

Pastor Tom Mortenson

Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

August 4, 2013

If Anyone Thirsts

John 7:37-38

Prayer: *Father God, we do praise you and we thank you for the glory of this day, we thank you for the glory of the gift that you've given us in your Son, we thank you for an opportunity to come and in remembrance of what he has done for us, we pray this morning especially, Lord, that we are in a communion Sunday, that you would give us the extra measure of grace we need to bring honor and glory to you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, as you know, this is the first day of -- first Sunday of the month, and that is the day that we remember Jesus Christ and his cross. Jesus on the night before he died, he gathered for the very last time with his disciples for a Passover meal, and as he celebrated that Passover meal with them, Matthew 26:26 describes it. It says this, it says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured*

out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So Jesus took the bread and he took the wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and of his blood, and then he asked his disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. He then asked them to repeat the remembrance of his sacrifice on a regular basis, and this is what we refer to as "the Lord's table." It's something that we celebrate once a month by meditating on what it is the Lord Jesus Christ did on his cross, by examining ourselves, allowing God's Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, and by confessing our sins and participating in the elements. John 6:53 says this, it says: *So Jesus said to them, "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 you."*

Now, we have been following the life of Jesus and we've worked our way up so far to the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John. Just to recapitulate where we've been, at this point Jesus has told his brothers that he is not going up to the feast, to the festival, and he's told them that because he knows if the word gets out, there's going to be people there waiting to arrest him. And so after his brothers leave, he decides to covertly go up to the feast and he arrives there and as he arrives there, eventually he begins

teaching in the temple. And as usual, he draws a crowd. And again as usual, he is astounding the people that he's speaking to with his authority. His presence divides this crowd into haters, believers, and to those who are almost persuaded. And he gets into a heated debate with the religious leaders about who he is, and the debate ends with these words in John 7:33, it says: *Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come."* The Jews said to one another, *"Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"* I pointed out before, this is not a legitimate question that they are raising. This is a sneering, mocking reference to Jesus' failure to move the crowds any more. What they were saying in effect is now that you've utterly failed amongst the Jews, perhaps you've decided to go to the pagans in the Dispersion, maybe you'll have better luck with them. Jesus knew exactly who he was speaking to.

Our text this morning picks up with Jesus at the very end of the same feast, and this is again, the feast of Tabernacles. This is the feast that was designed to remember the time the Jews spent in the desert. John 7:37 says this, it says: *On the last day of the*

feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

Jesus lived in a desert culture that truly understood thirst. And you know, most of the significance of what he has to say about thirst is lost on us because water, water is abundant here and thirst is never a serious problem for us. Anybody who's ever said, "I am dying of thirst," we know that that's an exaggeration. For them it was a very real part of life and living. On the feast's last day, they had a ritual that was designed to commemorate God's role in providing this life giving water to the Jews in the desert. And so what would happen is the crowd led by the priest would march around the altar seven times after which the priest would go to the pool of Siloam with his pitcher -- if you remember the pool of Siloam healed the man who had been crippled for 38 years -- well, the priest takes the pitcher and then he goes to the pool of Siloam, and then he ceremonially dips it and pours it out on the ground commemorating God saving the Jews from dying of thirst. One of the incidents that he's commemorating is in Numbers 20:11 which is described this way. I'm sure you're all familiar with it. It says: *And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the*

congregation drank, and their livestock. Now, it's likely that Jesus took this dramatic moment, this is the very end of the feast, this is what happened at the end and it's likely that Jesus saw this moment when the priest was pouring out the water to cry out again in John 7:37 to say at this exact point, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

You see, when Jesus, when he said that, he was connecting a dot that God had laid out centuries before. He was speaking to the Jews and he was connecting their thirst, his thirst, and our thirst and he was connecting them all together. See, their thirst was the reason for the feast in the first place. The feast of Tabernacles was there to celebrate the booths or temporary dwelling places or tabernacles that the Jews erected along their journey in the desert. This is a journey in which thirst played an incredibly important role. And the question that the Jews had to face over and over again is where would they go to find the answer to their thirst. You see, between the ten plagues and the mighty miracles that God did from the parting of the Red Sea to the cloud by day and the fire by night and the manna, God had given them ample evidence to trust in his provision to remove them from the bondage of Egypt. The choice was between relying on God or going back to

