

Verse by Verse: John 7: 37-39

By Lloyd T. Anderson

[Musical Introduction]

Announcer:

The Radio Department of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles Incorporated presents Verse by Verse. Verse by Verse is heard Monday through Friday at this time, and is presented for your spiritual instruction and blessing by one of the West's oldest and most respected evangelical training institutions. This ministry has maintained through the interest and help of its listeners. Dr. Talbot's special guest on today's Verse by Verse broadcast is Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson, pastor of the Bethany Baptist Church of West Covina and distinguished member of the board of directors of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles Incorporated. And now with today's Bible study, here is Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson.

Lloyd T. Anderson:

Thank you and good morning, friends. We're very happy to be with you this Friday morning, which closes another broadcasting week. And believe it or not, this coming Sunday is going to be Christmas Day, December 25th. It's difficult to believe, isn't it? that Christmas has come around so quickly yet another year. And yet my friend it's here, and we thank God for the presence of such a beautiful and a lovely and a wonderful holiday, as we have at the Christmas time of the year.

I want to take just a moment to remind you again that on behalf of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California, on behalf of Dr. Talbot, Dr. Sam Sutherland, members of the faculty, and every member of the student body, we want to take a moment to wish you and your family a Christ-centered, a holy, and a blessed Christmas hour. I trust that this will be the finest and the grandest and the most wonderful Christmas you and the members of your family have ever had. I wish it from the very depths of my own personal heart to you. I wish it would be possible to take each one of you by the hand and meet each one of you personally. But I thank God for the privilege of having a part in the school and in the broadcast of the Gospel of Jesus Christ over the radio.

May I remind you again, of course, as I said yesterday morning that your gifts and your letters are the lifeline of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. It is you who keeps the Bible Institute on the air. It is you who makes it possible for innumerable students to get their Bible training and college education at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. And so, my friend, why not sit down? And in your gift to the Christ child, make your check out to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Thank God for you and for that which God has laid upon your particular heart.

Dr. Talbot told me before he left that every Friday morning it would be permissible with him to have me mention just a little word about the church that we happen to represent. And I'd like to invite you if you're living in this particular area of West Covina, and you do not have a church home of your own, to attend our Christmas Sunday morning service; identical meetings, one at 8:30 and the other one at eleven o'clock with Sunday school in between. It's going to be a great large day, I can assure you; Christmas Day, Sunday. And we're going to be bringing a message

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on the subject: The Gift of God's Grace. We're going to be speaking about Jesus Christ being born in Bethlehem of Judea. It'll be a beautiful service, one I'm sure that will thrill and bless your own heart. I wish you could see the program out here. We're getting the roof on a great sanctuary, seating 12 hundred people. And we hope to be in some time after the time of Easter. God is blessing. And we pray that if you have no church home, that you will be a part of our program here at Bethany Baptist Church in West Covina, if already you have no membership and you have no church home.

Now, you remember with me that according to John Chapter 7 and in verses 37 to 39, the subject to which we come for our discourse this morning is one that has to do with Jesus Christ as the water of life. And I'd like to read those verses with you if you have your Bibles open, in verses 37 to 38 of John Chapter 7. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given onto them; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

I think we need to realize that in these two verses, three verses, 37 to 39, you have the truth of the satisfying quality of Jesus as the water of life. You have His super abundant supply; and you have His method of imparting this wonderful water of life. You see the setting of the seventh portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ, like most of the others in the Gospel according to St. John, it's quite appropriate to the theme of this particular picture of Jesus Christ. It is that, as we said

before in a previous broadcast, of the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles, the last of the three great annual religious festivals, at which every man of Israel was required to appear before the Lord.

Now this explains not only the going up from Galilee of all of the brothers of Christ out of His own home, but also their eagerness to have Him go to the feast with them as well, you see. A great crowd of men would be there because of this religious requirement. And if Jesus Christ was really everything He claimed to be, and by reason of His miracles, He seemed to be namely the promised Messiah. His brothers felt that this would be a splendid opportunity to show Himself to the world; for at the feast, the whole world of Israel would be represented in the city of Jerusalem.

Now, as we said before, the Feast of Tabernacles took its name from the custom of dwelling in booths during the time of celebration. These booths were erected in open places in the city, on the roofs of the houses and the courts of the homes, as well as in the open country outside the walls of Jerusalem. The throngs and the crowds of people attending the Feast of Tabernacles were so great that all could not possibly set up their booths within the narrow confines of Jerusalem. These booths were made out of boughs of trees as a reminder of the march of the children of Israel from Egypt through the wilderness into the land of Canaan. This march was remarkable by reason of the providential care of the Lord, but especially because of the supernatural provision of water, which the Lord had made for them in a desert where there is no water at all.

