

- I. Believing results in receiving the Holy Spirit
  - A. John 7:37-39 . . . 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 [Holy] Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
  - B. Prayer
- II. What the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit means for us today
  - A. In vs 38, Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" (possibly from Isaiah 44:3; 55:1; 58:11; Zechariah 14:8)
  - B. The first thing I want to point out is that in using the metaphor of a flowing river of living water, Jesus is giving us a picture of an unending abundance of all the things that make up life.
    1. And the word life in this context speaks of one who is alive physically and spiritually because he believes in Jesus and lives accordingly.
      - a. Those who are alive physically but do not believe in Jesus are alive temporarily, and the life they live is the lowest, weakest, and meaningless form of life. In other words, from the eternal, spiritual perspective, they are dead even though they live.
      - b. In contrast, those who believe in Jesus and live accordingly are alive eternally – even though they will die physically. And the life they live, here and on into eternity, is faith based, God pleasing, love driven, relationship focused, contented, kind and compassionate, patient and merciful, mindful of those less fortunate, humble and meek, saintly at home as well as abroad, intimate with God, peace-filled and joy-filled, and therefore unimaginably satisfying regardless of the circumstances.
    2. Now if you can imagine all of this flowing from your innermost being and touching the lives of those around you, then you are getting the picture of what Jesus means when He speaks of living water flowing from your innermost being. And this brings us to the second thing I want to point out from vs 38.

- C. The second thing I want to point out is that the work of the Holy Spirit which Jesus is speaking of here in vs 38, takes place, first and foremost, within us.
1. It is true that most of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit's work are outward – such as the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.
    - a. However, even though the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are most often outward, His work in the individual life of the believer is first and foremost inward.
    - b. And just so we keep all this in its proper perspective, Jesus said the Holy Spirit does this work in those who believe in Him. And as we have seen from the rest of scripture, believing in Jesus includes trusting Him fully, submitting to His authority, obeying His commands, doing His will, and pressing on in becoming holy just as God is holy.
  2. So why is it so important for the work of the Holy Spirit to take place inside us when the manifestations of His work are outward?
    - a. It is important because who we are on the inside is who we are.
      - (1) We can pretend to be someone we aren't so that our outside is different from who we are on the inside.
      - (2) Yet in spite of our efforts to hide our true selves and pretend we are someone we aren't, who we are inside affects what we think, how we think, what we believe, what we value, what we fear, what we long for, how we speak, and how we behave.
    - b. Therefore, in spite of our best efforts – at times – to hide who we are on the inside, those who are discerning, that is those who recognize the true nature of the fruit hanging from the tree, will see through our facade and recognize who we really are.
    - c. Jesus said as much in Matthew 7:15-20, "Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? [17] So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. [18] A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. . . [20] So then, you will know them by their fruits." And in the same way, you will be known by your fruit.
  3. Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit takes place, first and foremost, inside because that is how to get true and lasting godliness on the outside. For example,
    - a. If you are among those who believe, you will be among those who submit and obey.

- b. If you submit and obey, you will be among those who willingly yield to the inward working of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. If you willingly yield, you will be progressively changed on the inside, which in turn will progressively produce a variety of godly manifestations on the outside – that to the discerning eye will be seen as coming from the Holy Spirit’s work in you.
  - d. And it is these outward manifestations of godliness on the outside that are the flowing rivers of living water spoken of in vs 38.
4. I suspect we can all agree that the outward workings and manifestations of the Holy Spirit can inspire, draw a crowd, influence people for good, and bring joy to those healed or helped or loved or comforted or cared for in some way.
- a. And yet, it is the inward working of the Holy Spirit that leads and teaches and empowers us to grow in love, purity, generosity, hospitality, meekness, humility, compassion, kindness, gentleness, patience, sensibleness, and any other attribute of godliness and Christ-likeness you can think of.
  - b. And though these qualities may not make you stand out in a crowd or give you the excitement associated with being part of public and miraculous works of God, they do speak love, tenderness, kindness, compassion, and other godly things to those whose lives you touch – which most often is those nearest to you.
  - c. And what greater miracle can we be part of than the miracle of love which speaks of the love of God to those around us?
5. Now you may be wondering, if Jesus said this is what will take place in the lives of those who believe in Him, and if this kind of life comes from the Holy Spirit working in us, why is it so hard to be this way and why aren’t all Christians this way?
- a. There are several answers that you might find helpful, but for the sake of time, I want to draw your attention to just one portion of scripture.
  - b. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22 . . . We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. [15] See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. *(Do you see that this is an exhortation to community involvement in each individual’s pursuit of holiness? Now consider, how does the lack of community involvement slow or even hinder the work of the Holy Spirit within us?)* [16] Rejoice always; [17] pray without ceasing; [18] in

everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. [19] Do not quench (*extinguish or stifle*) the Spirit; [20] do not despise prophetic utterances. [21] But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; [22] abstain from every form of evil.

- c. I submit to you that to the degree we humbly, honestly, graciously, and compassionately practice these words as a church, to that degree we will encourage and promote the fruit of living waters coming from within each other.

D. The third and final thing I want to address in relation to vs 38, are some of the works of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

1. The Holy Spirit teaches us what we need to know about God, His word, and His ways (John 14:26;16:13-15; I John 2:27).
2. The Holy Spirit reveals more and more of God's truth to us as we become able to receive it (I Corinthians 2:9-13).
3. The Holy Spirit leads us and empowers us to live a godly life so that in following the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are kept from living according to the world, our flesh, and the devil (Romans 8:2-4,13; Galatians 5:16).
4. The Holy Spirit works in us to change us so that we gain the condition necessary to bear what the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit. And it is in bearing such fruit that we honor God, exalt Jesus, and bless those who receive the benefits of this fruit (Galatians 5:22-24).
5. It is the Holy Spirit who knows the mind of God and who knows us so well that He can effectively pray on our behalf when we want to pray but don't know what to say (Romans 8:26).
6. The Holy Spirit empowers us to do the work of building the church, both spiritually and numerically (I Corinthians 12:7-11).
7. And the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of true Christians so that they have a mindset and attitude of unity and love for one another (Ephesians 4:1-3).

III. Division in the church and among God's people

- A. John 7:40-44 . . . Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet." [41] Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? [42] Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants 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 wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

B. Division occurred in the crowd because of Jesus

1. These verses are not the only place that speaks of division among the religious Jews because of Jesus.
  - a. We read in John 9:15-16 . . . Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." [16] Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.
  - b. And again in John 10:19-21 . . . A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. [20] Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?" [21] Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"
2. Paul addresses the problem of division in the church and among God's people in –
  - a. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 . . . Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. [11] For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. [12] Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." [13] Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?
  - b. And Paul spoke of the character and spiritual condition of those who cause division, and how we ought to deal with them, in Romans 16:17-18 . . . Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. [18] For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
3. We live in a world where there is an abundance of damaged and broken relationships. And sadly, these damaged or broken relation-

ships are not only found in the world – among unbelievers, they are found in the church – among those who share the same Father, Savior, and Holy Spirit, and the same baptism, Bible, and Lord's Table.

- a. Whatever the reason is that we are prone to damaging or breaking off relationships, or whatever our reason for ignoring and tolerating the damage we have done, let me give you some of the Bible's views of this issue.
  - b. Matthew 5:23-24 . . . Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.
  - c. Romans 12:10 . . . Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.
  - d. Romans 12:16-18 . . . Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. [17] Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. [18] If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
  - e. James 1:19-20 . . . This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; [20] for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.
  - f. Ephesians 4:26-27 . . . Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and do not give the devil an opportunity.
  - g. Colossians 3:12-14 . . . So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. [14] Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.
4. As Christians, the responsibility starts with us to do what we can to make relationships work, to offer healing when damaged, and to offer forgiveness and reconciliation when broken. Of course, if we have contributed to the division, we are responsible to take the first step in apologizing, seeking forgiveness, making wrongs right, and moving forward in restoring the relationship.

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. I wanted to talk more specifically about division in the church, but time does not permit.
- B. However, if we as individual Christians and as a group of believers would live by the scriptures just considered, that would remove much of the dissension and division that exists and will continue to exist within the Body of Christ.
- C. May we, like Jesus, value peace and the things that make for peace, in our homes, extended families, neighborhoods, workplace, and church.