

# OUR ENDLESS RESOURCE OF JOY

Theme: The indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit in every believer gives them a continual source of blessedness and sustaining strength in every circumstance of life.

The study of the Holy Spirit—as He is presented to us in the Scripture—is always an exciting subject. How can we not be greatly blessed in studying truths about a divine Person who so marvelously ministers in this world and through the gospel of our Lord and in the church? But with this lesson, we begin a portion of our study that should be especially exciting to us. We begin to consider the personal and practical aspects of the Spirit’s ministry in the life of the individual believer.

We start this personal and practical focus with the wonderful truth of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the man or woman who is redeemed by Christ. Over the next four studies on the subject of His indwelling, we’ll talk about (1) the blessedness of His indwelling ministry; (2) the persons in whom He administers this indwelling ministry; (3) the permanency of His indwelling ministry; and (4) the hindrances to His indwelling ministry in our lives.

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This particular lesson focuses on the blessedness of His indwelling ministry. And to learn of the wonderful blessedness of His ministry in us, we turn to our Lord’s teaching in two key passages in John’s Gospel. First, we consider ...

## I. JESUS’ PROMISE TO THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.

- A. The first thing we discover in this story is our Lord’s offer of something wonderfully mysterious; the very name of which can’t help but fascinate us—“living water”. In John 4, we’re told of how, at the noon hour—after a journey in the hot sun—our Lord was tired and thirsty. He and His disciples had come into the city of Sychar in Samaria; and He had sent His disciples ahead into town to buy food. As He rested by ‘Jacob’s well’, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Breaking with the social norms of the day, our Lord surprised this woman by asking for a drink. As He drank from the water she gave Him, He then told her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10).<sup>1</sup> In these few words, we learn that this “living water” is a gift from God—something that is being “offered”. It’s a gift that should be considered greatly desirable to those to whom it is offered, and that is an offer made only by Jesus.
- B. Now; for a poor, tired woman who has had to make her way out in the hot sun to draw from a well every day, the idea of “living water” would have been very interesting. And the way our Lord spoke of it piqued her interest. But she couldn’t see how Jesus—who had just asked her for water—could draw anything from the well. Where did He get this living water that He spoke of? What was its nature? Her misunderstanding about it all was because she was thinking only of natural water. And this is where we learn of the true nature of “living water”. While probably still holding a cup of natural water in His hand that the woman had given Him—perhaps holding it up so she could look at it as

He sipped from it—our Lord went on to explain to this inquisitive woman: “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (vv. 13-14). And here, we learn a bit more about this water that Jesus offered. Unlike natural water, the living water Jesus promises is eternal in its effect and endless in its sufficiency. It becomes in the one who receives it a perpetually abundant source—not just a well, but a bubbling fountain—that satisfies to the greatest possible degree; even to the degree of giving eternal life.

Now; there's much more that we could talk about from that story. Our Lord eventually led that dear woman to saving faith in Himself. But perhaps like she did at first, we're still wanting to know more about “living water”. Our Lord doesn't tell the woman everything there is to know about it. To find out more, we now go to another portion of John's Gospel; and to the story of ...

## II. JESUS' INVITATION AT THE GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST.

- A. The “feast” that Jesus attended was the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a week-long feast; and the last day of that feast was called “the great day of the feast”. In John 7, we're told that our Lord stood up and spoke on that last 'great day' in the temple in Jerusalem to the people who were gathered there. The tradition of the time was that libations of water were made throughout each of the seven days of the feast while Isaiah 12:3 was sung: “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” But on that last of the seven days, the libations ceased<sup>2</sup>—making His words rather striking. In John 7:37-38, He cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” What this contributes to what we've already learned is that this “living water” that Jesus spoke of to the woman in Chapter 4 is a promise that was contained in the Old Testament Scriptures. The Scripture portions that Jesus may have been speaking of—other than Isaiah 12:3—are Isaiah 43:20,

*The beast of the field will honor Me,  
The jackals and the ostriches,  
Because I give waters in the wilderness  
And rivers in the desert,  
To give drink to My people, My chosen (Isaiah 43:20);*

and Isaiah 55:1

*“Ho! Everyone who thirsts,  
Come to the waters;  
And you who have no money,  
Come, buy and eat.  
Yes, come, buy wine and milk  
Without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1).*

But note a very interesting difference from what our Lord had previously said. What our Lord described as a “fountain” to the woman by the well is now called a “river” to

the Jewish people (see Ezekiel 47:1-12).