Egypt. And again, this was a symbolic, not a literal decision. I guess if they could have gone back to Egypt, they could have, but time and time again, what did the Jesus do? They decided we want to go back to Egypt. Numbers 20:2-5 describes the conditions. It says: *There was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink."* This is what Moses heard constantly, and he had grown weary with these people and their constant complaining, their bitterness, and their rebellion, and his frustration began to get the best of him as he approached this rock. And as he approached this rock, he did something truly awful. Numbers 20:9-11 describes what happened. It says: *And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: Shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in*

me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them." Now, Moses had disobeyed God. God's command to Moses had nothing whatsoever to do with striking the rock. In fact, God had told Moses in Numbers 20:8 this, he said: *"Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle."*

Now, there's a reason why God so severely treated Moses' disobedience. The reason he was treated so severely is because the rock that he struck was no ordinary rock. The rock that Moses struck was Jesus Christ. Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 this, he said: *For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers -- that's the Jews -- were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.* See, this was the dot that Jesus was connecting when he cried out at the festival.

You know, thousands of years after that rock was struck at the

height of the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus is still offering the Jews the solution to their thirst. Most of them want no part of it. You see, there's a stunning irony in this ceremony that's taking place, 'cause it's taking place years and years and years after the actual events. And so centuries of right and ritual all pointing to God, all pointing to God as the one who is going to take care of the thirst, that right and that ritual has produced a people no different than the rebels that God saw in the desert. See, as the feast of Tabernacles is winding down to its most dramatic moment, as the waters are being poured out, the very one that the feast is pointing to stands up in the temple and cries out: *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* You know, the vast majority of Jesus' hearers had no idea what he was talking about. The Jews' thirst in the desert was a physical thirst, and Paul tells us that Jesus was their life-giving answer to that thirst, that he was the very rock that this water gushed out of, and that to trust in his provision was to have their lives rescued. And now here at this festival commemorating the deed he is offering to quench a far more important thirst. In fact, it's a thirst that brought you here in the first place.

Have you ever considered what a blessing thirst is? You see,

anyone who's ever come to Christ comes to him for one specific reason, and it's a reason that trumps every other reason, the most basic reason there is. You all came to Christ because you wanted to. The question is: Why did you want to? Someone and something made you thirsty for Christ. You see, you can't come to Christ any other way. I mean, your parents can make you come but that will only last for a certain time. You're going to reach a certain age where you're going to make that decision yourself, and you will or you won't come depending on whether or not you have this thirst. The question is: Where did that come from? The question of thirst addresses the question: Why did you want to come to Christ in the first place? You know, right outside those doors, right out there on Sullivan Avenue, go all the way up to Main Street go into Port Jervis, go out into the surrounding areas, you're going to find thousands and thousands of people who, morally speaking, are as good as or better than any one of us here, all of whom have no spiritual thirst at all. Now the question is: Are we just a little bit more spiritual, a little more insightful? Or do we have this thirst as a complete and total gift that God gives to some but not to everyone? Now, I know people find that highly, highly offensive, but Jesus said in John 15:16: *"You did not choose me, but I chose you."* Folks get offended at this but for some reason they have no problem with the idea of Jesus choosing -- or God choosing an entire nation. He chose the nation of Israel and he

chose it over any other nation, and people don't get offended because that's what it was. People don't say well, why not the Amalekites or the Jebusites sites or the French or the Irish? Why did he pick them? Well, God told us. He told us. He tells the Jews why he loves them in Deuteronomy 7:6-8, he says this. He says: *For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you. For you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

How's that for an answer? You know, God is telling Israel I didn't choose you, I didn't choose to love you because you are special, because you are more in number than any other people. I chose to love you because I chose to love you. That's all the explanation you get. You know, the only explanation that we get for our thirst is found in Romans 9:15: *For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."* See, it is of God's mercy alone that you have been given the thirst that put you here today. Jesus offers it to all

and any at the festival with no conditions and no strings whatsoever attached. *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."* It's the same offer we make today. It's the same offer we make when we share the gospel with folks, and by and large you get the exact same response. People either deny their thirst or they decide they just as soon remain thirsty.

