He was probably an awkward person to be around at times. A lot of long pauses and silence. Because He said things like this in the temple.

But if you look in verse 40, it tells you how the people responded to this. "So, some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, 'This certainly is the Prophet.' Others were saying, 'This is the Christ.' Still others were saying, 'Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?'" His brothers said that, right? Remember his brothers said that earlier, essentially. "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him."

If you notice, just from reading this, the crowd just didn't know what to do with Jesus. Some said He was the Christ, so it seems like they believed. Some wanted to seize Him. You can read more about those guys in verses 45 through 52, because the chief priest and pharisees goes on to say they wanted to kill Him. And they might have done it here if Nicodemus...remember Nicodemus from John chapter 3? Nicodemus steps up and seems like in his own way, he talks them down a

little bit from the edge.

But verse 43 probably sums it up when it says, “So a division occurred in the crowd.” And I dare say that we might be divided in this room today. I pray that we're not, but we might be. Some of you may not want to seize Jesus Christ and kill Him, but you don't know what to do with Him. And if that is the case, I want to encourage you to read back over our passage this morning and study the life of our Saviour. Read back over the conversations Jesus has with these strangers and with His disciples and come to Him and drink and believe.

Several years ago, Ronald Reagan, the former US president made a very interesting statement in His biography. I don't know Reagan's background as far as his faith. But this was an interesting statement. It's kind of long but let me read this to you. He said,

Perhaps it is true that Jesus never used the word “Messiah” with regard to Himself, but is there really any ambiguity in His words, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me”? These and other statements He made about Himself foreclose in my opinion, any question as to His divinity. It doesn't seem to me that He gave us any choice. Either He was what He said He was or He was the world's greatest liar. And it is impossible for me to believe a liar or a charlatan could have had the effect on mankind that He has had for 2,000 years. We could ask, would even the greatest of liars carry His life through to the cross? That would be madness.

I still can't help wondering how we can explain away what to me is the greatest miracle of all, that a young Man grows up a carpenter and starts preaching on street corners and in the nearby countryside, walking from place to place, preaching all the while, even though He's not an ordained minister. He never gets farther than an area, perhaps 100 miles wide at the most, and He does this for only three years. Then He's arrested, tried, and convicted. There's no court of appeal, so He's executed at the age of 33 along with two common thieves.

Those in charge of His execution rolled dice to see who gets His clothing; the only possessions that He has. His family cannot afford a burial place for Him, so He's buried in a borrowed tomb. And the story goes on. Because this uneducated, propertyless young man has for 2,000 years had a greater effect on the world than all the rulers, kings, emperors, scholars, scientists and philosophers of all time. How do we explain that unless He was who He said He was? Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God.

Friends, Jesus is the most significant Person in history. And He is worthy of our praise. For every one look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ. Come to Him and drink for He is the water of life. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for Your Son. And we thank You as we just read of the impact He's made on our civilization, on our world. But Lord, I want to pray and thank You for the impact He's made on the hearts in this room. And we're not gathered here today because we live in the same town, we're not gathered here today because we have the same hobbies, and we're not gathered here today because we have the same politics or ethics or whatever word you want to use. We're gathered here today because we have the same Saviour; the Lord Jesus Christ. And Father, we

pray that He would be glorified in the work of our church. We pray that He would be glorified in the work of other churches in our community, in our country that proclaim His name every week, and proclaim His works.

Father, may Christ do a work here in Chilliwack. May He continue to do a work in our hearts. And Father, I pray if there's any here today who have not come to the living water, that they would come and drink and believe this morning, even now. We pray this all in Jesus' name, amen.