Doubtless, as a reminder of this supernatural experience in connection with the Old Testament wilderness wanderings of the people of Israel, one of the principal ceremonies of this Feast of Tabernacles was that every day, during the festival time, at the time of the morning and the evening oblation, a priest filled a golden vessel with water at the pool of Siloam and carried it to the temple, where it was received with trumpet blast; and then were called out loudly the words of Isaiah 12 and verse 3, with joy shall he draw water out of the wells of salvation. And after that, there was a great pause. It was on the last day of the feast, immediately following this last act of this water pouring. Doubtless, in the midst of this great pause, that Jesus stood up to His feet, and with a loud voice, He cries out what you find in verses 37-39 of John chapter 7.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Thus did Jesus clearly and dramatically identify Himself with the deepest meaning of the old testimony ceremony of this last of the great feasts, which was doubtless a memorial pointing to the smiting of the rock from whose hidden depths the water had flowed in the wilderness journey of Moses and Israel.

And you remember it was Paul who wrote, in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, "and the rock that followed them was Christ." Now here we find Christ Himself making the same claim, as with the Manna, that food that came down every morning to the camp of Israel, so also with a rock that was smitten. God's primary purpose in bringing water from it was not to quench the thirst of

Israel. He could have done that quite as readily by causing it to fall down as rain from the clouds. But His purpose in bringing water from the smitten rock was to point forward to the true Rock to be smitten for the sins of the world, and from which, as the result of the smiting, the water of life would begin to flow. And just as the rock was smitten in the wilderness and water came, so Jesus Christ, as the Rock of ages, would be smitten and stricken at Calvary, and precious water of life would flow to all men as the result.

Now, for this reason, our Lord made dramatic use of this ceremony to introduce Himself to the whole world as the water of life. It was Dr. Laird who said, and I think it's an interesting observation, His gracious invitation, he said, "if any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," implies the presence of a thirst in every human breast so deep seated that no one but Jesus Christ can bring satisfaction. This thirst manifests itself in the many forms of restless activity by which men everywhere are seeking to satisfy their aspirations, but all in vain; for the things of this world are powerless to quench the dying thirst of the human soul. That's a wonderful word, isn't it? From a great man.

You see, one who seeks to quench the thirst of his own soul by means of the tawdry and the puny things of this little world is like one who endeavors to quench the thirst of his body by drinking water from the briny, salty ocean. This explains the restlessness of many rich people and the things of the world. You remember, it was Augustine who said the soul was made for God, and it can never find its rest until it finds its rest in the Lord. Absolutely true. But this invitation now, in John Chapter 7 verses 37 to 39, also implies the ability of Jesus to quench the thirst of any

human soul. However intense that thirst might be. You can hear Him again as He cries out, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Yes, absolutely true.

And then you remember, in the fourth chapter of the gospel we've already started to study, "If thou knewest the gift of God, He said to the woman at the well, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given the living water. Whosoever drinketh 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." And it is our understanding that the original word, which is translated well in John 4, means a fountain or a spring. What is there more satisfying, my friend, than a well, or the water of a spring or a fountain? And mark you, the spring that He promises is within. How can anyone possibly thirst with a spring of water inside of him, you see?

And this is what Christ offers to every restless, thirsty soul in Himself. He offers the water of life. And when He uses the word water, He is drawing the striking parallelism between physical water, which allays physical thirst, and himself, spiritual water who takes away spiritual thirst. Then I think we need to remind ourselves, too, that certainly here is a great universal offer; and it implies the ability to substantiate everything that He offers to man. Oh look for a moment, if you will, my friend, at His super abundant supply as the water of life. And this truth, of course, is seen in verse 38, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water."

Now this is a picture, my friend, of Jesus Christ's super abundant supply as the water of life. In the preceding verse, you remember, and in His offer to the woman at the well in John Chapter 4, He presents Himself as the water of life, able to quench the thirst of the individual soul that comes unto Him and receives Him and believes in Him. But here, He declares that if any man will truly open his heart and will allow Christ as the water of life to flow in and through him without obstruction, so abundant will be that supply that not only will his own thirst be quenched, but out of him shall flow rivers of living water, quenching the thirst of multitudes of people around him. Is not this more wonderful than that even of His offer to the woman at the well?

