



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 7:32-52

“Rivers of Living Waters”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] Chapter 7 verse 32 of the Gospel of John we’re reading, remember, events that transpired during the celebration of the feast of the tabernacles, and we’re coming to the things that transpire on the last day of that feast which lasted a week.

“The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, (or Greeks) and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

By the way, the Scripture nowhere specifically states this in the Old Testament. In other words, our Lord is not making a citation of a specific place. But in several places of

the Old Testament the essence of this is stated and that's the meaning of the statement “as the Scripture has said.” Just like we might say, “The Bible says that we're justified not by the works that we do but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Well those precise words may not be found, but that's the teaching of the word of God. John adds in verse 39, or rather, yes, John adds in verse 39, “(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” Literally, the Holy Spirit was not yet, or the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Of course the Spirit was active in the Old Testament, but in the sense in which he would be active in the present age. He could not be active until the Lord Jesus was glorified.

“Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. (that is the Prophet that Moses had written about in Deuteronomy 18) Others said, This is the Messiah (or Christ). But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. (well our Lord came to bring division, did he not) And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. (probably because of what is stated in verse 30, because his hour was not yet come) Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them).”

Isn't that interesting, they said have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? Now here's a man who is one of them who speaks up, “Doth our law judge any

man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.” How would you answer that? If someone were to say to you, “Search and look out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” how would you have replied to the Pharisees? May the Lord bless this reading of his Word.

When I think of the passage to which we have come in our exposition of the Gospel of John, I usually think for myself at least of two important things that stand out. In the first place, the drama of these central words that were spoken on the last day, that great day of the feast, when Jesus stood and cried and said, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” The drama of it is caught up in the fact that this was the last day of one of the greatest of the Jewish feasts, and of the things that transpired every day.

Every day from the pool of Siloam a pitcher of water was taken and in a very solemn procession the priest would return to the temple, and then he would pour out the water amid the blowing of the trumpets and the shouting of the rejoicing multitudes, through a funnel which led to the base of the altar of the burnt offering. The people were in a jubilant mood, for the feast of tabernacles was a feast in which they rejoiced. And then every day that would transpire, and of course the last day of the feast was the greatest day of all. Not only was this significant but the spiritual things that lay behind it were significant, because the water that was taken was taken from the pool of Siloam, but it was intended to represent the water from the rock that flowed when Moses struck it as they were passing through the wilderness.

Remember in the early days of the Exodus, when the children began to murmur because there was no water, and Moses went to the Lord about it. He said, “Moses, stand by the rock and smite the rock and water will come forth.” And Moses did that with the rod with which he smote the rivers of Egypt, turning them to blood, and water came out,

and the children of Israel's thirst was assuaged. And then later on in the last day of their journey through the wilderness, the same thing happened and again the Lord said to Moses, “Moses, stand by the rock and speak to the rock.” Now Moses was disobedient. He instead of speaking to the rock, smote the rock twice, but nevertheless water came forth. And on every day of the feast of tabernacles when the water was poured out, they thought of the way in which God had led them in the past through the wilderness.

But they also looked forward to the days of the Messianic kingdom, and the spiritual bounties, suggested by the water, which would be theirs then. Their minds and their hearts were occupied with such passages as Isaiah chapter 12 and verse 3, sent in a Messianic context, “Therefore with joy shall you draw water from the wells of salvation.” In their right hands, as they were making the procession, they had some branches from myrtle trees, and a willow branch, and a bow of the palm tree. And then in their left hands they had a citron, or a similar kind of fruit. And that was intended to represent the dessert life that they had enjoyed as they passed through the wilderness, when God provided for them. Later on those citrons were used in another way, when one of the worldly high priests, Alexander Jannaeus, sought to improve upon the established ritual of the feast of tabernacles and they used the citrons to throw them at Alexander Jannaeus the high priest. But they were designed to represent of course, the way that God had provided for them.

So this, the climactic celebration of the feast of tabernacles, was the precise moment when the Lord Jesus stood and cried out with a loud voice, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” And so he was saying in effect, “All of these things that you celebrate in the feast of tabernacles find their fulfillment in me.” It was a tremendous claim that the Lord made in the midst of the multitudes who had come in order to enjoy that feast. That's one thing that comes home to me with great effect as I read these verses.

