

Thirsting

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon focuses on the invitation of Jesus in John 7:37-39, where he offers living water to those who thirst. The speaker emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God, recognizing the need for the Holy Spirit in every aspect of salvation and experience. The message highlights the deep thirst for God that only He can satisfy, drawing parallels to a powerful story of miraculous rain in the desert. The call is to yield, drink continually from the source of living water, and allow the Holy Spirit to intensify His work in our lives.

Scripture: John 7:37, Romans 3:10, John 4:13, Ephesians 5:18, Psalm 42:1, Isaiah 44:3

Topics: "Living Water", "Surrender to the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

Well, it's very nice to be back with you again. We've been in some very wonderful meetings in the UK and some meetings that I will never forget and I thank God for any small part I've had in them. But as they say, there's no place like home.

So, here we are, right? And I'd like you to turn in your Bible to John's Gospel with me, please. John chapter 7. The verses I'm going to read are not unfamiliar to you by any means and I know that some of us have visited them a number of times before but this is where I feel the Lord leading this morning. So, we're in chapter 7 of John and we're looking down to verse 37.

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 has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 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. And I'm going to leave the reading there and encourage you to look at it in its fuller context before too long. To the man and woman of God, those that are truly His, every moment and every event in their lives is significant.

It's significant because we believe that God is indeed sovereign. There's a hymn that, well let me rephrase all this part here. This morning, very, very early, like so early that it was almost last night, I was awakened to Sheila singing and she was singing, I believe the tune is called Luther's Chant.

A hymn of Martin Luther's and she actually said she'd like us to sing it and I wasn't sure that that was what we were going to do but there we are. But as I was still yet lying, I was thinking about some of the words in that hymn and in particular the context in which they were written by Martin Luther, breaking away from the traditions of Pope-ism and becoming conscious of the sovereignty of God and how God is truly over all as it comes out in that hymn. And this is what we're thinking about, if we really believe that God is over everything then we can't say but he's not over this area or he's not over that area.

He's either Lord of all or he's not Lord of all or he's not Lord at all, I guess is the way it goes. And with that in mind, we have to believe that the various particular situations that we find ourselves faced with and the things that are happening around us are in some way that we can't fathom and think through very clearly, ordained of God. Paul makes a statement on one occasion, he says all things are of God and again he says all things are for your sakes.

So there's all that, this is just background here to what I'm about to say, that God, for the man of God or the woman of God, everything is of him. For his glory, for our benefit, eternally speaking. I believe without any question that Jesus, the son of God who lived on this earth as a man in the person of Jesus Christ, he was only too well aware of this fact.

And so as we watch him, as he lives out that life on this earth, as we watch him through the words of scripture, with this in mind, it's fascinating to see how he was always so incredibly prepared and appropriate for each and every situation in which he finds himself. And so when a particular set of circumstances present themselves, we believe that the Father speaks into his heart, nudges him, directs him, he told us this himself, didn't he? He can do nothing except the Father's leading and speaking, so we're on track saying this. He feels prompted to act or move or behave in a particular way.

And so time and again we see him seizing the moment. I believe this is how God wants you and me to live as well, where recognizing God is doing something around him, God is doing something with him, and indeed this is how we must think of our own lives. And so in the moment we find that Jesus is just right, he's just there, he's got the right word, he behaves and acts in just the right way.

And I think that's exactly what's happening here in these few verses that we're looking at this morning. There's a situation that actually occurred, it's recorded here, and we have the benefit of reading it this morning. And I don't know how many times, it's impossible for me to know how many times I have read this section of scripture, I can't even tell you how many times I've spoken on it.

Can I digress just for a moment as I'm saying that? I'll be all over the place this morning, I know. But one of the interesting things that occurred while I was away was going down to the Rohrer Fellowship in the south of England where we've not been there for, I don't know, about ten years I should think, and it was just an incredible privilege to go there and an incredible pleasure as well. But a number of people came to me at different times through the day that we were there and said, I remember when you were here last time, or some people were from other areas, so it would apply in different areas as well, and they said, I can still remember what you spoke on.

