

The Promise Of The Holy Spirit

John 7:37-39

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 7:37

...Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many quarter folded sheets of paper as the number of children in your class, and crayons, markers, or colored paper and glue sticks.

Two bowls and two sponges.

A large box lined with a garbage bag, an aluminum pie tin with a face drawn on the bottom in indelible ink, two pieces of paper with stick figures drawn on them, a towel, and a spray bottle with “stream” setting or a squirt gun.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

“You Are Invited...”

Before class, prepare as many invitations as the number of children in your class. Take a white piece of paper and fold it in fourths. On the inside of your card write the words, “...to come to Me!” On the outside write, “_____ is invited...”.

Seal each invitation with a sticker and pass them out to the children in your class. Instruct your children not to open their invitations until you instruct them to (they will do this later in the class). Have children write their names in the blank space. Allow them to decorate their invitations with crayons or colored paper and glue.

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever been thirsty? I mean really thirsty? (Allow children to tell you their "thirst" experience; think of your own "thirst" story to tell.) When you are truly thirsty you don't want anything but a big, wet drink. Chocolate cake, your favorite candy, \$10, none of these things will take the place of a drink of refreshing water. You would even turn down a bag of gold and take the drink of water if you were really thirsty.

The Lord often gives us a picture with words to help us understand the spiritual things He is teaching us. Today we're going to read about drinking water; something every living thing on the planet can understand, because we all need water to drink. Without water to drink we would die. Water is vitally important to our bodies. That's why Jesus uses water here in John 7. The spiritual water He talks about is important to our spiritual life, because **Jesus satisfies our thirsty spirits.**

Let's look at what Jesus said about water.

JOHN 7:37

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."

Every year there was a feast in Jerusalem to help the Jews remember all that God had done for them in the wilderness when He rescued them from Egypt. The feast was a time when they all gathered to remember God's miracles in the wilderness.

Everyday at this feast the priest carried water in golden pitchers and poured it out on the temple altar to remind the people of the time when God had given them water out of a rock in the wilderness to quench their physical thirst.

Now, it was the last day of the feast and the priests came with their water to pour it out in remembrance of that great miracle. All of a sudden Jesus did something no one else could do. He stood up right in the middle of the solemn ceremony and cried out a great invitation to the crowd watching. It's an invitation to us, too.

What did He say? "If anyone." Who is the invitation to? Was it only to people with green eyes or only those of us over 10 years old? No, it is to anyone who is thirsty. Anyone could accept the invitation. All you had to know was that you were thirsty. The interesting thing about this "thirst" is that it is a picture of our inner need for something.

Jesus didn't mean the thirst we talked about earlier when we need a glass of water to drink. He was talking about a longing, a "thirst" inside of us that longs to be satisfied, the way our thirsty body is satisfied with a long drink of water. People can try to quench that inner thirst in their hearts all their lives with lots of things other than God and find that the thirst is never gone. They are always thirsty in their spirit. They try making money, buying a lot of things, being powerful people, or doing what they feel like doing all the time to take that inside thirst away, but it is still there. It is never satisfied. They hope to satisfy that inner thirst, but nothing works.

They may think, "If I had more friends to love me, I wouldn't be thirsty in my heart anymore." But all the friends in the world won't drive the thirst away for good. "Perhaps if I could buy all the things I ever wanted, that longing inside me would go." But no amount of things can satisfy the thirst inside. "Maybe if I was the leader of something, the top-person, the one everyone looked up to, the one with the most power, perhaps that would satisfy my thirst." But no, all the power in the world can't satisfy that thirst in a spirit. If none of these things can satisfy us, what will?

Jesus had the answer that day on the temple steps, and He has the answer for all of us today. All of us have a spiritual thirst; even if it gets covered up at times by things, it is still there inside us. Pascal said, "There is a God-created vacuum in the heart of every man, which cannot be satisfied by any created thing, but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ." In other words, there is a God-shaped hole in our hearts that nothing can fill except Jesus. Jesus knows that, so He offered His great invitation. His invitation is personal and private. He says, "let him (one person) come to Me (Jesus)." His invitation only has room for two people, a thirsty person and Jesus. This is why we all must choose for ourselves if we will accept Jesus or not. No one else can make the decision for us.

Jesus claimed, and still claims today, to be able to quench all human thirst. This invitation is purely personal. Jesus gives it to us. We just accept His glorious invitation. We say to Him, "yes Jesus, I know I have a thirst in my heart nothing else can take care of. I come to You." **Jesus satisfies our thirsty spirits.**

Jesus knew that He was going to the cross to die so that our sins could be washed away and we could be made close to God again. He saves us from our sinful selves and from hell. He adds to that salvation the wonderful gift of satisfied thirst. We receive His gift of salvation when we say, "Yes. I am a sinner and I need You Jesus." We believe in Him and in the work of the cross. We simply believe. "Yes, Jesus. I believe that when You died on that cross, you died for me. I take your gift. I accept Your personal invitation to come to you."

You Are Invited...

Have your children break the seals on their invitations. Maybe on the count of three, you can have the whole class read out loud what their invitation says, or you can call on several of the students to read their invitations out loud.

