

Words of spirit and life

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Let us turn to **John 7: 37-39**.

John 7: 37-39

- 37 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.
38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'
39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Lord Jesus called upon the people to come to Him if they were thirsty, so that they could drink of the living water. And we know that the living water is an expression to tell us about what God wants to give to us of His very life, His very being, so that we will find true meaning and richness in life, and the character of God can be formed in us.

However, as we look at the Scriptures, and we see the response of the people to the Lord Jesus, we realize that not many people benefited from His offer of life, of living water. Many people came to the Lord Jesus, many people professed to follow Him, there were large crowds that thronged about Him and yet at the end of it all, when it comes to the real issues of life, how many were truly prepared to follow Him, live for Him, abide by His words?

Many people did not quite understand who He was. Some accused Him wrongly in many ways. Even those who appreciated Him may also appreciate from the wrong angles and their attitudes were not good.

Why is it that although the Lord Jesus offers to us living water, many of us do not actually partake of that living water?

I see that one of the major reasons, or we could say the primary reason, why we do not partake of it is that we have come with the wrong spirit.

Many people look at the Lord Jesus and they may say He is very kind, He is a good man, He is a prophet, He spoke on behalf of God; we can benefit from what He has offered us.

But is that the way we should approach Him?

We view the Lord Jesus Christ as a man like the rest of us and we are too familiar with Him.

Because of that, it is very difficult for us to understand what He actually offers us, what is he seeking to give to us. We interpret based on the natural, what we may see in this world that we prefer, we like, and we think of what He says in those terms.

When He talks about living water, yes, we may think of physical water so that we do not need to thirst any more.

When he talks about drinking of His blood, eating of His flesh, they think of the literal blood and flesh. They were stumbled. That is because they did not understand what was in the heart of the Lord Jesus; that was because of what they were preoccupied with.

So, I see it is very important, if we want to come to the Lord Jesus in the right spirit, in the right way, we need to first properly appreciate God, the fountain of living waters.

If we do not sufficiently recognize that, then we can easily come to the Lord Jesus with the wrong spirit.

The Lord Jesus offers us living water. But where does it come from?

It comes from the great, the almighty God: the Source of all life, the fountain of living waters. We considered that in a previous message.

God is the fountain of living waters. So if we want to come to the Lord Jesus who is offering us living water, we must first come before God and appreciate who He is: the great, the almighty God; the Judge of all the earth, the awesome God.

Have we come before God in that spirit?

It is my deep concern that most Christians treat God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit in too superficial a manner without sufficient reverence for Him, without a deep spirit of worship.

If we do not recognize God in that way, the way we approach the Lord Jesus will become superficial and it will be in the line of the spirit of the world.

Look at the Israelites. When God spoke to them at Mount Sinai, they were terrified. Why? Because they had a glimpse, the sense, of the presence of almighty God: They were afraid; they did not dare to come near the mountain; they thought they would die; they asked Moses to speak to them.

Today, many Christians come before God frivolously, freely, without a recognition of how awesome it is to come before the great, the almighty God – to come into His presence. We are too free in the way that we pray, we come to Him – we take it lightly.

It is such a wonderful thing – privilege – that God has given to us: that we can come into His presence, we can have an audience with the great almighty God, to speak to Him, to pray to Him.

But do we take it seriously? We think it is a burden: it is so difficult. How can we then appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ?

So I see a very important aspect is: If we want to follow the Lord Jesus, we must first recognize the Lord Jesus Christ came from God. The Lord Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh, the almighty God dwelling amongst us as a human being. Many people relate with Him, look upon Him like any other human being.

So we may then say, “Wouldn’t it be better if we concentrate on God so that we live in that kind of spirit of reverence and worship and fear?”

Well, God understands that, and He wants us to appreciate the wholesome aspect of a relationship with Him.

If God were to come to us primarily as He did on Mount Sinai, what kind of relationship would we have with Him?