When Jesus made that offer at the feast, only he understood that to quench the thirst of his sheep would require him to experience the most profound thirst a human being could ever experience. See, God's perfect justice demanded that sin be paid in full for all, and the wages for that sin, Romans tells us, is death. So the only way that God's perfect justice could be meted out would be for death to come and destroy us all or for Jesus to take on himself the burden of that very penalty. So at the cross, perfect justice met perfect mercy because the debt penalty for our sins was carried out not on us but on God himself who had taken on the form of the man, Jesus Christ. And as he was nearing death on the cross, having just given the care of his mother over to John, the Scripture says this in John 19:28, it says: *After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is*

finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now, the scripture that Jesus fulfilled in his thirst was Psalm 22:15, which says this, it says: My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

You see, Jesus just like the rock that Moses had struck has been poured out. In addition to all of his other tortures, he is literally dying of thirst. Can you imagine what that feels like? I mean, can you remember the thirstiest you've ever been? I remember as a little kid, I remember in high school football practice, I just remembered having this incredibly searing thirst. Do you remember what it was like when all you could think of was to get some kind of a drink? Maybe you couldn't swallow, maybe your tongue had swollen so much you thought you were literally dying for something cool to swallow. That doesn't begin to describe the thirst that Jesus had. You see, his strength was dried up and his tongue was sticking to his jaws because his blood, his sweat, and his tears had literally drained his body of fluids. And that was just the physical aspects of thirst. The spiritual picture that this paints is of Jesus being thrust out from the only source of life he has ever known. You know, his Father whom he has been in fellowship with since before time itself began had no choice but to thrust Jesus out for the sin that he had become, and it was not his sin. It was your sin and it was my sin. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. So Jesus for the joy set before him, the joy of glorifying his Father by rescuing his chosen children knows that he's going to be reduced to this incredibly pitiful sight. The king of the universe will be hanging naked, his swollen tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. He will be humbled to death and even death on a cross. And here at the feast of the Tabernacles, he invites anyone who is thirsty to partake of the water that would gush out of the stricken rock which is Christ.

And again, we have the same question to ask, a simple question about our text this morning. The question is: Do you honestly think that anyone at the festival had the slightest idea what Jesus was talking about when he stood up at the festival and he said, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* Put yourself at that feast, listening to what Jesus was saying. You know, the priest has just poured out the water, Jesus stands up at this dramatic moment and offers himself as the -- as the solution to all thirst. Well, the fact is, the scripture itself says they couldn't possibly have understood because the scripture tells us in the very next verse, verse 39, *Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because*

*Jesus was not yet glorified. We've had 2,000 years of history and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and it would still take me the rest of this morning to just kind of outline what it is that Jesus was getting at when he said those words. How in the world could they have understood what he was saying? But here's the point. That doesn't matter. It doesn't matter because God connects the dots miraculously. Listen to what Jesus said in John 10:27. He said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand." See, there were those in that crowd who had been given the gift of thirst, and along with that they were given eyes to see and ears to hear. That's all they needed to trust Christ as savior. Listen to the description, God's description of how these words that Jesus spoke were heard and understood by the crowd. This is verse 40, it says this, it says: *When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over him.**

Now, you basically have in these three different responses of the crowd the same responses that we have even today. There's the religious response: *"This is the prophet."* There's the religious response: *"This is the prophet;"* there's the unbelieving response: *"Is this the Christ, the Christ is to come from Galilee,"* and there's the response of those who have been given the gift of thirst: *Others said, "This is the Christ."*

As the elders begin distributing the bread, I would like us to consider what a privilege it is that you can say, *"This is the Christ."* Listen to what Jesus said at the very end of the book of Revelation. He said this in Revelation 21:6: *And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."* Consider the love of God in Christ, *The founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).*

As you're considering the idea of thirst, consider also this warning that God gives in 1 Corinthians 11:28. He says this, he says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning*

the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. I say this every month, but it bears repeating. I said communion is extremely serious business, and to enter into it in an unworthy manner is to court disaster literally. If you are not absolutely confident that you are one of Christ's own, then just pass the elements on. When they -- when they come to you, just pass them to somebody else.

Nobody's going to look at you, nobody's going to think you're strange. I've often said that in fact, they'll think you're wise.

But you know, the opposite is also true. You can make the mistake of thinking that unless we are spotlessly perfect, we are unworthy to receive communion and that, too, is a mistake. Being a child of the King does not mean that we don't sin and that we never fail.

It means that when we do fail, we are aware that we have sinned and the reason why we are aware that we have sinned is because the Spirit of God lives inside us, God's Holy Spirit, it is God's Spirit that convicts us, and so we grieve and we grieve as children who know that we have a Father who longs to forgive and cleanse us, who said this in John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So being a child of the King doesn't mean that we

are without sin. It means that when we sin, we understand we have an advocate with the Father. Again, 1 John 2:1 says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* You see, because we have Jesus Christ's righteousness and not our own, we are free to eat from his table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny the privilege that Jesus has purchased for you. If he has given you the privilege of thirst, the thirst that brought you here, don't deny yourself this privilege that he's given to you right now.