And I go, really? And then a number of them proceeded to sort of give me an idea of what that was and I certainly can't remember those things at all. So we come to scripture and on a given occasion we feel, well, God is saying such and such and such, and if you're a note-taker, a person, you write some notes down as to how the Lord is speaking to you, but isn't it a wonderful thing to be able to come back again to the same familiar scriptures and discover that God is saying something else through those words to you, or he's emphasising something, he's got his highlighter out, he's highlighting that to us to make it real or precious to us, and I hope that that might be the case here this morning. The fact is, as someone who studies the Bible, and I hope that's true for every one of us here in the room, we come and we read the passage and we're anxious to understand something fresh from it, as I'm saying, but what we also understand is, of our own selves, we're not going to get very far at all.

We really need the Holy Spirit of God to somehow open that text up to us and lay his word bare to us so that we can see it, you know, sometimes we use the expression that something jumps out of the page for us. I hope you've had that experience with the Bible when we're reading, and just something, maybe it's something that you've read maybe hundreds of times, but somehow it just becomes precious to you and particular and personal to you on that occasion. Well, speaking of occasion, the occasion here where all this is taking place is, of course, the Temple area in Jerusalem, and so far as time is concerned, it is the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles, and this was a very unique feast.

It was the last of the feasts, so far as the spread of the months of the year are concerned, and it was indeed unique. I was thinking about it, of course I was thinking about it this morning. I was thinking about it when I went out, didn't take the dog for a walk this morning.

It was a bit too chilly for me, but the dog was out, yeah, I'm sorry, but you know, one of the interesting things about this Feast of Tabernacles was it was a week-long event, and the people, even those who had their own homes, you know, this is not just people living outside, but they would actually choose to create little tents or booths, as they're frequently referred to, outside with branches and whatever else, just a very flimsy kind of outdoor dwelling place, and I'm thinking of that, talking about the weather, because it took place somewhere end of September, beginning of October, right about now, actually, more or less, and they would sleep outside for these days in this little place that they'd prepared for themselves. The reason for all this is, you see, because the significance of the event was a reflection on their forefathers as they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan and their journey in the wilderness, and so that was the sort of backdrop to all of this. But the whole event was really little less than an extravaganza.

It was quite a business, what with sleeping outside and so on, but it was a moment of thanksgiving to God. It was kind of a harvest festival, if you like, but it was more yet than that, where the people's attention is focused not only on what their forefathers experienced, but on how God ordered the whole thing and how God took care of them, and so on, on that ancient wilderness journey that they were involved in. One of the particular features of that event that they were recalling on this occasion was the miraculous way in which God provided water for this host of people as they traveled through a barren wilderness, something that was absolutely supernatural, and a couple of particular events mentioned in the Old Testament passage that you'll remember, just how God was doing that, that we won't think about in particular right now, but that was very much a focus.

And so, on seven of the days, they went through a little procession, wouldn't have been little really, because it was the whole host of these people that were gathered at this point in time, and they would go down to the Pool of Siloam, which we understand is about a quarter of a mile away from the temple, and

they go down there and the priest would have a golden vessel that they would fill with water from the Pool of Siloam, and then they would turn round and they would march back to the temple area, and as they marched, they would sing and they would express their thanksgiving to God, and as only they could, no doubt with lots of harmonizing and who knows what, they would go through this whole thing as they come back, and eventually reaching to the temple area, they would go to the altar, and the priest would ceremonially pour out the water at the base of the altar, all as a token of worship of God and thanksgiving for his provision, as I say, for their forefathers, and so on. The crowd of people were unquestionably sincere people. They were devout religious Jewish people and they were zealous, who can deny that, and obviously they were God-fearing people, and they were, of course, feast-keeping people.