Yes, likelihood there will be reverence, there will be fear; we come trembling before Him. But we may not have the freedom to express to Him what is in our hearts. We will not be able to freely share with Him the concerns of our lives and to expect Him to be interested: He is such a great almighty God; why should He bother about us?

So God became a Man, lived amongst us. He attended to the things that we are familiar with. He went through the difficulties of life that we all go through. And so we see God understands.

God is concerned about all these things that we go through, to the smallest, minutest details of life. The God who created the galaxies is also the God who created the electrons. He is the almighty God, but He also knows every single detail in the universe.

So when the Lord Jesus came into this world, He came to bring the infinite to the finite.

He brought the greatness of God into a form that we can appreciate, recognize, be more comfortable about; that we can relate with Him, we can benefit from His grace, His goodness, His love – that is, only if our spirit is right, if we truly appreciate what is good and we are very grateful for His grace toward us.

If we do not have this spirit, if our motive is not good, if our heart is not pure, then we will come to Him with a wrong spirit. We will interpret Him wrongly, we will be asking for the wrong things, and our relationship with Him will be superficial.

God is the Source of life; He is our Creator, He is the Giver of all life, and we must come before Him in a deep spirit of reverence, humility, worship, and a recognition of our need of Him.

If we come with a deep spirit of worship of God, then we must come to the Lord Jesus because God gives us the living water, eternal life, through the Lord Jesus. It is always through the Lord Jesus. That is why the Lord Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

The Lord Jesus Christ brings us to God the Father. He did not come just to tell us to relate with Him.

Ultimately, the Lord Jesus would hand the kingdom to the Father, but God has made Him... Lord and Christ: The Lord of lords, the King of kings. So God wants us to come to the Lord Jesus so that we can benefit from all that God wants to give us. All the riches of glory are to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ, to be given to us through Him.

So God imparts that life to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Man. He wants to impart to us the life of God.

1 John 5:11-12

- 11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
- 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

So if we come to God, the almighty God, in order to receive life, then the only way by which we can receive it is through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is because God became a Man, He lived as we did and He died in our place on the cross in order to save us.

Through that event, the Lord Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to be forgiven as a result of which we can receive the life of God to transform us.

We cannot be forgiven by any other means. There is no other way by which we can be saved. There is no other name given under heaven... among men by which we must be saved. It is only through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is because He is God who became Man, dwelt among us, lived a sinless life, took upon Himself the sins of mankind so that if we are repentant, we can find forgiveness.

So we must come to the Lord Jesus to receive the fullness of this life. The Lord Jesus said in **John 6: 63**:

John 6: 63

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life..."

The Lord Jesus Christ, when He spoke, there were words of spirit and life. He said: "...the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life..."

So if we want to receive life, we must listen to what the Lord Jesus has to say. We must come to Him and receive that life.

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing..." It is the Holy Spirit who will impart that life to us, but we must come to the Lord Jesus, we must listen to what He has to say.

That is why the **Sermon on the Mount** is so significant. Those are not the only words of the Lord Jesus, but that message that He gave contains very major aspects of the kingdom of God and the life that we ought to live.

So we need to carefully consider all that the Lord Jesus has said, to appreciate more and more with each passing day the significance, the depth, the meaning of His words.

But although the Lord Jesus spoke and there was spirit and life in His words, we must also recognize that most people do not benefit from that spirit and life.

They do not receive it. Spirit and life come forth when the Lord Jesus spoke, but that does not mean we will benefit.

That is why the Lord Jesus at the end of what He preached on that occasion, He said in **Matthew 7: 24-27** these words:

Matthew 7: 24-27

- 24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.
25 "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.
26 "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.
27 "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."

If we are to be prepared for the storms of life in the spiritual realm, we have to be solidly built. Our house must be properly built on the foundation that is strong, that will not collapse in times of storm.

And the Lord Jesus tells us that that is a picture of a man who listens carefully to what He has said and acts upon them: he lives by the words that the Lord Jesus has said. That is the critical difference.

