

A SPRING OR A SPONGE?

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John 7:37-39

1. God's original intent for local churches was for them to be equipping centers and not entertainment centers. Ephesians 4:11-13

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service**, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

2. Churches were to provide people what they needed to represent Christ and His Kingdom in the world, rather than pandering to their personal preferences and desires.

3. Initially evangelism was the byproduct of what happened when prepared and equipped followers of Jesus Christ left their gatherings and went out into the world in which they lived.

4. When a church makes evangelism the main emphasis of their gathering together they have departed from God's original intent, because that which leads to discipleship is neglected.

NOTE: God intended evangelism is to be outgrowth, the result, of our coming together.

5. My last message on this passage focused on a case supposed, a remedy proposed, and a promise held out.

6. In this message we will focus on some additional implications of this passage.

I. "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."

A. Here is a simple but profound solution related to our real needs.

B. Because of sin most people are looking for meaning and fulfillment where it cannot be found. Psalm 63:1

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, **in a dry and weary land where there is no water**.

NOTE: David knew where to satisfy his thirst, his real need in life, while most people are looking in all the wrong places.

C. God, speaking through Isaiah, made a promise to those who are thirsty. Isa 44:1-4

"But now listen, O Jacob, My servant, and Israel, whom I have chosen: 2 Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; and you Jeshurun whom I have chosen. 3 'For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants; 4 and they will spring up among the grass like poplars by streams of water.'"

D. Sadly most people are drinking at the wrong fountain.

E. Apart from Jesus Christ no person will have the ultimate need of their life satisfied, but those who come to Jesus and drink will find life, life more abundant, life eternal.

II. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said..."

A. Many profess to believe in Jesus, but not in accordance with the Scripture.

B. Consequently what the Scripture says will be true of those who are born again is not true in their lives.

C. The Word of God and the work of God are forever linked together.

III. "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living (life-giving) water."

- A. Those who partake of, and continue to partake of, what is found in Jesus Christ, will become artesian wells rather than sponges.
- B. Most people come to church looking for something, rather than desiring to become someone God can use.
- C. The right thirst will bring us to the right Spring, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, from our innermost beings, will flow rivers of living (life-giving) water.
- D. The life of Jesus Christ will be manifested in our mortal flesh. 2 Corinthians 4:11
- E. God will manifest through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Jesus in every place. (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- F. The fruit of the Spirit will become increasingly evident in our lives. Gal 5:22-26
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

APPLICATION

1. Ongoing, informed and active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ leads to living a life that impacts, sustains and strengthens others.
2. We become representatives of God's Heavenly Kingdom on the earth.
3. We live lives that glorify God and fulfill His will on the earth.
4. We will subject ourselves to other believers by being accountable, active, involved members of a local body of believers.
5. We will lighten the corner where we are.