

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK FIFTEEN: THE INVITATION OF JESUS

READING

37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” 39 (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.) 40 When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, “Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.” 41 Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others said, “But he can’t be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? 42 For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.” 43 So the crowd was divided about him. 44 Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him. John 7 (NLT)

TEACHING

Last week we read about Jesus teaching at the Feast of Booths. On the last day of that feast, Jesus gave an amazing invitation to everyone who was there. When Jesus spoke of being thirsty, he wasn’t talking about literal thirst. Jesus was revealing something about our human nature: We all are driven to find something or someone to satisfy us, to make us happy, to take away our sadness. And that thirst drives people to do all sorts of things. It can make you say hurtful words. It can lead you to lose your joy when you’re having a bad day. The “thirst” can cause people to break promises, change who they are, and do things they know are wrong.

But as we learned in John 4, Jesus is the Living Water. He is the only one who satisfies the soul and brings lasting joy and peace into our hearts and lives. Jesus was the one the Jewish people were waiting for, but they were divided in their opinions about him. They knew Jesus was from Nazareth in Galilee and the Old Testament prophecies stated that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. They didn’t know that Jesus WAS born in Bethlehem even though he grew up in Nazareth. Some of them made their decision about Jesus with only some of the information. It’s worth it to study and learn everything we can about Jesus so that we don’t miss out on all he has to offer because of our lack of understanding.

RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

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- When was the last time you were invited to a party? Were you excited? Why?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- In this story, who gives an amazing invitation to the crowd?
- In this story, anyone who is thirsty is invited to drink but it isn't talking about the water or juice we drink from a cup. Who is the living water?

CHILDREN:

- In this story, what was the invitation given by Jesus and what do you think it means?
- How did people respond to Jesus' invitation?
- Why it is important to study and learn everything we can about Jesus?

TEENAGERS:

- What did Jesus mean by "thirst?"
- What are some harmful ways people satisfy their thirst? Why doesn't it work?
- Why do you think people are still divided in their opinions about Jesus?

ADULTS:

- What "thirsts" in your life have too much control over you? In what ways is Jesus better than any of those things?
- How much time do you spend studying and learning about Jesus? What next step could you take to be a better student of the person and work of Jesus?

PRAYER

God, Thank you that you invite us to come and find life in you! Jesus, thank you that you do not leave us thirsty and with nowhere to turn. Thank you that you satisfy our thirsts. Help me to look to you first and always for everything my heart and soul craves. As others around me are divided in their opinions about you, help me to stay steady and committed in my love for you and my trust in you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

In this passage, Jesus references the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. But as the text points out, the Spirit had not yet been sent because Jesus had not yet died, resurrected and ascended. You can read in John 14 and 16 about Jesus' promise to send His Spirit. Paul wrote, "*The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.*" (Romans 8:11 NLT). This is the living water that flows from the hearts of those who respond to Jesus' invitation to come and drink. The Holy Spirit works in our hearts to bring life in us and around us.