

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, April 18, 2024

Today is Thursday, April 18 and we are studying the Gospel of John.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed Lord God, as I begin another day, I seek your face. I calm the chattering of my busy mind, slow my breathing, and focus on you - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As I continue to study the Gospel of John, open my heart and mind to hear the particular message you have for me today. Bring your blessing with the reading of this holy word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet." Others said, "He is the Messiah." Still others asked, "How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" John 7:37-42

REFLECTION

It was the last day of the Festival of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem. The highlight of the festival was the water-drawing ceremony. The priests would draw water from the Pool of Siloam and lead a procession to the Temple. Beautiful pitchers of water were ceremoniously brought to the Temple and poured out as a libation upon the altar for the people's wholeness and healing. The water signified the Biblical promise that in the time of restoration, rivers of living water would flow from the Temple. This promise was supported by prophetic scriptures read on the last day of the Festival of the Tabernacles. Ezekiel 47 promised that rivers of water would flow from the Temple and Zechariah 14 said healing waters will flow from Jerusalem.

In the middle of this sacred annual libation ceremony, as the water is being poured out upon the altar, Jesus cried out in a loud voice and named himself as the source of the living water. "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (John 7:37).

Jesus is the source of the living water in our lives. The river of life is not something outside of us, it is the life of God within us. The Holy Spirit-filled people of God are the river of life. A flowing conduit of vitality, healing and wholeness bubbling up from the heart of believers. Our physical bodies need water. There is a distinct connection between water and sleep. When our bodies do not receive enough water during the day, we can become sluggish and tired. When our bodies become dehydrated during the night, it is enough to wake us up from a deep sleep to quench our thirst. We soon find ourselves stumbling into the kitchen for a glass of cool water. So it is with our souls - we need to wake up from our spiritual slumber and drink of the water of

life, Jesus Christ. Do you want more of the spiritual life? More of God? More of the Holy Spirit? Do you want to go deeper with Jesus? It is time to wake up. It is time to quench your thirst. Come to the Living Water.

Ask: How is the true condition of my soul? Am I awake or sleepy, thirsty or filled?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I seek you, I long for you, my soul thirsts for you. Forgive me for continually trying to satisfy myself with the meager things of this world and not seeking the gift of Living Water you provide. As the priest poured out the water from the Pool of Siloam upon the altar of the Temple, pour out your life-giving water upon the temple of my heart. Awaken my soul and revive my parched spirit. I believe in you. I come to you thirsty and ask for a drink. May a river of living water flow from within me and move out to bring life and blessing to others. Amen.