**John 7:37-39 (ESV)**

*On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

**“Christ Confirms The Spirit”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. The internet has become its own kind of gathering in our modern times. People are able to connect with others from all over the face of the earth. Barriers once between cultures, languages, and other distinctions are blurring together at an ever-increasing rate. Some countries are trying to control the internet phenomenon, but it is far from preventing the overall influence. As what the phone and TV in years past did. This new wave of technology now draws even more people together. Just as a social aspect exists on the internet, so a spiritual climate is present as well. It is a chaotic world where every religious thought and appeal goes around and around in a matter of seconds.

Unlike Pentecost, the internet holds a spirit of confusion by cramming everything and anything together. This interconnected people finally have no place they can truly call “home.” As much as Pentecost falls into a part of the Church Year. It is not an isolated event cutoff from the promise of salvation made at the very beginning or what continues into the future. God as the life-giver has been hard at work by His Word throughout the history of the Old Testament. Pentecost just happens to be the point of origin where trickling streams collide into a raging flood for the baptized. This interconnected people have a place to call “home.” The Spirit calls and directs us all to Jesus hidden in His Church. Christ confirms His promise that the Spirit works to satisfy, send, and let us celebrate Him alone as Savior.

When Jesus originally proclaimed the Holy Spirit. It was during a festival different from Pentecost for it had to do with water. The Feast of tabernacles remembered Israel’s wandering in the wilderness. God was the fountain of life for His people. St. John the Apostle told us, “On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” On the eighth day of the festivities, the Spirit cried out from Christ for He was the foundation of life sent by the Father. The same Spirit cried out on parched lips of the Savior at the crucifixion saying, “It is finished.” The Spirit on Pentecost also filled the disciples with miraculous languages so people amazingly said, “We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” This disruption of good news by the Spirit invites the thirsty to drink deeply of Christ’s forgiveness for sinners.

Bad news is what we typically deal with from day to day. Instead of causing thirst though, most of us learn to ignore it, excuse it away, or blame it all on someone else. However, the invitation from Christ is to come to Him! Without thirst who needs to drink? What is Christ as Savior if sinfulness cannot be seen for what it is? What is the Gospel without the Law leaving us barren? Martin Luther declares,

“When the Word was first proclaimed twelve or fifteen years ago, the people hearkened to it eagerly… People remarked: “Thank God, we now have water to drink!” At that time they were thirsty, and the Gospel doctrine tasted good to them… But now we are sated and tired of the drink. Therefore God will have to forsake us and let us die of thirst, for He remains only with those who feel their wretched condition. [[1]](#footnote-1)

The promise of Pentecost is God fills pitiful lives with the Holy Spirit. Yet, we today are a therapeutic kind of people not needing forgiveness just approval for my way of life. Satisfaction is now to twist the Scriptures to our will rather than surrendering to the Spirit. Suffering the Law, having sadness over sin, and feeling loss is why the Father gave His Son as the sacrifice for a sinful world. This is disturbing good news for the despairing, weak, lonely, hard-pressed, and thirsty. “Come to me” is Jesus crying out to save, redeem, forgive, and lift up all so the Holy Spirit may satisfy our life by the Gospel.

 Those satisfied by the justifying work of Jesus do not just go away empty-handed. The Spirit is sent out into our lives. God has no desire to leave us alone. The Savior said, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" This river burst forth on Pentecost as Peter stood up with eleven to proclaim what scripture promised. “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy…” This pouring out came by baptism for all into the death and life of Jesus. The water that washes away the sinner also brings forth a saint as promised by the Word. What has been coming out of Pentecost is a river of life flooding this world of sin and death. It is a movement by the Holy Spirit sending the Church out with the Word and Sacraments. This witness to the Gospel and its blessings brings nourishment to all kinds of people. The life-giving Spirit of God does not pick and choose. He goes forth into the lives of each and every baptized disciple of Jesus.

 As a river has a source, it also flows in a direction carving out a path along the way. When we side step our witness to the Gospel or “pass the buck” in the Church. When we deny the fact of how the Spirit makes us stick out in this world. When we have no love to serve our neighbor by sacrifice of self. All of this shows the river of baptism has become a trickling stream if not stagnant water. The Holy Spirit keeps demanding His rightful place in our life. It is a call to repent, to turn back to the Savior whose heart bursts forth with love for us. There is no stagnant water with Him. His sacrifice continues to be a river flowing over our whole life. The Divine Service is the source where Christ comes to save by His Word and Sacrament. As our Lutheran Fathers states,

“But when we are consoled by faith through hearing the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit, so that we can think rightly about God, fear him, and believe in Him.” (Tappert 125:135).

The Spirit springs forth with newness whenever we hold fast to Jesus. Those returning to baptism are blessed with the Savior and they in turn will be a blessing to others. It may not be in the glorious works as reserved for those on Pentecost. Yet, St. Paul still says, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone” (1 Cor. 12:4-6). The Spirit works among our various lives helping others and leading them to Jesus as the source of this ever-flowing river of life.

If the festival of tabernacle was about God nourishing His people in the wilderness. Jesus knew that He would turn Pentecost into a harvest festival of salvation that came from His death and resurrection. As St. John said, “Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” The activity of the Spirit on Pentecost continues to the present day. It is a celebration for the Church over what the Father has given by His Son. As this river of life keeps flowing forth, the Spirit produces a harvest connecting all to Jesus by Word and Sacrament. This celebration cannot stay in one place because it keeps flowing forward twisting and turning throughout the world.

As Jesus received a divided response at the festival, so too the disciples had a divided response on Pentecost over proclaiming Christ. Yet, nothing stops the celebration won by the cross. Even the great internet of today cannot stand against the internal working of the Spirit among the baptized. He is present not only throughout cultures, but throughout time and without confusion. Christ confirms His promise the Spirit works to satisfy, send, and let us celebrate Him alone as Savior. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting, Amen.

1. Luther, M. (1999, c1959). *Vol. 23*: *Luther's works, vol. 23 : Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 6-8* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Jn 7:38). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)