The second thing that comes home to me is the depth of the spiritual sentiment found in the words that Jesus spoke, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” That suggests to me all of the dominant desires that lie hidden in the heart of fallen man. The whole nature of fallen man moves out after the divine things that are found in the word of God. Desperately, deep down within, we recognize that there is a yearning after something that is better, but the fallenness of man causes us to suppress the knowledge of God, and the desires after God that are implanted there, simply because we are the creatures of God.

In some ways we are like plants that seek to grow in cellars. If you’ve ever seen underneath a house which has been built over on piles, which has been built over plants that were growing, a year or so afterwards you can look under the house and those plants are still living. But instead of being green because of the light of the sun which they seek, they are now white, blanched, seeking after some light. In a sense, that’s the nature of man. Created by God to enjoy him, but because of the fall suppressing the knowledge of God that God has implanted there and the seeking after God is also something that is suppressed by the results of the fall; what we call theologically the noetic effects of sin.

Now that, I think, is suggested by the words of the Lord Jesus, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” We so often misinterpret the meaning of these inarticulate cries that occasionally rise from our hearts. We misunderstand them; we do not realize that we really are groping after something that is satisfying. There’s really something pathetic about the heart of man; its endless effort to fill up his empty heart by the multitude of diverse and small things, that he seeks after the material things for example, when all the while, the deepest meaning of the aspirations and yearnings and longings and unrest, and discontent is expressed by the psalmist when he says, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.” You know you can see some of this also in the activities of the rulers of men. The rulers of men have in their own life expressed something, unwittingly, of the fact that God has created man to rule and to govern. And

so they seek to rule and govern, but they rule and govern dominated by rebellion against God. And even these activities of men, in which they seek to rule men, are expressions of what God originally made out man to be, and that which man shall be in the future through the Lord Jesus Christ who has, by virtue of the cross at Calvary, won back what men have lost in their sin.

Well that stands out to me too, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” And these central words, verse 37 through verse 39, express Jesus Christ’s view of humanity. Humanity needs God, “If any man thirst.” It also expresses Christ’s view of himself, “If any man thirst let him come unto me” not religion, not good works, not some different kind of life specifically, but “let him come unto me.” He is the answer for all of the aspirations and searchings of the human heart. And of course, expressed in it is his great invitation to humanity, “let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Well the Lord Jesus has been speaking to the Jews and to the multitudes, and in verse 32 through verse 36 of the 7th chapter, he again reveals that he is not going to be here at a time in the future. He speaks about the fact that he is going to leave, and he’s going back to the one who has sent him, he’s going to ascend to the Father, and then they are going to be frustrated, “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. You shall seek me, you shall not find me. Where I am thither ye cannot come.”

There is an expression here in our Lord’s words of the despair of the Jewish nation. In a sense, Israel is like Esau. Esau had the birthright, but he sold it for a mess of pottage. He lost the birthright, he lost the blessing. And Israel is the nation with the birthright. Israel is the firstborn, but Israel has lost their privileges, and therefore like Esau they’ve lost their opportunity. As Amos said, “The time is coming when there is going to be a famine of the word of God.” And that famine of the word of God is now present in the nation. You know if we refuse our opportunities when they come, the time may

come when we cannot any longer take advantage of them. That’s a sad thing, but that’s the teaching of the word of God. It’s called the doctrine of divine retribution, and it is a sad truth.

There is an old story, which actually is found in mythology, of Theseus and Pirithous, who made a very bold trip into the underworld on a gallant kind of adventure. And they sat down to rest, but they dallied where they were and they discovered to their horror that they could not rise, for they had grown fast to the rocks. It was a saint of God who once said that he could not repent, he could not make progress in his spiritual life, and then he added, “Now I cannot because once I would not.” Like the eyes of fishes that live in the dark caverns in time grow dimmer and dimmer, so those who refuse to take advantage of the opportunities ultimately lose out. There is one terrible word that Jesus utters in the parable of the ten virgins. Remember they were waiting for the marriage feast. Five had filled their lamps with oil. Five had neglected their opportunity to do that. When the time came the announcement that the marriage feast was at hand the five discovered they didn’t have any oil. They appealed to those who had and they were told to go out and buy oil just like they had done. Well they went out and bought oil and by the time they got to the feast, Jesus as he tells the parable says, “and the door was shut.” The opportunity which was neglected was now gone.