Oh the supply of a spring is wonderful, but my friend, there is a great difference between the supply of a spring and a flowing river. A spring may supply a single family, but a river will quench the thirst of a whole city. Moreover, Jesus said you recall, He will cause not only the river to flow, but rivers, plural, of living water to flow. Have you ever known Christian people out of whose lives there flowed such a rivers of spiritual blessing? Yes, think with me for a moment. Think of J. Hudson Taylor. Think of David Livingstone. Think of William Booth of the Salvation Army. Think of Dwight L. Moody. Think of Billy Graham. Think of all of the great missionaries, and pastors, and teachers, and workers, and laymen today, out of whose joyful, Christ-centered, spirit-filled lives this water of life, given them through Jesus from within, is an ever flowing stream to bless the hearts and lives of other people with whom they come in contact. It's a tremendous thing. Think of others whom you've known more intimately. Maybe your own father. Maybe your own mother; your brothers, your sisters, your pastor, your teacher. Someone that you knew. Surely the secret of the blessing that poured forth from their lives upon

hundreds of other lives was found in that glorious fact. And what Christ offered to do and did for them, He offers to do and will do for you and me, if we will only give Him the opportunity to do so.

But notice the method that He uses to impart this water of life. And this truth, I'm sure, we can see in John's added word of explanation in verse 39: "(But this spake He of the Spirit)." What an explanation this is of the perfect satisfaction within and the ceaseless blessing's going forth from the soul that has truly drunk of the water of life. For he who thus drinks, receives the Holy Spirit; "even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth of him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and he shall be in you," is the word of John 14 and verse 17.

The Christian who was truly filled with the Holy Spirit is the individual who has the fruit of the Spirit, love and joy and peace and long-suffering and gentleness and goodness and faith and meekness and temperance. You see, this is the explanation of that soul's perfect satisfaction within, and unceasing blessing the people who are without. It is his joy and his peace and faith that brings satisfaction within; and his love and long-suffering, and gentleness, goodness, and meekness that makes the believer's life flow forth like rivers of blessing to enrich the thirsting souls of other men and women.

Yes, but only those who believe on Jesus Christ as Savior, ever receive the Holy Spirit. Only they receive the water of life. And Christ's method of imparting the water of life to men is through His Holy Spirit, whom He gives to those who believe on Him. What did He say? If any

man thirst. If any man has a thirst for divine life, for divine salvation, for the water of life, let him come unto Me, and spiritually drink, you see. And the only way one can come to Christ is to come through believing faith, recognizing that you're a sinner, that you're lost without any hope. And by faith, you receive Christ as your personal savior. Then and only then, can you be said to be drinking of the water of life. You cannot come to Him by physical approach, for Jesus said, "whither I go, ye cannot come." Neither can you drink of Him, as some believe, by the physical act of drinking His blood. My friend, I shudder to think of such a thought.

But you can partake of Him by believing on Him. More as possible to us through faith in Christ than it was possible to the people of that day on the last day of the feast when Jesus presented Himself as the water of life; for then, you know, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. But now, the Holy Spirit has already come; for the cross and the empty tomb and the ascension are things of the past. And my friend, the moment a man believes in Christ; the moment he takes a spiritual drink of the Savior; the moment he accepts Christ as redeemer and Lord, that very moment, he can be filled with the Holy Spirit, that Spirit of God who is emblemized and symbolized and typified as water.

We're told that in the (inaudible) calendar are printed the words of Dr. F. W. Ainsley, and he said an interesting thing, and it's this, as we lay hold on the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus lays hold on us; and He works in us, that wonderful life that is hidden with Christ in God, the life of which the fruit is love and joy and peace and long-suffering, also gentleness and goodness and faith and meekness and temperance. It is a life against which there is no law. He gives us that life. Let us not miss that life. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yield your whole being to the

control and comfort and guidance of the Holy Spirit. And, my friend, you shall be overcomers, which is the real proper name for God's own wonderful people. And so there it is, this universal offer of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was here standing at the great feast, claiming to meet every man's need and to quench human thirst of whatever sort it might be.

Now, most people, I'm sure, have grown wise to the extravagant claims of cure-alls. Yet, my friend, here is such a claim which cannot be met with an indulgent smile. We know that there is in man a thirst too deep to be satisfied by anything that this world has to offer. We know, too, that somewhere there must be that living water which will answer to man's human need. Jesus claim to supply. It looks good and multitudes bear witness to the fact that it IS wonderful and that it IS good and it really works.

