

The smartest ones wait until late July or the month of August. And they watch the forecast to ensure they don't miss the opportunity. They've got a cooler for the ice, and they use lots of sugar and lots of real lemon, because with the perfect recipe you can get more return customers, and then they put on their cutest smiles, throw up their sign and stand, and they invite any passerby, or any out doing yard work, to come and be refreshed for only a buck twenty-five—tips more than welcome.

And as much as it's a bunch of little kids capitalizing on your thirst in order to make some money for their own candy or slushies, there is something really, truly refreshing about that lemonade. Or an iced coffee, or some ice water. Your body is wiped and it needs to be enlivened and those wise children hold your answer for only a few dollars. It won't be long, I bet, before they have tap with a tip option.

Jesus offers something similar for even less of a cost, we heard, today. Jesus had made His way to Jerusalem for the feast of booths, a time to remember and rejoice in God's provision for His people, a time to anticipate His total renewal of the land, when there would be no more need anymore.

After a week of feasting and remembering, just before everyone packs up to leave, Jesus stands up and offers Living Water to any who would hear and come.

"If anyone is thirsty."

Jesus doesn't look around for those whom He wants to share His gift with. He doesn't have a standard of morality or appearance or lineage before they can venture towards Him to receive what He gives. "Anyone who thirsts." All a person needs is to be thirsty. You just have to have a very human need, and He will provide refreshment for no cost.

Now, we've learned earlier in John what Jesus means when He talks about Living Water. He made the same promise, He gave the same gift, to the Samaritan woman at the well three chapters prior. She anticipated earthly living water, that is, fresh, potable, not stagnant but genuinely refreshing to whoever grabs a cup. But the water Jesus gives is that of new life, the forgiveness of sins and the hope for life today and forevermore. His water is being introduced to, and walking with, the Messiah.

And here He offers this lucrative gift to not an individual but to the masses (and in the following verses, this promise is quite controversial). Living water, that which is basic to life, refreshing us each day and giving us the strength and energy to carry on into the next moment, is for any and all who would bring their thirst to Him.

If such a perfect gift is free, why are there so many walking, no, dragging themselves around in dehydration? Sluggish feet and lifeless eyes shouldn't be a thing if the gift of perfect life, rejuvenated life is on offer, a free sample to be snagged as you pass by Jesus.

But people, us included, don't love acknowledging that they are in need, that they cannot do it all themselves. With the correct google searches; with enough days of trying again, trying harder; with enough time or the correct community or the newest routine and diet and workout I can make my life what it needs to be. I can make it satisfying and justifiable and I can get my mind and body and soul to just click together to do away with the aches I feel, the dissonance I experience between who I am and who I know I should be. I can quench my own thirst if I search hard enough; you don't need to hand it to me, Jesus—you can care for other charity cases who aren't as strong or smart or determined.

And yet He cries out, over and over and over again, to invite us to receive satisfaction for our thirst. He's been doing it since the beginning, and it happened definitively and dramatically on the Day of Pentecost, and He will keep crying out until the very last second prior to His return. He offers the free gift of Himself right in the midst of people's lives, in their language, in their community, smack dab in the middle of their joys and successes and fears and failures. Peter got up and preached as the Spirit directed Him and He spoke of Christ, Him crucified and risen for the salvation, the quenching, of all present. Just as Jesus predicted, just as the prophesying elders in Numbers pointed towards. And then that they would know that their thirst was quenched on Pentecost, they get drowned in Baptism, risen then and there in the perfect new life of Christ.

If anyone thirsts, come to me and drink. Believe in me, and rivers of living water will pour forth from your heart.

So Jesus doesn't want you to bring a cup. First and foremost because He isn't truly giving out crisp H<sub>2</sub>O, but He's giving out life-refreshing Himself. Second of all, a cup wouldn't be enough. When the kids on your block give you lemonade, it satisfies until it's gone, and then you need another glass. What Jesus gives is unending, a stream that just won't quit.

And we learn that to come and drink is nothing other than to believe. To trust in this moment and then again in that and then still time after time after time. It is to see who Christ is, how He is love incarnate, God made flesh to live and die and rise for the salvation of little old needy you, and to realize that it was His joy to crush your enemy, to die to your sin, and even His joy to chase you down and to offer it all to you free of charge.

So to those who believe in Him, who recognize their need and His need-meeting gifts, He gives more than enough to satisfy. But as I said, this isn't simply a one-and-done "Yes, I believe" but it is a believing that is on-going. It is trusting in Him as you wake up, and knowing that He is sufficient for your strength as you go about your job and as you live out your relationships. His forgiveness is perfect when you've made a right mess in all those areas that you knew better and even had His strength and guidance to help you to do better. He is your life when your days are going well and when they are crumbling before you, even when death is circling around you. This is what it means to believe in Him, to remember that He has given you enough Living Water from Calvary as it poured from His side and in the empty tomb as new life sprung forth; He has give you enough to keep you going long-past your last day and every day until then.

And when you believe in that—when you remember how much satisfaction He has on offer just because you are in need—then He promises that He won't simply satisfy you, but He will send forth His life sustaining water, He will send forth Himself through you, through your words and actions and whole life, that others may drink deeply, that they may be cared for and come to faith in Him as well.

We see this in all the elders, including Eldad and Medad in the camp, prophesying God's Word, and on the day of Pentecost we see Moses' hopes and dreams come to pass—all the Lord's people become prophets. And what is it that they prophesy, that they proclaim? The Holy Spirit does not give them mystic and super-spiritual things to declare. It's not as though each receives something long hidden and now to be revealed.

They simply are all proclaiming the wonders of Christ, culminating in His death and resurrection for the salvation of His people. And in the same way, all that the Spirit does in your life, all the rejuvenation He does for you, all the gifts He gives to you, all of it is to point you again to Christ that you would be renewed by His work on your behalf, and that your life would proclaim His love through what you do and say. The Spirit proclaims Christ to you, and shapes you into Christ that He might proclaim Christ through you. This is what God has been doing through His Word since the

beginning, and He takes this same saving Word and proclaims it through His people, the Church, until that last breath before our saving Christ returns and reveals to us the unending life that He has promised to us and even begun in us today.

The Spirit was sent to ensure that Christ, and all His free gifts, are proclaimed in all the earth. The Spirit was sent to you, and now dwells with you, that you may have Christ's peace and His joy, His forgiveness and His freedom, His love and His life. And all of it is completely free of charge for you because Christ has already paid the high price, that of His love. And so the Spirit comes your way so that it would not all be in vain, but would truly be enjoyed today and for the rest of your eternity.

So bring your need, your thirst, to Christ, and He will certainly pour out His Spirit upon you, giving you all the blessings of Heaven that He has won for you, that He yearns to give to you.

Amen.