

The Gospel of John Part 38: An Invitation to the Thirsty

John 7:37-53



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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. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture

said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were going to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. 40 Some of the crowd therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This truly is the Prophet." 41 Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "No, for is the Christ going to come from Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" 43 So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. 44 Some of them were wanting to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. 45 The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" 46 The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken like this!" 47 The Pharisees then answered them, "Have you also been led astray? 48 Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in Him? 49 But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed." 50 Nicodemus (he who came to Him before), being one of them, said to them, 51 "Does our Law judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing?" 52 They answered him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." 53 [Everyone went to his home.

It is on the last day of the Feast of Booths that Jesus comes, stands, and cries out before the crowd. It is in His final words to the people there that He issues

an invitation for them to believe in Him. The time for presenting arguments about why they should believe is over, now it is the time for making a decision about Him. So, Jesus issues His invitation to believe and among this invitation to the crowd we can learn today some truths about doing the work of discipleship among a large gathering of people.

1) The Invitation to Believe is Comprehensive and Clear. Jesus says that anyone who is thirsty can come and drink of Him. Jesus's use of "anyone" along with His appeal to "thirst" means His invitation is perfectly comprehensive, it applies to every living person, and nobody is excluded. Every person thirsts and must drink to live. This truth applies also to eternal life. Every person must drink of Jesus to live in life eternal. And to the one who is wondering, "how do I drink of Jesus?", He says, "believe." The clarity of His invitation is that we are to drink to live, or believe to inherit eternal life.

2) The Invitation to Believe is Personally Received. Though Jesus's invitation is comprehensive and clear, the crowd is indecisive. Some believe, while others do not. Some have fully accepted the words and the works of Jesus and trust in Him as Christ. While others remain doubtful. The reality among this crowd is the same as today. Every person must decide for themselves what to believe concerning Jesus. This decision is personally received. Nobody can receive the invitation from Christ for eternal life for another. Each person must accept or reject Jesus for themselves.

3) The Invitation to Believe is Cancelled By Pride. The religious rulers respond to Jesus's invitation with indignation. Their pride has cancelled out His offer of eternal life. You can see their pride in their words. They say "we are your leaders, not Him" and "we know the Law, you don't" and "our truth is not His truth." Pride remains the greatest barrier to eternal life in our day. The proud will choose their way over any other way every single time. The proud will not submit to anyone but self, and will never bow their knee to Jesus as Lord. Until the proud can declare, "not I, but Christ", then His invitation is left powerless in their life.