

**Sermon Study Guide Based on  
Associate Pastor Larry Omasta's Message of February 14, 2010  
"Are You Thirsty?"**

**[Jesus tells us that he is the one who can provide “living water” that quenches everyone’s spiritual thirst.]**

**[Topics: Spiritual Thirst; Living Water; Come to Me and Drink]**

**Excerpt:** Psalm 139:14 tells us that we are "**fearfully and wonderfully made.**" And that's so true. And the more you study about the human body, the more amazing it becomes to us. For example, scientists tell us that our bodies are approximately 80% fluid. Wow, that's an amazing statistic, isn't it?

So apart from our bones and a dozen or so organs, you could say that we're just a bunch of walking water containers. Now that's not a derogatory comment because God made us the most handsome and beautiful walking water containers, we'll ever see.

Now in order to maintain our health, we need to keep replenishing fluids that we constantly lose in various ways. And so, our wonderful Maker wired us with a “low-fluid indicator” – Does anybody know what it's called? Thirst.

All of us know what it's like to be thirsty – right? So can anyone tell me what the symptoms are of being really thirsty? [Audience answers] We get what's called a “dry mouth.” If we're really thirsty, we can get a thick tongue, lose energy, have an achy feeling all over and we can even pass out.

And when our bodies suffer severe dehydration, which can be deadly, coherent thoughts vanish, our skin grows cold and clammy and our organs begin to be severely affected and some even begin to shut down. So we don't want to ever reach that state if at all possible.

Now can anyone tell me what type of drink quenches your thirst the best? [Audience answers]

Now what we've been briefly talking about is physical thirst. But what about spiritual thirst? I believe our Creator also wired us with another low-fluid indicator – this time to indicate spiritual thirst. Can anyone tell me – what the symptoms of spiritual thirst are like? [Audience answers]

The symptoms vary from person to person. Some have lots of worries. Others are overwhelmed at times with guilt or angst of how they're living their life. How about fear? Being fearful can be a symptom. How about the nagging feelings of loneliness, insecurity, of having very little self-worth? How about irritability, resentment, anger? Some of us might put it this way – that we have felt a sense of “spiritual dryness” deep within our hearts.

So where can we find “water” to quench our spiritual “dryness” or spiritual thirst? Jesus gave us the answer one fall day in Jerusalem during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. Now at that

time, there was a ritual that went on for 7 days that culminated on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. It was the annual re-enactment of the rock giving water miracle of Moses as described in Num 20.

Each morning the high priest would fill a golden pitcher with water from the Pool of Siloam (perhaps it looked similar to the one I brought) and carried it up a people-lined path to the temple with the people reciting **Isa. 12:3, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."** With the blowing of trumpets, the High Priest would encircle the altar and pour out the water as an offering to God.

The Levite choir would also sing the Hallel – **Psalms 113-118** to the accompaniment of flutes. As you can see this was a very dramatic ceremony giving thanks for God's good gift of water, which gushed forth from the rock when the Israelites traveled in the wilderness. The ceremony also included prayers for rain for the next growing season.

The High Priest did this every day, once a day, for 7 days. And then on the Last Great Day, he circled the altar seven times and poured 7 golden pitchers of water on the altar.

Now Scholars don't know for certain, but many have the feeling that it may have been at this precise moment that Jesus who was perceived, at this point in his ministry, as a rustic rabbi from Galilee commanded the people's attention. Let's pick up the account in **John 7:37-38**.

**"On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38) Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'"**

Yes, Jesus shouted out this incredible message with a loud voice. His timing was absolutely impeccable. While this elaborate ceremony paid honor to God's provision to quench the physical thirst of the people in the wilderness, it didn't satisfy the crowd's spiritual thirst for salvation.

So Jesus was appealing to them and saying he could provide a different kind of water that would quench their inner spiritual thirst forever. In essence, Jesus said, he was that water from the "wells of salvation" depicted in Isaiah.

Yes, Jesus said, **"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."** Jesus understood that people, caught up in their way of life with only having a fleeting or distant relationship with God if they had one at all, thirsted for relief. They needed water not to quench their physical thirst but to quench the spiritual thirst in their hearts and souls.

So Jesus said, in essence, if you recognize your thirst, come and drink me! Notice that Jesus said, **"If anyone is thirsty."** In other words, Jesus is saying in his proclamation – all are welcome. There's not an age limit to his offer. Both genders are invited. No race or tribe of people is excluded. You don't have to be rich or famous to drink in of Jesus, or even religious for that matter.

You don't have to be successful to drink in of Jesus. You could be a tax collector, you could be a cripple or homeless person, you could be person involved in various types of sexual immorality, you could be an alcoholic or drug addict, you could be a thief, or you could even be a murderer. All you have to do is to recognize your thirst and acknowledge Jesus.

This same statement is also found in **Rev. 22:17, "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."** Yes, all of us have the choice to take of the free gift of the water of life. Now God won't force us, but he will urge us and encourage us to make that wonderful choice.

And we also see that Jesus said this with such compassion, **"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."** The verbs "come" and "drink" in the Greek indicate a present progressive state – meaning, "keep on coming" and "keep on drinking."

Coming to Jesus is more than just a one-time event such as at the moment we became a Christian and professed Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Coming to Jesus is more than a yearly acknowledgment that he exists in our life like at Christmas time or Easter. Coming to Jesus is more than a monthly encounter with our Savior at the Communion Table. Coming to Jesus and drinking in of him should be a moment-by-moment life experience all the time for us.

Just as water quenches our physical thirst, Jesus can quench our spiritual thirst as he works in our heart. Now our heart, in Biblical terminology, is the seat of our emotions and our will and where our decisions are made. Jesus can soften our stony-hard hearts that tend to resist him and give us the desire and the strength to follow him instead of following our self-centered human nature that's bent on evil and destruction.