Israel, having neglected the presence of the Lord Jesus in their midst, the time will come when, “You shall seek me and you shall not find me” Jesus said, “and where I am ye cannot come.” They’re puzzled; they have not paid attention to what he’s been saying really, “Where will he go that we shall not find him? Will he go to the dispersed among the Greeks and teach the Gentiles?” Not listening to him, they were unable to find him, “What manner of saying is this, Ye shall seek me and ye shall find me: and where I am thither ye cannot come?”

Well, at the climactic celebration of the feast, with the great crowds around the temple, the Lord Jesus, probably as the priest came with the pitcher and the solemn

procession following behind him, and just as he poured it into the funnel that led down to the brazen altar, that was by the way the altar of sacrifice, as he poured out the water, and in the stillness and solemnity of that, Jesus stood and cried out with this vast multitude of people in that area, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” It was a dramatic occasion, no question about that.

Let’s look for a moment at these words that he spoke, “If any man thirst.” How shall we describe the word? Well I think that’s a word of aspiration. Does not he Lord Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount, “If any man hungers and thirsts after righteousness he shall be filled?” “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink” that is I think a word of aspiration. Sir James Steven, in a lecture to young men, once said that he could put all of his suggestions into one word, aspire. And in a sense you could put all of the exhortations that men address to us concerning spiritual things in one word, aspire. Aspiration, “If any man thirst.” Now when he says, “If any man thirst” he’s expressing a general truth.

Now I know that there are probably some seminary students in the audience, the rest of you can relax for a moment. This is a third class condition. And a third class condition is a condition that is defined as a more probable future condition. It suggests that some may not thirst. Or if you wish to define this as Goodwin does, this is a present general condition and expresses a general truth. And it is a general truth, “If any man thirst” Jesus said, “let him come unto me and let him drink.” It is a word of aspiration, “If any man thirst” but it also is a word of approach, “let him come to me.” And it’s a word of appropriation, “let him drink.”

You know it’s a marvelous testimony to the invitations of the Lord Jesus, and a marvelous testimony to his grace that he invites them to come to him in spite of the fact that they have, as a nation, rejected him, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” And I think also the fact that he uses the present tense in these words “come and

drink,” “let him come to me and let him go on drinking” that suggests that when we do come to him we adhere to him, because we are united to him by faith.

Now he explains what he means. What is coming? What is it come to the Lord Jesus? Well again, as he did in the 6th chapter, he defines his coming. It is believing, “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” That’s what he said in chapter 6 verse 35, in the first of his great “I am” statements, “I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger. He that believeth on me shall never thirst.” So to come to him is to believe in him. To believe in him is to come to him. One might expect this explanation to read something like this; he that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said, out of my belly shall flow rivers of living water. Well of course that is true, when we come to the Lord Jesus and we believe in him we discover that out of him comes, speaking symbolically, rivers of living water. But he says, “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly” a reference to the believer. There are some commentators that like to link this to our Lord, and still others who like to link it to the city of Jerusalem, but exegetically it’s probably weak and insupportable. Most of the commentators, rightly I think, say “out of his” is the believer and “out of his” the believer’s “belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Now that’s a startling thing because I say we should expect to read that the rivers of living water come from our Lord, but we read, “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of the believer shall come rivers of living water.”

What is Jesus claiming to be here, first? Why he’s claiming to be the true rock. In the Old Testament, I mentioned in the Scripture reading, or in the introduction to the message, the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles looked back to the event, recorded in Exodus 17, of the murmuring of the children of Israel and how Moses smote the rock and water came from the rock, and then later how Moses smote the rock twice, when he should have spoken to it, and the water came out. Now the Lord Jesus is thus claiming to be the true rock. In other words, as you read through the Gospel of John, notice how

many times the Lord Jesus claims to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament things and events. In chapter 2 he claimed to be the true temple. In chapter 3 he claimed to be the true brazen serpent. In chapter 6 he claimed to be the true bread from heaven, or the true manna. In chapter 7 here he claims to be the true rock. In chapter 8 the light of the world, he claims to be the true light giving cloud by which Israel was guided through the wilderness.