My friend, I can testify personally that such is true. But does Jesus Christ really satisfy every kind of thirst? Are there not some thirsts which are illegitimate? The thirst itself is basically right, but men judge wrongly concerning what will satisfy their thirst, and they develop wrong appetites for those things. Let us, however, call these appetites thirsts for just a moment as we study it together. Will our Lord Jesus Christ satisfy a man's pleasure thirst? Assuredly. What does the Bible say? "In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Thou shall make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.

And then another question we'd like to ask, Will God satisfy the thirst for wealth? Yes. What does the Bible say? "He that spared not His Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all thing?" All things are yours, says Paul. Whether Paul or

Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Well, another question. Will He satisfy the thirst for power? Let me answer it this way. What does the Bible say? "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Until as a prince, He said to Israel, to Jacob, "thou has power with God and with men and has prevailed.

And so, my friend, we might go on answering these questions. Does God give knowledge and love and power and everything that man wants? Yes. But He gives it to man in its proper quantity, in its proper quality, and in its proper kind. All things are sublimated and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Now, whatever our Lord does, He always does it in superabundance. You remember the words of Dr. McCauley? When He made the heavens, He did not count out a half a dozen stars as their portion, but He made the stars a great multitude that no man could number.

And so it is not- not for God to merely quench our thirst. He must put within us springs that will overflow the channels of our own personalities, and bring blessings to other people. "He that believeth on Me," said Jesus in John 7 and 37, "as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." This overflowing life is the life of faith. There was faith in the preceding verse, you remember? The coming to Jesus to receive the living water is an act of faith. But here we have the continuous exercise of faith that ensures the more abundant life.

You remember, three times in the New Testament, we have the words that are quoted from the Old Testament Book of Habakkuk "the just shall live by faith." Tradition has it, of course, that these words came to Martin Luther, as he was laboriously climbing the Scala Sancta in the city

of Rome. And they became the great watchword of the great reformation. Remarkably enough, they occur in the three books on which Luther wrote his greatest works: the Book of Romans, the Book of Galatians, and the Book of Hebrews. Some have suggested that the emphasis in Romans is "the JUST shall live by faith." In Galatians, the emphasis is "the just shall LIVE by faith." And in Hebrews, the emphasis is "the just shall live by FAITH." And the word faith is to be emphasized. If so, we shall take the Galatians emphasize here- emphasis in John 7 37 to 39, for it is the continuous faith for Christian living, which means the overflowing life to which Jesus refers.

You remember, it was the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, who pictures for us a wonderful river, having its source at the altar and flowing through the land down to the sea. First, you remember it was ankle deep, and then it was knee deep, and then loin deep, and then it was over his head and waters in which to swim. And after describing the beneficial effects of these holy waters, the prophet said, "And everything shall live whither the river cometh." You see, apart from the prophetic value of the passage in Ezekiel, we certainly have in it a picture of the life of blessedness and power.

Dr. Andrew Gi of China once describe the various depths of the river as having to do with a sanctified walk, the prayer life, the power for service, and the life of full communion. Now that's very suggestive. Everything shall live, said Ezekiel, whither the river cometh. Yes, it's true. Ohhh you can see it everywhere. Man has a great need for the water of life. It is the large intention that we should carry with us as believers such great potency to bless and to revive and sweeten the lives of people around us; so that our lives cannot be selfish, we must give our lives

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to other people in word and deed and act and thought and motive. And the more abundant life is not one of selfish enjoyment and spiritual blessing alone, but one of the bestowal of making fertile and beautiful the desert lives of men and women around us.

The divine method, you remember, of bringing this to pass is in the interpretive parenthesis in John 7 and verse 39. "(This spake He of the Spirit)." Yes. Jesus was talking with Pentecost in mind. He was talking prophetically. The Holy Ghost had not yet come to assume His temporal mission in the age of the church and in the life of the individual believer. Nor could He so come until Jesus was glorified in heaven after His death and ascension. It is necessary for you that I go away, He said, because if I do not go away, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, cannot come unto you. But when I go, I will send Him unto you. Our Lord lived in the perpetual realization of the Holy Spirit for Himself, and in the faith of a coming Holy Spirit for His own people.

[Musical Closure]

Announcer:

For the past half hour, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles has presented Verse by Verse, a program of stimulating Bible study and inspiration for your spiritual blessing. You are invited to share in this and the many other ministries of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Address all mail to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Los Angeles 17, California. That's the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Los Angeles 17, California. Dr. Talbot's special guest today has been Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson.