

Rivers of Living Water

by John Edmiston

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Spiritual ministry depends on the supply of the Spirit. In times of great faith and revival spiritual ministry flourishes. In times of unbelief and apostasy spiritual ministry is almost unbearably difficult.

The first, and often the most difficult step is to believe that God wants to FREELY give us an abundant supply of the Holy Spirit:

Luke 11:13 MKJV *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*

God gives the Spirit as a Father gives food to a child, that is freely, for the asking. The child asks for bread or an egg and the Father gives the appropriate food. The Spirit is given '*to those who ask Him*'. And we are to ask as needy children ask when they are hungry; humbly, yet insistently – trusting in the goodness of our Father.

John 3:34 MKJV *For He whom God has sent speaks the Words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.*

God is infinite and gracious and He has no need to be stingy, nor does He even have any desire to be stingy. In fact He is a God of abundant goodness (John 10:10). He doesn't give His gifts drop by drop, cautiously watching to see if everyone 'has just the right amount' as if it is a pie that has to be carefully cut into the right sized pieces. God does not have to give the Spirit out in such small careful doses. His supply is abundant. He will graciously give a mighty empowering of the Spirit to all who ask for it.

John 4:10-14 MKJV *Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give Me to drink, you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water. (11) The woman said to Him, Sir, you have no vessel, and the well is deep. From where then do you have that living water? (12) Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his children and his cattle? (13) Jesus answered and said to her, Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again, (14) but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

Jesus promised the living water of the Holy Spirit to the Samaritan woman as a completely gracious act that had no regard for her nationality, her broken lifestyle

or her theological misunderstandings. And Jesus told her that if she drank at His well it would not be a static well but a spring, an abundant supply, continuously springing up into everlasting life. There was no sense of her having to earn such a great blessing.

John 7:37-39 MKJV *And in the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. (38) He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (39) (But He spoke this about the Spirit, which they who believed on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

During the great feast the priest would fill a golden pitcher with water from the Fountain of Siloam, and bring it back to the temple amid music and joyful shouts. Advancing to the altar of burnt-offering, at the cry of the people, "Lift up thy hand!" he would empty the pitcher toward the west, and toward the east a cup of wine, while the people chanted, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

Jesus stands up on the last day of the Feast, after this has happened seven times on previous days and declares: *If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. (38) He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* Jesus is clearly referring to the water-pouring ceremony described above and John interprets it as reference to the Holy Spirit. The implications are that:

- a) All who believe will have an abundant supply of the Holy Spirit
- b) The 'rivers' of Christ are immeasurably greater than the golden pitchers of Judaism
- c) We will joyfully draw water from the wells of salvation that are in Christ.

This abundant supply of the Holy spirit comes to '*those who believe*' and this is backed up by Galatians which tells us that we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith and not through any religious works 'of the Law':

Galatians 3:2, 5 MKJV *This only I would learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith? ... (5) Then He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, is it by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?*

Galatians 3:14 MKJV *so that the blessing of Abraham might be to the nations in Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Anyone who thirsts can take of the water of life freely:

Isaiah 55:1 MKJV *Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

Revelation 21:6 MKJV *And He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain of the Water of Life freely.*

Revelation 22:17 MKJV *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let the one hearing say, Come! And let the one who is thirsty come. And he willing, let him take of the Water of Life freely.*

So we see that the Holy Spirit is supplied freely, abundantly and without restriction to those who believe, who ask as a little child, and who thirst for the Living Water of God.

You don't need any money, or to be of a certain nationality or to have your life together. God freely and graciously supplies the Holy Spirit through faith to the Gentiles, to the Samaritan woman, to the spiritually thirsty and so on. It is the poor in spirit that inherit the Kingdom of God. There is no reason to doubt or to hold back. God wants all Christians to flow mightily in the Spirit and that includes you.

Satan tries to convince us that we do not deserve an abundant supply of the Holy Spirit, but God tells us that our sins are forgiven and that His supply is by grace alone. Another lie is that the supply of the Holy Spirit is reserved for special people such as ministers and missionaries. But the Scriptures tell us that God supplies to all as a heavenly father, giving freely to him who asks and him who believes. A third lie is that the mighty works of the Holy Spirit are for another time or for another generation, but Peter refutes this on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:38-39 MKJV *Then Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ to remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

The Holy Spirit is the power behind all truly spiritual ministry and He is given freely to those who thirst and who believe and who come to God asking to be filled with the Holy Ghost each day:

Ephesians 5:18-20 MKJV *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, (19) speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; (20) always giving thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Enjoy God! Rejoice in Jesus! Ask for the full abundance of the Holy Spirit!

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