

“It’s Inside” A sermon by Lee Ireland
Cathedral City Community Presbyterian Church
June 4, 2017 Pentecost
John 7:37-39

Prayer: Open our eyes to see your Spirit in our life. Open our hearts to receive the blessings you send each day. Guide us with your wisdom so that through us Christ may walk on the earth once again. Amen.

It’s Pentecost Sunday, the day we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. Why in the world have I chosen to focus my sermon on this scripture from John where Jesus offers drink to those who are thirsty. A drink that he says will produce living waters in the heart of the believers – rivers of living waters that flow out of the heart of the believers.

I have chosen John instead of the Acts scripture because I would like for us to look at the Holy Spirit from another perspective - beyond the Spirit’s arrival in the rushing wind and tongues of fire on the head of the disciples.

The picture of the Holy Spirit that Jesus presents as recorded in John isn’t about either rushing wind or tongues of fire, but about living water that is inside of you. That living water is the Spirit given by Jesus and is inside of you and me. The Holy Spirit flows out like a river of living water.

These verses connect water and the Spirit. Where else has Jesus done this? Jesus tells the confused Nicodemus that **“no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.”** In a different encounter, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman: **“The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”**

In today’s scripture, Jesus is attending the Feast of Tabernacles. At the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews celebrate how God took care of the Hebrew people during their 40 years of wandering in the desert as they travelled to the Promised Land. At the Feast of Tabernacles the people were celebrating the gift of water that God provided in the wilderness. During the feast, the Temple priests would pour out water to God and pray for rain for the coming year’s crops. Against this backdrop, Jesus tells the people that he can satisfy their spiritual thirst, just as he told the Samaritan women.

Now what does all this have to do with Pentecost when the promised Holy Spirit arrived? The last verse of our reading explains that the living water is the Holy Spirit: **Now he (Jesus) said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.** This is not Jesus speaking, but the writer of the text explaining the Holy Spirit is the living water that Jesus will provide after he gives up his human body and returns to the Father. At the time Jesus said these words, the Holy Spirit had not arrived. It arrived at Pentecost.

Later in John, chapter 14, we have Jesus’ words that say the same thing when he tells the disciples: **“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you the Holy Spirit. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”** I have summarized Jesus’ words to emphasize that Jesus himself reveals that he will send the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit will be in you, will be a part of you. Jesus is the source of

the living water, the Holy Spirit, which arrived on Pentecost and is still with us today. Yes, I said is still with us today. The Holy Spirit is with you and me right now.

I have said several times that this living water is inside you and flows out of you. Whether you realize it or not, Christ-followers have living water, the Holy Spirit, that can flow out of them to others.

In the last several months I've been considering this concept that the Holy Spirit is in us. What I've been puzzling about is how to pray about the Holy Spirit. It seems we usually pray for the Holy Spirit to come into our lives and direct us, to lead us so that we may live a life pleasing to God. But God has already given us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is inside us and ready to flow out.

Since I already have the Holy spirit inside of me, my prayers have moved from asking the Holy Spirit to come into my life to asking the Holy Spirit to flow out of me in ways that are useful to God.

You have the Holy Spirit, the streams of living water in you. You don't need to ask for it every time you need it. You just need to ask the best way to use it. Ask Jesus. He can tell you how best to use the Holy Spirit that is in you. And the Holy Spirit's best use? Using your life to bring God glory!

We will feel parched from time to time. We all become discouraged. At those times, I think we lose our perspective. We forget that Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit. But I want you to remember that you already have the living water in you. It's inside us ready to flow out.

How does it flow out? What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These gifts flow out of us so that we can be concerned for others, so that we can share with them the Holy Spirit and they can also enjoy love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, that living water that is in each of us. The Spirit that prays for us when our concerns are too deep for words. The Spirit that others see in us that make them want to know Jesus. The Spirit that enables us to live a life pleasing to God.

On this Pentecost Sunday, I am thankful for the Holy Spirit that is in each one of you. May you draw on that living water and may it flow out of you as rivers of living waters. Amen!