And then in chapter 19 in the climax he claims to be the true Passover lamb. But he is claiming here to be the true rock, but there is an advance and the advance is simply this, that when we come to the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in him we are united to him. The Apostle Paul will develop all of his teaching about the union of the believer with Christ out of these great things. And we learn from this that when we come to him and we are united to him the life of Christ flows out through us, and so we do become the source of rivers of living water as the channels of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And so we, “out of his belly,” the believer’s belly, “shall flow rivers of living water.” The living water is the divine gift, but it is channeled through the believers to the world. Later on in chapter 16, when Jesus said, “When the Spirit comes he will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment” he adds, “He will come to you and he will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.” So the convicting work of the Holy Spirit is to be done through the believers. We are the channels of the grace of God. That’s why he writes, “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Now John cannot resist a word of interpretation, and I’m glad that he did not resist it because some of us need this, “But this spake he of the Spirit.” In other words, he says this is a figure, rivers of living water, it’s a reference to the ministries of the Holy Spirit, “This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive.” That verse is important because it tells us very plainly that when a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he receives the Holy Spirit.

There are people, as you know, who have taught down through the last few decades, that a person does not receive the Holy Spirit when he believes. He receives the forgiveness of sins, but later on at a moment of self-surrender, a moment of praying through, he receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace. Some orthodox men have believed that doctrine too, like R. A. Torrey, to give one example. But that is not the teaching of holy Scripture. This text is one of the texts that indicates that, because it says, “This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.” In fact, in probably the preferable text it says, “They which had believed on him should receive.” In other words, the receiving of the Holy Spirit is linked with believing. It’s not linked with any later so-called self-surrender in which we come into complete dependence upon the Lord and then receive the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing as a second work of grace.

You’ve heard of the individual, a believer who asked another believer, “Have you received the second blessing?” The first believer said, “No, I really haven’t. I’ve received the first, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, and quite a few more beyond that, but I never received the second blessing.” “Why not?” “Well because it made such fools of people that I decided I would skip that particular one.” [Laughter] There is no such thing as a second blessing, identified as the receiving of the Holy Spirit after we have believed in Christ. A believer when he believes in Jesus Christ receives all of the blessing of God. The remainder of his life is the life of appropriating what we already have. All of us are like people who’ve had an infinite amount of money deposited to our accounts in the bank, but it’s so difficult to believe it. To come to the place where we actually write a check in faith on the riches that is set to our account in heaven’s Interfirst bank. [Laughter]

“He that believeth in him, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” I also have some friends who like to say, “Lewis is it not true that all the work of the Lord

is dependent on divine activity?” “Yes.” “Were believers in the Old Testament regenerated like believers in the New Testament?” Now the Old Testament says that believers were regenerated, and so we have to answer, “Yes the Old Testament says believers were regenerated.” “Were the Old Testament believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit permanently?” Now personally I have to reply, “No.” And they usually say to me something like, “Well if they were born again by the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit and since they also lived spiritual lives, lives that are used as examples for us, to which we all would agree, then why are they not permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament times?”

Well there are some biblical reasons for that. In the first place in the New Testament we do read of permanent indwelling, whereas in the Old Testament we read of some individuals in whom was the Spirit of God, like Gideon, like Bezalel and his workers who worked on the tabernacle. Those instances are generally, in spite of that terminology, references to the induement with power ministry of the Old Testament and refer to specific indwelling for specific purposes. So far as a permanent indwelling presence of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Spirit, that is unknown in Old Testament times. Jesus said in the upper room discourse to the apostles, “I am going to pray the Father and he’s going to send the Holy Spirit to you, that he may abide with you forever. He is with you, he shall be in you.” We will deal with that more thoroughly some months from now when we deal with John chapter 14 verse 16 and verse 17, but the apostles were regenerated men. They were saved individuals, but they were not permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

This text also says, “The Holy Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” The reason for that is that Calvary is the necessary prelude to Pentecost. There is other evidence of this too. The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians chapter 3 to the Galatians that in Old Testament times believers were children, and they were under tutors and they were under governors, which he identifies with the Law of Moses, but he said,

“Now you are taken out from under the tutors and governors and you are united to the Lord Jesus Christ by virtue of his redeeming work and he has sent the Holy Spirit into your hearts crying Abba Father.” So I’d like to suggest to you that that too is proof that we do not have permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times.