They were engaged in all of the particulars of their religion, and they were people who were familiar with the teachings of the Old Testament, they were familiar with prophecies in the Old Testament, and so they were people who also, on the one hand, while remembering things of their own national history and God's involvement there, they were also people who were looking forward. They were looking forward to what was perceived to be the messianic kingdom that was prophesied in the various passages of Scripture, and so on. So in the context of all of this ceremony, there's singing and music, and so on.

And I guess it would be fair to say that the whole event would be second to none. It's a grand event. Wonderful.

But the important thing that I believe God would lay on our hearts this morning is a reminder that notwithstanding all of this that I have very inadequately sought to describe, not one of those people were regenerate, not one of them. Not one of them was a Christian. Not one of them was saved in the way that we think of salvation, or not one of them was converted as we think of it today.

That very fact should prompt each and every one of us to do some very deep thinking, and may I be so bold as to suggest that not many of us are very adept at that, thinking deeply. Would you agree with me that in so many ways we learn the, excuse me I can't think of another expression but there's got to be a lot that are better than this, we learn the nuts and bolts of the Christian faith and doctrine. To one degree or another we learn this.

To one degree or another we're sincere in our commitment to those things. And we get on with our lives, and wherever it seems appropriate, which could be every Sunday morning, or whatever else you, whatever blanks you want to fill in, we incorporate those things or we adjust our lives to sort of link up or synchronize with them and then we get on with our lives and do our own thing and so on. And then some crisis occurs and then of course whether it's Sunday or not we go back to try and focus again on these things and so on.

I'm not being cynical, I'm just saying that I think this is how so many of us live our lives, and so on. And to actually draw aside from all the legitimate things of life and present ourselves before the Lord with open hearts and open minds and we say, speak Lord to me, teach me your way Lord. And I'll tell you one thing that I believe very deeply, when God actually responds to that prayer, he takes the initiative in that situation, he'll overturn some of your mental tables, your religious tables, your doctrinal tables.

He changes things. He doesn't just fit into the, you know, and slot onto the tram lines of the way we've been taught in our particular background, whoever we are, or the fellowship way, if there is such a thing. Sadly, I think there is.

And to say Lord, help me out here. I'm not sure that I'm really getting a clear picture of this. I think I'm prejudiced as the result of certain things in my own background, but I need you to adjust my thinking, my understanding.

I want to be brought in line with you. I don't want to be just singing repetitiously, I bow down or I surrender all, or whatever it is. Show me what this is Lord, to be taught of God.

Not merely by my favourite preacher, but speak to me Lord, teach me your way, your word in my heart. And I think if I say no more, that's plenty for us to really go home with, really, and really put into practice. But you know, as I think about this throng of people who I've said are devoutly religious, they're completely sincere, and someone will want to come into your mind and say, well of course they weren't Christians because they were living prior to that.

I understand that. But I'm just making a point out of this. It certainly is true.

And perhaps we'll say a little bit more about that in a moment. But the fact is, just pausing with that observation causes like an alarm to go off in my mind here, because with that observation I think to myself, but I think that this is typical of so many today, who would call themselves Christians, who meet in the various companies, and wherever they are, whatever size they are, and they go through their religious ceremonies, and they're sincere. Remember, as I'm saying sincere, my mind just then went over to Billy Graham and hearing him years and years ago talking about people who are sincere.

He said, but you can be sincerely wrong. And we can be sincere and devout and disciplined in the way that we conduct our lives within the framework of what we understand to be the Christian life. And we can, you know, there could be people listening to me today, here or wherever, I don't know, who attend the services regularly.

They participate in the worship. They may be even people who lead worship, as they say. We listen to preaching.

It could be people who are actually doing the preaching. And they're not lacking sincerity at all. And yet there is one undeniable and very observable at times fact, and that is that there is such incredible shallowness and such incredible degrees of worldliness that are part and parcel of the throng.

We say, are we able to pause long enough this morning and say there's something wrong with this? There's just something wrong. We find in the course of our own lives that we can be with people and there'll be conversation and the conversation can flow very freely and the conversation can be about politics. People have got lots to say and lots to say about sporting events.