1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, the 23rd verse says this: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* Take and eat.

Well, we've looked at the thirst of the Jews in the desert and we saw that it was a repeating ongoing test of their faith, and the question is would they in the desert trust in God's provision for their thirst. The answer was no. 1 Corinthians 10:4 says this again: *And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for*

they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

We've seen the thirst that the savior spoke about at the feast of the Tabernacles, how the offer to quench thirst went out without qualification, without condition to anyone who was thirsty. We saw how it was met, it was met like it always is, with either religious hypocrisy, unbelief, or genuine belief. We saw what it cost the Savior to offer living water to each of us, and we saw that the very ability to have this thirst was a gift from God.

And now it's time to look at the thirst itself. Again, Jesus said in John 7:37: *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."* This is a thirst that Jesus fills in such a way that the overflow can't help but drive us to seek to satisfy that thirst in others. Verse 38, he says: *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" now, to understand better what Jesus is saying, we only have to go back to the last time that Jesus addressed the issue of thirst. If you remember, it was a couple of chapters ago in John 4, the meeting with the Samaritan woman, where Jesus meets this woman at a well. Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink. Why? Because he was thirsty. What really gets lost on us is how far out of the*

mainstream racially, culturally, and religiously Jesus has gone to address the needs of this woman. She's completely stunned that a Jew would ask a Samaritan for water. And we look at Jesus and we understand Jesus is our model, and as we look at what Jesus is doing, we are seeing living water flowing out of Jesus. This is what he says in John 4:10: *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* Jesus makes this fantastic and arresting statement that piques her interest and pulls her right into the gospel. *"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and his herds?"* The Samaritan woman, she finds Jesus' claims to be way, way over the top, and she's trying to find a respectful way to say to him, "Who do you think you are?" *Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* So Jesus just doubles down on his original statement but she thinks he's still speaking about natural, regular water. Here's where we begin to see the supernatural power of the gospel. Verse 15: *The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have*

to keep coming here to draw water." You know, she's thinking very practically here. She's probably harassed or ignored every time she comes to draw water because we know she's a woman with a checkered life-style. She thinks she's being offered an opportunity to have her own source of water, maybe even her own spring. She's thinking I won't have to hassle with this any more. You know, she's just like the crowd at the feast of the Tabernacles, she's completely unaware of the deeper meaning that Jesus has in his words. And in the case of the Samaritan woman, there are really two trains of thought that are operating on parallel tracks that appear never to be able to intersect. One train is God himself, he's telling her that his indwelling Holy Spirit can make it so that she will never be spiritually thirsty again. And the other train is the Samaritan woman herself locked into her own pain and her own sinful life-style. See, it's only a miracle that'll bring these two tracks together. And we all know the story, there was a miracle. John 4:15 says: *The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."* The woman said to him, *"Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet."* She is a

microcosm. She's a microcosm that represents every one of us in our inability to grasp or deliver the gospel without divine intervention, and in her case we see Jesus divinely intervening. In John 4:21, it says this: *Jesus said to her, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming, (he whose is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"*

See, she thought her need was for physical water. Jesus showed her that her need was for truly living water. From an earthly standpoint, this was impossible. She was culturally, religiously, and behaviorally unable to respond or even perceive the gospel. That was no problem at all for God. Listen to these words. These are not my words, these are Jesus' words. He says this in John 6:44: *"No one, no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

As the elders come forward to distribute the cup, I want to once again repeat this simple question about our text this morning. Again, put yourself back at that festival, watching what's been taking place, it's been taking place for years and years and

years. The priest has dipped the pitcher into the pool and he's pouring the water out, suddenly Jesus stands up in the midst of them and says, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."* Now, do you honestly think that anyone at that festival had the slightest idea what Jesus was taking about? Just consider the crowd. They had no knowledge whatsoever that the Rock that Moses struck was the one who was crying out at the festival. They have no knowledge that the King of the universe is right there addressing them with a free invitation to end all of their thirst forever. They have no knowledge that the Holy Spirit who is the source of this living water has not even been given yet. And yet, and yet there is a response of those who have been given the gift of thirst. These are the sheep who hear the voice of the shepherd and follow him. They said in John 7:41: *Others said, "This is the Christ."* See but Jesus didn't stop at simply ending thirst. He says, *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* See, a child of God is a witness who produces other witnesses. It's someone who produces disciples. Consider the Samaritan woman. She had been a believer for less than a day. God says in John 4:39: *Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."* You know, the Samaritan woman had no great reputation, just a sinful life restored. She had no deep theology, just a simple truth revealed;

and she had no skill at speaking, just a heart full of wonder at her Lord. And the scripture says: *And yet many of her fellow Samaritans believed.* That's exactly what Christ promised. He says, *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* That's what witnesses do.