Let me put it this way; the major premise, the sending of the Spirit to indwell the saint is based upon and grounded upon the adult status of the saint. The Old Testament saint, minor premise, lived his life in a minor status. He was a babe, an apias Paul says. And he had not attained unto adult status until the coming of Christ and the institution of adoption. Conclusion, therefore the Old Testament saint as a babe did not qualify for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and were consequently not indwelt by him. That is something that began on the Day of Pentecost and has continued ever since. That means that the indwelling presence of the Lord through the Spirit is the blessed possession of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a magnificent thing it is to realize that Christ indwells every one of us permanently, now that Pentecost has come to pass, “This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” That’s why later on he will say, “It’s expedient for you that I go away, for if I don’t go away the Spirit will not come and permanently indwell you.” So one may be regenerated and not possess all of the blessings that belong to the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Now, we possess those blessings.

Calvary then, as I said, is the necessary prelude to Pentecost. Well as you might expect there were some reactions to this. Jesus said, remember, he came to bring division. Well I’m sure that within his own spirit he said, “Lord we’re getting it. We’re getting the divisions.” Some said, “This is the Messiah.” Others said, “This is of a truth, the Prophet that Moses promised.” One could sense the authority and power with which he spoke. Others said, “Wait a minute, does the Messiah come out of Galilee? Doesn’t the Scripture say that the Messiah comes of the seed of David and out of the town of

Bethlehem where David was?” Why didn’t they say to him, “Where were you born?” They really weren’t that interested. That’s the way many of us are you know. We’re not really interested. We don’t really aspire after spiritual things. We don’t really thirst as the heart pants after the water brooks. They never bothered to ask him. Others said, “We’d like to seize him and arrest him, but no man laid hands on him” because a sovereign God is in control of all of the circumstances, “and they could not take him because his hour was not yet come.”

Well, the chief priests and the Pharisees had sent some officers in the mean time to arrest the Lord. And evidently they were given instructions not to just take him, but if you see a favorable opportunity, when it might not cause any problems, then take him. Well the officers come back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, and the Pharisees say to them, “Why haven’t you brought him?” and they reply, “Never man spoke like this man.” That’s a magnificent testimony is it not, to the words of grace that poured out of the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then they answer the officers, “Are ye also deceived?” Have you become deceived too? “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on him?”

How little they understand. They’re like Washington trying to understand the mood of the nation. Those people living on the Potomac have a very difficult time understanding how we folk out here in Texas understand things. If they could just come down here where we are they might learn how we feel about things. The chief priests and the Pharisees are just like that. They do not understand the people. “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on him?”

Later on in chapter 12 John will say in verse 42, “Many of them had believed.” And furthermore, here is one who is in the midst of them by the name of Nicodemus and he obviously is if not already a believer on the point of believing. And they go on to say, “This people that knoweth not the law are cursed” and it’s at this very moment that one of them speaks up, Nicodemus, and John specifically mentions he’s one of them. John loves

irony. He's one of them and he speaks up and says, “Does not our law say that we ought not judge any man until we know what he's doing?” In other words, the chief priests and Pharisees who accuse the people of not knowing the law do not know the law themselves. Their attitude is the attitude of a person who says, “Let the experts decide questions like that.”

What is an expert? Someone has said, “An expert is any little old spurt away from home.” [Laughter] Now I feel I must give you another definition because I had another definition in my notes, but at 8:30 I didn't give it, but I feel I must give it to you. It's so old, but two people after the message this morning came up and gave me this definition so this will prevent a half a dozen more of you coming up to me [Laughter] and giving it to me. This is another definition of an expert, “An x is nothing, and a spurt is a drip under pressure, so an expert is nothing but a drip under pressure.” [Laughter] Confucius say man who small potato get in stew. [Laughter]

Well these chief priests and Pharisees are small potatoes they say, “Have any of the leaders believed on him?” Why, they were believing in him right under their very noses. And furthermore, Nicodemus, one of them, accuses them of not knowing the law that they say characterizes the people of God. They turned to Nicodemus and they say, “Are you too of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee arises no prophet.”

How would you answer? How would you have answered the Pharisees and the chief priests if you had said, “Perhaps he is the Messiah” and they should say, “Look, study the Scriptures, out of Galilee does not arise any prophet” what would you say? Well there was a prophet out of Galilee, a well known one, well known for one great event at least, Jonah, who was swallowed by the whale. He was from Galilee. They not only accuse the people of not knowing the word of God, they do not know the word of God themselves.