Now what happens?

JOHN 7:38-39

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When we believe in Jesus, something remarkable, something life changing happens. Our sins are blotted out. We become His children, and we get to go to Heaven one day. But something happens to our lives here on earth too, something noticeable, something others can see! He gives us that thirst-quenching drink when He saves us, when we receive His personal invitation. Then He makes us channels or fountains of living water so that others can be blessed!

By believing, we not only drink the living water, we become fountains of living water to bless whoever we come in contact with. That's what He has in mind. It's the overflowing life. He fills and satisfies our own thirst, and then He fills us to overflowing so that whoever comes in contact with us actually comes in contact with Him through the living water that flows out of our hearts!

How does this happen? Verse 39 tells us. When we believe in Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we receive the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was resurrected and returned to the Father, He said that the Holy Spirit would come and indwell, live inside, everyone who believed in Him. Do you realize what this is saying? It's an incredible, amazing reality! The Holy Spirit comes and lives inside little, weak, sinful you and me! He inhabits us. He dwells in us! He makes His home in us! **Jesus satisfies our thirsty spirits.**

He is the Living Water that is to flow out of our lives! It's His great desire that our lives will be like great, refreshing rivers, splashing His refreshment everywhere we go, soaking all those we come in contact with. He wants our lives to spread, not just a drop or a trickle, but torrents of living water. "Torrents" means an abundance of overflowing water. The Holy Spirit pours out of our lives, splashing and soaking everything around us. This is to be the normal life of the believer, the overflowing of God so others are refreshed by Him.

You're All Wet!

Prepare before class two bowls with a sponge in each. Fill one bowl with water about three quarters full. Leave the other bowl dry.

Have a volunteer come up and pick up the sponge from the dry bowl. Ask him to describe for the class what the sponge feels like. Ask him if he feels any water on the sponge.

Have him next pick up the sponge from the wet bowl. Make sure he's careful not to make a mess. Ask him to describe for the class what the sponge feels like. Ask him if he feels any water on the sponge this time. Ask him which sponge he would rather have if he were thirsty.

Explain to your class that Jesus wants to continually fill our "bowls" with the Holy Spirit so that we can be filled with Him just like the wet sponge. When this happens in our lives, everyone that comes in contact with us becomes "wet."

There are two questions today that come from our lesson. Listen and see how you would answer them. Don't say your answer out loud. Just answer in your heart to the Lord. Remember the invitation is a very personal one. It's Jesus and you.

1) Have you believed in Jesus to have your personal, inner thirst satisfied?

2) Is your life a torrent of living water? Is the Holy Spirit flowing out so that others are brought into contact with Jesus through you?

Jesus wants both those things for us. If you want to receive Him and believe in Him today please talk to me before you leave today. I would love to help you. (Feel free to make this an open invitation and have as many in your class receive the Lord publicly, if you feel so led.)

If you already have Jesus in your heart, but you know the Holy Spirit isn't flowing out of you like a river. Other lives aren't really being "splashed" by Him through your life. You can simply pray and with the same simple faith that you asked Him into your heart, you could ask Him today to fill you up to the brim with His Spirit. Tell Him you want to be Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled.

He will do that! That is His great desire for you. He longs to bring you into deeper relationship with Him and make your life a river of living water. (Also, feel free to lead those in your class that would like to pray for the filling of or the baptism of the Holy Spirit.)

Spirit Filled Sammy

Line a box with a plastic garbage bag. Turn it on its side. Inside the box, at the back of the box (really the box bottom), attach "Sammy", a face drawn on the bottom of an aluminum pie plate, with a pushpin. Draw several stick figures on two sheets of paper and place them on either side of Sammy. Put a towel underneath the box to absorb any run-off water.

Have several children in your class take turns spraying Sammy with a "stream" set spray bottle or a squirt gun. As each child

sprays Sammy, explain that as he gets wet, the water splashes on the people all around him.

Supervise this activity closely as the water activity can easily get out of hand.

Options for Younger Children

Make “telephones” with two small paper cups and string. Poke a small hole in the bottom of each cup and tread the string through, knotting it large enough that it won’t come out. Have the children “call” each other and invite them to come to Jesus and be filled with living water. (Sound will travel through the string as long as it is taut and not touching any other objects.)

Cut out two “men” from a sponge. Put each in a pie tin or cake pan. Explain that one, Thirsty Theo, wanted to be a good Christian boy, but didn’t really know how. He tried to act like other Christians, but he was still dry and thirsty (drop a drop of water on Theo with an eye dropper). He tried to learn at church, but he was still dry and thirsty (drop a drop of water on Theo). He tried to do good deeds, but he was still dry and thirsty (drop a drop of water on Theo). Finally he read John 7:37-38 and he asked Jesus to fill him (pour water from a cup all over Theo). He was so filled that he got all of his friends wet, too (squeeze him over the other sponge man).

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer thanking the Lord that **Jesus satisfies our thirsty spirits**. Be sure to give opportunity to those children who have not yet responded to the gospel, to do so.