Many, many people know the words of the Lord Jesus, some understand to some degree, but very few people live by His words in a significant, sufficient, deep kind of degree that will really benefit them.

So, listening and understanding alone will not give us life in our spirit. It requires our living by the words of the Lord Jesus to transform our being.

God wants to give to us His wisdom so that we know how to live our lives on earth, but we often seek for wisdom in the wrong way, even from the Scriptures.

We may think that by reading the Scriptures, studying the Scriptures carefully, we will have wisdom. But that may not necessarily be true.

The Pharisees read the Scriptures greatly, but they did not have the wisdom of God. That is because the wisdom of God is not just understanding of things.

The wisdom of God comes with a motive of holiness, righteousness, purity, goodness.

So, unless this is what motivates us, the things that we hear, the things we understand will not truly benefit us.

The apostle Paul tells us that the Jews were stumbled by the Lord Jesus Christ; He was a stumbling block to them. To the Greeks, the message of the cross was foolishness. "But," he said, "to those who are being saved... Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

So we need to know Him, receive Him and have Him transform us to be like Him.

So in order to develop our lives such that we can benefit from His offer of living water, we need to look at the Lord Jesus, we need to spend time to understand how He lived His life, what He said, what God requires of us.

The Lord Jesus is the Word and He is the Word of God. He communicates what is in the heart of God. He executes what God wants to bring about. He brings us to God.

So when we say that it is, first, important for us to have a deep sense of worship of God, the almighty God, it is to set the setting right so that we know the direction, and ultimately we want to come before the great and almighty God and have a deep and meaningful relationship with Him.

But in order to do that, we need to appreciate the Lord Jesus because the Lord Jesus came and lived amongst us as a Man, so we can draw closer to Him, we can look at His life, we can appreciate what it means in practical terms in daily living.

It helps us to understand how it can work out in life: God has become near to us. He has come to us: God with us – Immanuel – He has come to dwell in our midst.

So, God has come very near to us, but the final step is critical.

God has come near but how near?

If we want God to be truly near in us, then we must learn to partake of the Holy Spirit and walk by the Spirit.

That is how He becomes so very near to us: He dwells in our heart, He transforms our being, He guides us, He grants us wisdom, He empowers us, He brings the life of God to us.

That is why the Lord Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

So when the Lord Jesus gives us living water and we can receive it the right way, the Holy Spirit comes, He dwells in our hearts, He helps us, and when we live by the words of the Lord Jesus, then the character of the Lord Jesus Christ will be formed in us.

How close can God be to you?

The closest possible is to become part of you.

God can become part of our being, our moral and spiritual being.

Our spirit can be transformed as we partake of the divine nature: God becoming part of us, His character formed in us.

How wonderful that is!

The great almighty God, the Creator of the universe came into this world, lived as a Man, now in the Spirit dwells in our hearts so that we can know Him and talk to Him every moment, in every situation of life, so that we can: rejoice always; in everything give thanks; and pray without ceasing.

It is such a wonderful life that God offers to us, but we need to be careful.

If we do not approach it the right way, we will not benefit. God tells us His laws, how we ought to live our lives. We ignore them, we seek the ways of the world, we will perish.

But if we are careful to listen to Him, we are prepared to walk in His ways, we depend on the Holy Spirit moment by moment, we are led by Him, then we will know the transformation.

So then, let us come before the Lord to ask Him to help us to understand what God wants to do in our lives, what He wants to give to us and how we can benefit from it.

And let us also recognize that it is a very serious matter if we treat this lightly. If we do not sufficiently worship God, we will worship something else that is not God - and that will draw us in the direction of evil. Let us be careful. If we do not truly love what is good and pure, we will love that which is not good and pure - and that is evil.

So, it is important for us to set our hearts so that we can properly and fully give ourselves to God, the One who is truly good and perfect. It is there and it is then that we will find true meaning, joy - not just now, but forever.