That's a big thing in the UK and so on. But when it comes to the things of God, the things we say and imagine that we believe are the most precious things and the most important things of all, we have very little to say about those because our minds and our conversations are crowded in with all the rest of the stuff which is really clutter and debris. And we say, are we satisfied really with that situation? Looking back at this story or this account here, we notice the words are very clear.

Verse 37, it's the last day, the great day of the feast. The routine that I described a little earlier with the carrying of the golden pitcher and the water and so on, that took place once each day for seven days. And as the seventh day finished, that was the end of that particular routine.

But it wasn't the last day of the feast. The last day of the feast was the eighth day. And the eighth day was different.

And it was completely different because in a sense, what they'd been remembering through those earlier days was all genuine, it was legitimate and sincere. But then when they had completed that, then on the eighth day, the sense was that they were looking forward now on this occasion. Because they were familiar with the scriptures I've alluded to just a little earlier that they would have in their Old Testament scriptures, scriptures which look forward.

And there are a variety of them that we could pick on and choose just now. But scriptures that speak about a time when God was going to bring waters and floods, a different time in the Old Testament or the way he provided for them in the wilderness journey. Times when, I'm thinking of Ezekiel 47 for example, where there's a picture prophetically brought there of water flowing from the side of the throne that would flow out and keep flowing.

It would flow out into the desert and various features that are described concerning that river back in that passage. And it would bring life and blessing and fruitfulness wherever it goes and so on. And so they were aware of these things.

And so there's a sense in which on the eighth day, their minds were more focused on the future, on this messianic provision and fulfillment of these prophecies where there was no more water carrying and pouring and so forth and so on. It was just a different kind of a day. And I've talked about Jesus being well aware of a situation in which he speaks or acts.

And clearly I'm bound to believe that Jesus saw this particular moment on this particular day, which was the culmination of the whole feast where people's then and that's somewhere in the future. And Jesus, it was a perfect setting for Jesus who is present on the occasion. And once again, he's up to the moment, he seizes the moment and he cries out with a loud voice there.

And that in itself is very unusual because just cast your mind back into the Old Testament for a moment. It's in Isaiah chapter 42 and verse 12 where we read this in reference to Jesus, the Messiah. And it says, he will not, capital letters there if you like, N-O-T, he will not cry out nor raise his voice to be heard in the street.

But he did raise his voice here. And he did cry out. It was different.

But I believe he saw this moment as being a crucial moment. You know, this could be a crucial moment in your life and your experience this morning. It was a crucial moment and Jesus had something to say that needed to be said in that moment.

For him, it was the last day in another sense. It was the last day that he would be in the temple in this way speaking to the crowd. He had something to say to them.

He was on his way to the cross. It's not only the last day of the feast, but it was a very important day. It was the moment when he must say what needed to be said.

You know, that could very easily be true in your life and mine today. It's a more significant day than any one of us can appreciate. If it's because God wants to say something, that makes it very crucial indeed to us.

And he cries out on this occasion. It would be his last message, if you like, of this kind here in that context. And also, he would know this.

He would know that there were people who would have a name that they live, but are dead. He was speaking to such a company. They had a name that they lived, but they were lacking dreadfully.

And so Jesus used this optical situation, the optics of the situation, to make his own important announcement. And of course, at the same time, the announcement that he made was really nothing less than outrageous. It was an outrageous statement.

They didn't need a code to be broken to understand what Jesus was saying. Let me read it again. 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 innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. What's he saying? In a very, I think, uncoded way, he was saying, I am the Messiah. I am the one that you're looking for and anticipating.

I am he. And if you read more widely in the chapter, you'll see that there's a dispute about him, his own brothers and sisters, according to the flesh. You know that there's a qualifier to put in on that statement.

They were opposed to him and so on, and different things are going on. But he was who he was claiming to be, and he made it very plain, I believe, in this situation. It's as though he, with a group of people who had been thinking about the rock in the wilderness that was smitten by Moses' rod, do you remember? And all of that that pursued in that situation, water gushed out from the rock.