So these judges who are supposed to be experts, and supposed to judge impartially, are just like all the rest of us, they judge out of their own passions and

prejudices. They made two errors. Jonah was from Galilee. And secondly, Jesus was not. He was from Bethlehem of Judea. He was of the seed of David according to the flesh. He was the Messianic King as prophesied by the Old Testament, but they were so disinterested because they'd already made up their minds that they never even bothered to ask him, “Where were you born?” Isn't that amazing? These are the religious leaders of the day, and the fundamental question they've not asked, and they're ignorant of it.

Let me just say a few words about those central words in verse 37 as we close. I want you to notice that this invitation that the Lord Jesus Christ addresses is an invitation that is universal, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” All through the Bible the invitation to receive of the blessing of God is given universally. Everyone, Isaiah says. Revelation chapter 22, verse 7 says, “Whosoever taketh of the water of life freely.” The invitation to respond to the word of God is universal. There is no contradiction whatsoever with a universal invitation and the divine sovereign, sovereign election of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Spurgeon has little paragraph or two which I like. He says, “Captious and caviling persons will object. You say that God loves his people and therefore they will be saved, then what is the good of preaching? What is the good of preaching? When I say that God loves a multitude that no man can number, a countless host of the race of men, do you ask me what is the good of preaching? What is the good of preaching? To fetch these diamonds of the Lord out of the dunghill to go down to the depths as the diver does, to fetch up God's pearls from the place where they are? What is the good of preaching? To cut down the good corn and gather it into the garner? What is the good of preaching? To fetch God's elect from the ruins of the fall, and make them stand on the rock Christ Jesus and see they're standing sure? Ah, ye who ask what is the good of preaching because God has ordained some to salvation, we ask you whether it would not be a most foolish thing to say, ‘Because there is to be a harvest, what's the good of sowing? There is to be a harvest, what's the use of reaping?’ The very reason why we do

so and reap is because we feel assured that there is to be a harvest. And if indeed I believed there was not a number who must be saved, I could not go into the pulpit again. Only once make me think that no one is certain to be saved and I do not care to preach.”

That’s a very significant word on those who say that Jesus’ death did not save anybody but made all men savable. I know what Mr. Spurgeon says about that because he says it in a number of places. “But now I know that a countless number must be saved. I am confident that Christ shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days. I know that if there is much to dispirit me in my ministry, and I see but little of its effects, yet he shall keep all whom the Father has given to him and this makes me preach.”

The reason that we do preach is that there are the people of God out there who have not yet come to him. That’s why we’re still preaching, and this invitation goes out to all, and it goes out confidently, because there are God’s diamonds who are out there in the midst of a fallen race. And we preach for them. If we actually preach to sinners who must themselves make the ultimate decision, by their own free will, knowing their nature, what a despairing and discouraging thing it would be to preach. But we preach with the confidence that the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of those who are condemned in bondage to sin, unable of themselves to come, he works and makes the unable able to come. And God shall gather all of his saints into his family, and we preach with confidence, expecting the Holy Spirit to do what men cannot do; bring men to Christ.

So the invitation goes out to all, “If any man thirst” any man, any of you, any of you in this auditorium, if you thirst come unto him and drink. He that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. That includes the atheists, and the agnostics, and the idolaters, and the disappointed, and the discouraged, and the defeated, and the proud, and the overbearing, and the cheaters, and the foul, and the weary, and the sad, and the weak, and the hopeless, and all of the others. And the Lord Jesus who was so confident of his power to impart life has the same confidence

today at the right hand of the Father, if you come to him out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water.

I like the old story of the elderly lady who was fast losing her life she was so old. She had learned one text, and that one text was a text from the Apostle Paul, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” As she grew older she forgot most of the text she had learned, but she held onto that one, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” Then as her days drew nearer when she must leave this earth, she forgot the first part of the text and all that she remembered was, “that which I have committed unto him” and she kept repeating that. And finally, at the end, the only thing she could remember was “him” “him” “him” which she kept saying. She’d lost the whole Bible but one word, but she had the whole Bible in that one word, “him” the Lord Jesus Christ. He really is the summary of the Scriptures. Come to him. Come to him and receive the gift of life, out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water. May God help you to come.

[Prayer] Lord we pray that Thou wilt create within us the aspirations of the Psalmist, “As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my heart after Thee oh God.” “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink” Jesus said. May we come to him. May we not only drink the drink of eternal life, but go on drinking, adhering to him throughout the ages of eternity, kept by his marvelous grace. And Lord if there are some in this audience who have never come, at this moment create...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]