B. And it's in this context—as we read on—that we discover the identity of this “living water”. It turns out that it is actually a Person. In John 7:39, the apostle John comments on our Lord's words and makes clear to us that “this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Jesus, then, was speaking of the Spirit's indwelling ministry before that ministry began in this world; because it would not occur in those believing in Jesus until Pentecost (see Acts 2). But the promise was clearly declared that this “living water”—that is, the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit—would be available to all who desired to receive it through a relationship by faith in Jesus.

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Here then, in the words of our Lord, we learn a great deal about the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry as living water. First, we learn of the offer of this living water; that it is available to whoever asks for it (John 4:10). The indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is withheld from no one who truly desires it and accepts the offer (not even from a Samaritan woman who had been living an immoral life). We also learn of the nature of this living water; that it is a fountain of endless satisfaction to whoever drinks of it. The indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is something that wells up and bubbles from within unto everlasting life (John 4:14)—flowing forth from the innermost being (John 7:38). Further, we learn that this living water is readily available to “anyone” who thirsts—the only condition being that they believe on Jesus. Truly, all who have a relationship with Jesus by faith have the full Person of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them (see Romans 8:9). And finally, we discover that this living water truly is 'living'! It is a divine Person—the Holy Spirit—the second Person of the triune Godhead (John 7:39). And what's more, we can add that the promise of this “living water”—the Holy Spirit—is, as our Lord testified, “as the Scripture has said” (John 7:38). We can count on the promise of God that it is so.

Truly, this indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is the source of “joy unspeakable” that the apostle Peter spoke of in 1 Peter 1:8! It is He who produces the very fruit of the life of Jesus Christ in us in an abundant and all-sufficient supply in every occasion and circumstance of life (Galatians 5:22-23). It is hard to think of anything more practical and applicable to daily living than the blessedness that comes from the Spirit's indwelling. If what our Lord said is true, then the blessedness that comes from the Spirit's indwelling ministry ought to be our experience in every area of life—giving us true, overcoming, overwhelming spiritual victory in the tests and trials of daily living.

It's worth carefully reading the words of R.A. Torrey (a great Bible teacher from a century ago) on the perpetual joy that comes from the Spirit's indwelling. He said:

*It is a great thing to have a well that you can carry with you; to have a well that is within you; to have your source of satisfaction, not in the things outside yourself, but in a well within and that is always within, and that is always springing up in freshness and power; to have our well of satisfaction and joy within us. We are then independent of our environment. It matters little whether we have health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, our source of joy is within and is ever springing up. It matters comparatively*

*little even whether we have our friends with us or are separated from them, separated even by what men call death, this fountain within is always gushing up and our souls are satisfied. Sometimes this fountain within gushes up with greatest power and fullness in the days of deepest bereavement. At such a time all earthly satisfactions fail. What satisfaction is there in money, or worldly pleasure, in the theatre or the opera or the dance, in fame or power or human learning, when some loved one is taken from us? But in the hours when those that we loved dearest upon earth are taken from us, then it is that the spring of joy of the indwelling Spirit of God bursts forth with fullest flow, sorrow and sighing flee away and our own spirits are filled with peace and ecstasy. We have beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isa. 61:3). If the experience were not too sacred to put in print, I could tell of a moment of sudden and overwhelming bereavement and sorrow, when it seemed as if I would be crushed, when I cried aloud in an agony that seemed unendurable, when suddenly and instantly this fountain of the Holy Spirit within burst forth and I knew such a rest and joy as I had rarely known before, and my whole being was suffused with the oil of gladness.*

*The one who has the Spirit of God dwelling within as a well springing up into everlasting life is independent of the world's pleasures. He does not need to run after the theatre and the opera and the dance and the cards and the other pleasures without which life does not seem worth living to those who have not received the Holy Spirit. He gives these things up, not so much because he thinks they are wrong, as because he has something so much better. He loses all taste for them.<sup>3</sup>*

Dear brothers and sisters; is there any reason why that cannot be our experience right now? We have our Lord's word on it that it can be so! May it continually be so in us, through the blessedness of the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit—our Lord's promised 'living water'!

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<sup>1</sup>All Scripture readings are taken from *the Holy Bible, New King James Version*; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

<sup>2</sup>B.F. Westcott, cited in Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), p. 168.

<sup>3</sup>R.A. Torrey, *The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zonervan Publishing House, 1973), pp. 113-114.