And the Apostle Paul saw this very clearly, because as he writes to the Corinthians, he tells us very plainly that Jesus was the rock that was being smitten. Symbolically, when Moses smote the rock once, that was prophetically referring to Christ, the eternal rock, who would be smitten at the cross. And of course, Moses broke that type on another occasion, didn't he, by smiting the rock twice.

And as a result of that, he could not enter the Promised Land. Do you remember all that story? But the fact is, Jesus is basically saying, I am the rock. He's basically saying that the living water that you read about prophetically will flow from me.

It's as though he's saying, I am the source of that river that Ezekiel was prophesying about, for example, and so on. And it's at this point here in verse 39 that the Apostle John adds this section, which is in parenthesis. And in doing so, he's adding to our understanding an important, in fact, I believe a crucial key that makes sense of what Jesus is saying here on this occasion.

It's as though John is saying to us, let me read the words and then I'll comment on it. 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. I believe John is saying here, if I just paraphrase what I think is his intent on this occasion, he's saying, you know, at that time, at that time when Jesus stood up and cried in the temple on that important day, that feast day, he said, at that point in time, we really didn't understand what he was meaning.

It didn't really come clear to us. We didn't understand how what he was saying really applied to us on that occasion. But now we know.

I think that's what John is saying. And he's telling us plainly that when Jesus made those statements, he was using a metaphor to help us understand, but it was truth that was just beyond our grasp at that particular time. This idea of drinking and coming to him to drink.

But now we see that he was speaking about the Holy Spirit. And they didn't know at that point in time, of course. And this spake he of the Spirit.

What John is really saying, I believe, and what God is saying to you and me in a fresh way this morning, is that every aspect of salvation's blessing and experience is impossible apart from God, the Holy Spirit. In so many cases, the Holy Spirit is made to be almost like an appendage at the end of the Gospel. As though it's something extra that certain people realize they need.

And they need this experience by whatever term or whatever name it is. But the Apostle Paul makes it plain, doesn't he, when he says, if any man has not the Holy Spirit, he's not his. The Holy Spirit is more important to you and to me than we could ever even begin to understand.

It's not just me being brought up in a religious setting and deciding whether or not I'm going to follow this course. So I become religious like my mum and dad. If you were raised in that kind of a home, I was, and many of you are, or were.

But it's more than that. There's a force. There's a being.

There's God who is at work. And he's engaged in something which we believe involves my life and your life. And I think this is true what John is saying here on this occasion.

And so John might say on the one hand, well we didn't experience, we didn't understand it then, but we do now. I believe God is wanting to enlighten each and every one of us just how important it is that we make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit, who as Jesus says here, but I'm just paraphrasing and opening up a little bit what he's saying when he talks about rivers of life flowing out of you. He's really telling us that when people receive the Holy Spirit, we receive the very life of Jesus to be experienced and to be expressed through our lives.

And it would not be of ourselves. It would be of him. And so John is saying that drinking in, receiving the Holy Spirit is the key to everything.

It really is. To everything that pertains to the Christian life. But it's at this point that there's another problem we have to think about.

And that is that no one, I hope you're hearing this, because it's so important, no one acts independently to seek after God. Jesus says if anyone's thirsty, let him come to me and drink. That's a statement of Christ himself.

So it's completely truthful and significant. But here's another approach to the same truth that we have to face. And that is that no one independently, that is no one out there anywhere, whoever it is, wakes up one morning and says I'm going to seek after God today.

That does not happen. And it doesn't happen, I can make the statement it doesn't happen, on the full authority of the Bible. Nowhere better is this seen than in Romans chapter 3. Just let me read two verses, 10 and 11.

It says there's none, listen to this carefully, there's none that's righteous. No, not one. It says there's none that understands.

There's another statement that goes on, there's none or no one seeks for God. No one seeks for God. Again it goes on, it says all have turned aside.

Together they have become worthless. No one does good, not even one. Do you get that? In those couple of verses you've got none, no not one, no one, no one, all, no one, not even one.

That's pretty clear. And so we can say with confidence that there's no one just off their own bat just decides to seek the Lord. So what does that mean? And it means that there's an outside factor, an outside force.

Spurgeon put it this way, listen carefully, you have gone through this form of worship but you have not sought after God. He said I am sick of this empty religiousness. We see it everywhere.

It is not communion with God. It's not getting to God. Indeed God is not in it at all.

He's talking about men and women who do wake up one morning and feel that they're going to seek after God. And what Spurgeon is saying is in line with what I've just read to you from Romans 3, that that is just an act, a human act independent of God. But over here we've got a different category.

We've got God who before time was. How do you get your mind around this? I don't know. But before time was, he made choices and that's why we find the word in the New Testament repeated so many times, elect.

You chose or made choices and so on. And this God is acting in this moment of our lives now making his choices and he is always the initiator. How many times have I said that? He is always the alpha.

He's always the initiator. So it's not just left to man. Those that are born, again, they're born not of the will of man, not of the will of the flesh, but of God.

God must always be the initiator because he is God. And that's exactly what we'll find here. And apart from the Holy Spirit, there is no awakening at all.

He is the awakener. He's the one who speaks. He could be doing that right now as you sit here in this meeting or you listen to this message where he, the Holy Spirit, is moving.

And what the Holy Spirit does in these cases is he speaks not merely to our minds but he speaks to that epicenter, that inner core of our being. Have you ever experienced that? Good to God you're experiencing it just now where it's not merely information coming to our mind but we're sensing something. What shall we call it? We don't know.

John says, well, it's like an anointing. It's a prompting. I don't know.

It's something inside is resonating. Something is saying, yes, inwardly as God by his Spirit begins to move. I believe I'm right to say that that moment when that first happens in a life is the most important thing that can possibly happen in anybody's life who lives in this world.

When God, we use expressions. We know God is everywhere. He's timeless.

He's space. We understand that but we say when God comes to us, but we know what we're thinking about, when somehow we become personally conscious that God is saying something to us, God is handling my life here in this situation, that has to be the most important thing that can possibly happen to us is something. It's taking place and we're being inwardly awakened.

We don't understand everything but something's happening where I know that I know that God's got his attention focused on me for his own purpose at this moment. Whether we respond like this or not, I don't know, but that really ought to be a moment in which we sense joy, that God has got hold of me. He's speaking to me.

It's a moment in which I should be overcome with a sense of privilege. Yes, that sets me apart. It sets me apart just because God has set me apart.

He's speaking to me. He's dealing with me. He's drawing me.

No one can come except the Father draw them. He's drawing me and I sense it. That should fill us with a sense of awe and privilege at that moment and I believe that that activity will continue to intensify in our awakened hearts as we begin to pay attention.

We could make it more profound than that but I think that's what it is. We begin to pay attention to it. He has our attention and it will intensify.

It will intensify, I do believe, until we arrive at an experience inwardly where we can equate our condition to the psalmist who said, as the heart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God. That's what God will do. In other words, he doesn't say, come over here because I want to be your saviour.

Sign this paper and I'll pray this prayer and now off you go and make the best of it out there. It's not like that. It's not like that at all.

That's a deception. It confuses people. It brings people into deception.

He wants to engage with us and insofar as we make ourselves available and we continue to pay attention, he will indeed intensify his involvement in our lives until we realize that there is nothing else in this whole wide world that can satisfy me. The hymn writer said, now none but Christ can satisfy. There's no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

We come to that conclusion. Don't just merely read the text. We do read the text, of course, but we come to the conclusion.

It's a conclusion where, yes, I need to drink. It's not my idea, but God has deliberately, almost systematically increased the heat upon me until he has my full attention and he's now got hold of me in that deep inward part of my being where I want this God to fill my heart and to fill my life. By now we're convinced of the total balance like a wilderness like that out there in the world with all of its voices and its clamor and its gaiety and whatever it is that's going on out there, but we've now come to a point in time where it's as though we're boxed in, in a sense.