Now's the time to ask ourselves a very important question, and that question is: Is that what I do? Do streams of living water flow out of your heart into this land where the thirst that kills is everywhere? It's too hard, people are not nice, people are nasty, people are confused, people don't understand, I'm not smart enough, I'm not brilliant, I don't know theology, I don't know how to give the gospel. Well, we've seen the impossible odds are no problem whatsoever for God. In 1 Corinthians 3:7, he says this: *So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.* So the question that we need to ask ourself this morning is this: Are you planting God's word? Are you watering it with his Spirit? Jesus says, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."*

Again, let us examine ourselves. 1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, 25th verse says this: *In the same manner he also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood.*

This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Take and drink.

This is the part that I call hands, heart, and feet. This is the part where we ask is there a practical consideration, a practical part of remembering Jesus, and you know, sharing the gospel always starts with one thing, it starts with a thirst. It starts with a desire to share it. You know, perhaps fear has snapped that desire away, snatched it away. Perhaps fear -- I mean, there's no question that this climate is a lot different than it was five years ago. There's a lot more hostility toward the gospel. There's a lot more vocal push back against the gospel, and so there's certainly an element of fear in sharing the gospel that a lot of people feel more now than they felt ever before. Maybe it's fear that is sapping your thirst, maybe it's complacency. You know, complacency can steal your desire to have living water flow out of it, you just get used to a pattern, you just do your thing, your Christian thing, I go to church, I do my thing, I don't really have that opportunity to share the gospel. Maybe you've been a believer for so long that all of those people that you used to know that weren't saved are either gone or saved, and your contacts in the world who are not saved are almost nonexistent. Well, God can turn all of that around. It really is a matter of thirst. It's also a matter of prayer. First we need to pray for a heart that

longs to share the gospel. Secondly, we need to pray for the opportunity to share the gospel; and thirdly, we need for the ability to share the gospel. So let's -- let's do that right now.

Father, I just, again, I think of what Jesus said, not only did he say that he would be the answer to thirst, but the thirst that he answers will overflow out of our hearts and give us a desire to become living waters ourselves. Father, we just want to pray, first of all, if it is fear that has sapped that strength and that desire and that thirst, Lord, if it is fear, we just confess that. We just pray, Lord, that you sovereignly would guide us and give us the understanding and the ability to know that you are in charge of every molecule in this world. Give us the courage to be willing to share the gospel in opportunities and in times where it might be scary, it might be something that we haven't tried before, something that we fear. Our fear in this culture is simply some kind of societal shame, we fear being mocked. Lord, there are people sharing the gospel all around the world whose fear is loss of life and limb and freedom and property. Give us the perspective that will enable us to plow right through our fears, to do what you would have us do. And Lord, I also want to pray for the complacency that often time saps our energy as well. I pray for the ability to break out of that complacency, and if there is not opportunity, to seek by prayer to have you create that

opportunity. Lord, we've said many, many times, I've asked each of us to have two or three people in mind that we would like to share the gospel with and just to remember on a daily basis, Lord, give me the opportunity to share the gospel with "blank." And finally, Lord, we want to pray for the ability to share the gospel, not just the ability to get everything right, we've seen this morning, what Jesus said made no sense to so many people. What Jesus said was if any of you are thirsty, I will be the source of living water within you. And the people responded to that the way people respond to any call of the gospel, it was unbelief, there was hypocrisy, but there were those who said, "This is the Christ." So Lord, help us to understand that you are in charge of every adventure we enter in when we share the gospel. We may mess up, we may look like fools, we may not say it right, we may walk away from that saying it was a disaster, but you are still sovereignly in charge of every one of these encounters. So Lord, give us the ability to understand that you are the one who supplies all of the missing parts in our delivery and give us the desire to grow in our ability to give your gospel. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.