I'm sure we all remember the story of Peter, who had stepped out of the boat onto the Sea of Galilee in the middle of the night to walk on the roaring waves to be with Jesus. But when he saw that the waves and the wind were against him, he became afraid and began to sink and then he cried out, "Lord, save me!" We need to be like Peter. In our daily prayers, we, too, need to cry out, "Lord, save me! – because we can't save our selves, no matter how hard we try.

You know, we can stand waist deep in Lake Mead or Lake Tahoe and if we don't drink the water, our thirst will never be quenched. That's fairly obvious. And likewise if we don't take a deep drink of Jesus on a daily basis by crying out to him and yielding to him, our spiritual thirst will never be quenched, even though he's all around us.

Earlier in his ministry Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well the very same thing about coming to him to have "living water." Let's look at **John 4** starting with verse 7. **"When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' 8) (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)**

**9) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 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.'**

**13) Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14) 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.'"**

Like our physical bodies or our physical lives need water to survive, our spiritual lives need Jesus to survive.

Now the question most of us might have – what is the connection between coming to Jesus and receiving this living water that springs up into eternal life and the water that will also flow from within us? Well, thankfully the apostle John gives us the answer in his parenthetical thought in **John 7:39**.

**"By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."**

Now we know that the Holy Spirit was involved throughout the OT period. Yet his fullness and indwelling was not available for everyone until he was given as a gift from God on the day of Pentecost and from that time forward.

Now just after Jesus had washed his disciples feet on the night that he instituted the symbols of the NT – the bread and the cup, he gave us some valuable information about the ministry of the Holy Spirit and his relationship to Jesus.

In **John 16:14**, Jesus said, **"He [the Comforter] will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."** So the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, glorifies the Son by clearly revealing who Jesus is and by pointing to his work, which continues today on earth.

And Jesus also said, **"On that day [the day when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples] you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20).**

Jesus does reside in the heart of believers through the Holy Spirit just as he promised here. And there are several key Scriptures in the NT that confirm this. One is **Eph. 3:16-17**, where Paul writes, **"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."**

The Greek word Paul uses for Christ dwelling in our hearts denotes a permanent residence as opposed to using another Greek word that means a temporary residence. I also like how the **Message Bible** renders Paul's statement.

**"I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength – that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in."**

Paul also made this statement in **Gal. 2:20**, **"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."**

And the NLT renders this verse, **"My old self has been crucified with Christ, It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."**

Yes, Jesus Christ can and does live in all of us when we put our trust in him; when we tell him that we will seek his will in our lives instead of stubbornly relying on our own strength and wisdom and will power to make changes in our life.

There's another saying that Jesus made that ties in with comments at the Temple. It's found in **Matt. 11**: Jesus said,

**28) "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29) Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30) For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."**

When Jesus says take up his yoke, what exactly does he mean? A yoke, in those days, was used to harness two animals together in such a way to maximize their pulling power. It was designed that the stronger animal would get the "heavy" end or load.

So the reason that Jesus' yoke is easy and his burden is light is because he takes the "heavy" end and makes our burdens bearable. Jesus' yoke or his Lordship is laid upon us with love and kindness and love makes even the heaviest burden seem light.

Based on this statement by Jesus in **Matt. 11**, Paul wrote these encouraging words – "**For I can do everything through him (Christ), who gives me strength**" (**Phil. 4:13**).

Now let's draw this message to a conclusion. Are you thirsty? Is your soul dry and parched? If, it is, then come to Jesus. If you've never given you life over to him, consider doing it now and come and talk with one of us in the ministry. Receive what Jesus has already accomplished for you by dying on the cross and by being resurrected. Receive his forgiveness of sin, as well as his grace and unfailing love. You'll never regret it.

And if you have already given your life over to Jesus, which is where most of us are, come to Jesus and drink deeply of him on a daily basis in your thoughts and prayers. We need to give our worries, our inadequacies, our stubbornness, our pride, our brokenness, and all of our struggles with sin over to him.

When we come to Jesus thirsting for righteousness, he will quench that thirst and he will give us rest, and he will give us peace of mind that transcends all understanding, and he will give us the assurance of eternal life as sons and daughters in the family of God.

Come to Jesus often and quench your thirst! And when you do, streams of living water, God's outgoing way of life will flow from you! That's a promise that Jesus gave to us. Let's take him up on it!

**Key Scripture: John 7:37-39, "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38) Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.' 39) By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."**

**General Group Question:** How has Jesus satisfied your thirsts as you put your trust in him?

**Additional questions for the entire group or in groups of two or three of the same gender (15-20 minutes). If appropriate, please pray for each other's needs afterwards.**

1. What are the symptoms of being really thirsty?

- 2.** What symptoms of spiritual thirst have you experienced?
- 3.** What invitation did Jesus offer to the crowd on the last day of the Feast? (John 7:37-38)
- 4.** To whom did Jesus make his offer? Are there any restrictions? Briefly explain.
- 5.** How often should we come to Jesus to satisfy our thirst? Explain why it should be more than a yearly or monthly experience.
- 6.** What did Jesus tell the Samaritan woman would be the result of drinking “living water”? How was that possible? (John 4:13-14)
- 7.** Is there a connection between Jesus and the Holy Spirit? If so, what is it? (John 14:20; 16:14)
- 8.** Does Jesus reside in a believer? If so, where? (Eph. 3:16-17)
- 9.** What is the significance of Jesus living his life in us? (Gal. 2:20)
- 10.** What did Jesus offer to those who feel weary and burdened? (Matt. 11:28)
- 11.** What is the yoke that Jesus is offering us? How does it impact our lives? (11:29-30)
- 12.** What specific thirst or burden do you need to trust Jesus with in this point in your life?