Our vision is narrowed down and we see if I can't know God as I'm realizing now I need to know him, there is nothing else in this world. There is no purpose. There's no fulfillment to be found in all these myriads of

things that I'm being told to chase or perhaps your own emotions are wanting to chase, but at the end of the day, they're all empty.

They're all bankrupt, save this one thing. It was Jesus who said only a few chapters earlier in chapter 4 to that woman at Syke as well, he said, if you will drink of the water that I am offering you, you will never thirst again. In other words, nothing will come close to it at all.

When you experience this wonderful, wonderful reality, how would you measure your thirst for God, I wonder? Let me share a little story. I'm drawing to a close. You'd be pleased to know.

This story, it comes out of a brethren book that I have and it's about a brethren family who are missionaries and they tell this story. This is a mum, dad and three sons and they're traveling in central Africa and their purpose is to reach a tribe that have not yet been reached with the gospel and they're traveling and there's no road and there's no trail. This is new territory they're on at this point and they have no compass and they don't realize it but every step they're taking they're moving further and further away from a water supply and things become desperate and they've got some carriers as they would have called them who were helping them carry their belongings and what not and so they actually dispatch their carriers and send them in different directions and they take the water vessels that they've got and they're going in search for water and one day goes by and two days go by and three days go by and things have reached a very serious stage at this point in time and they're looking very definitely at death being imminent.

It's reached that stage and the father encouraged his wife and his boys to come together and they knelt down together in the arid dry ground. The sun is blazing, there's not a cloud in sight and this is the prayer that's recorded by the father. He said, Father in heaven, in the name of your son, we are ready as you know to make the ultimate sacrifice but you are sovereign.

I cry to you, Lord, send us rain. This is that man's testimony. He was one of the boys actually.

He said, as God is my witness, clouds began to appear, lightning and thunder occurred and there was a deluge of rain. He said they grasped everything they could still yet find to hold water and these were his words. He said, we drank and we drank and we drank.

Are you thirsty like that? For God. That is exactly what the Holy Spirit of God is seeking to accomplish in every one of your lives. To draw you away from every other water pit, the broken wells, the empty wells, the call for your attention and they mock you when they fail, said the hymn writer.

The Holy Spirit is seeking to draw us to that place where the thirst becomes so intensified that nothing else can satisfy your heart. In that moment, you yield. One of the wonderful things about this metaphor, this illustration, is that we all know how to drink.

We knew that before we left our mother's womb, we're told. But we all know how to drink and the fact is, just as we've been seeking to emphasize that it's all of the Holy Spirit and it's not of ourselves, not of ourselves, lest any man should boast. It's of God.

So here's this metaphor to illustrate this crucial truth and it's that of drinking. It's not eating, because you have to do something to eat, but you don't have to do anything to drink except receive. Isn't that important? You open your mouth up and just receive, just receive it.

And so it's a perfect illustration. Jesus seized on it. Jesus used it.

The Holy Spirit is using it this morning. So that's all you need to do. It's not a special prayer.

It's not a special response. It's not a special anything. It's just to see the truth, to recognize God is speaking it into your heart and you just surrender.

Earlier on, we won't sing it now this morning, but that song came to my mind, We Bow Down or I Bow Down. That carries the same thought. It's to yield.

It's not saying the words. It's not singing the nice hymn. It's doing it where you surrender your life and you give up.

And then you learn to live like that for the rest of your life. So the truth comes right out in the text, in the original language, as many of you know, where the tense is the present continuing tense. If any man thirsts for him, come unto me and drink and keep drinking.

And for those who drink and keep drinking, there's a river that will flow and keep flowing. And that's the promise of Jesus and it's the work of the Holy Spirit this morning. Let's pray.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/UoJ6irs0710.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fred-tomlinson/thirsting/>

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