Exploring the Bible—Gospel of John (8)

The Need of the Thirsty

**Scripture Reading:**

2 Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was near... 14 But when it was now the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach... 37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. 39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:2-39)

**Ministry Reading:**

THE JOY OF THE HUMAN LIFE HAVING AN END

The Lord Jesus cried out on the last and great day of the feast. The last day of the greatest and final feast of the year was the greatest day of the feast; hence, this day was the most joyful day of the feast. This greatest and most joyful day, however, was the last day of the feast; it also was the last day of all the feasts. When this day was over, all the feasts of the year were over. When the joy of this day was over, the joy of the year was over.

A feast is a time of joy, and it signifies a joyful moment in human life. Therefore, the last day of the feast signifies the end of the joy of human life. There is a limit and an end to the joy of human life. No matter how much joy there may be, every kind of joy in human life comes to an end. There is a common Chinese saying: “A good scene does not last.” When someone reaches a peak in his human life, he has reached the last day.

Everything has a last day. Some people study diligently in college for many years and are joyful on the day of their graduation. But they eventually find that there is a last day to the joy of graduation. At the beginning of a wonderful marriage both the husband and the wife are full of joy, but this joy has a last day. The joy in a wonderful family reaches a last day when there is a death. The joy of possessing a prosperous business reaches a last day when the business fails. The joy of living a long life comes to an end when we die. A beautiful garment also has a last day. The last day is related to thirst. People are thirsty because everything in human life has a last day. When the last day comes, people’s joy ends. When the last day comes, the thirst in human life begins. When the joy of human life comes to an end, people immediately feel thirsty.

The joy of human life, the enjoyment of human life, and the blessing of human life all have a last day. The greater the joy, the stronger the sense of thirst will be on the last day. For this reason the Lord Jesus did not speak of being thirsty until the last day of the feast. The feast lasted eight days. The first two days were the beginning of the feast when everyone was excited; no one felt thirsty. The third and fourth days were in the middle of the feast when still no one felt thirsty. By the fifth and sixth days, however, people began to realize that the feast would soon be over. On the seventh day of the feast their taste changed. The eighth day was the most joyful time, but it was also the hardest moment. The last day of the feast had finally come. Their joy and excitement were over, and a deep and strong sense of thirst emerged within them. At this moment the Lord Jesus stood and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (v. 37).

There is an end to the joy and enjoyment in human life. One day your joy and enjoyment will come to the last day. Then you will feel thirsty and understand that you should receive the Lord Jesus. Many prominent figures do not feel a need for the gospel while they hold high positions and enjoy their prosperity. It is not until they are on their sick bed and about to die that they realize the joy of human life has come to the last day, and they begin to seek Christ.

You do not need to wait for the joy of your human life to come to an end before you believe in the Lord Jesus. Without exception every person who has believed in the Lord Jesus wishes that he had not waited. The longer you wait, the more you will regret. You should believe today. Your human life is a life of thirst. You should be prudent and anticipate the last day. You should not wait until the last day to seek the Lord. It is good to seek the Lord at that time, but it is far better to seek the Lord before the last day.

IF ANYONE THIRSTS, LET HIM COME TO CHRIST AND DRINK

Because people are thirsty and unable to quench their thirst, the Lord Jesus stood and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me...out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38). The Lord Jesus cried out on the last day of the feast because He wanted people to know their real need. He wanted them to know that they were thirsty and that He had living water to quench their thirst. The joy of the feast was unable to stop or quench their thirst. Only His living water that flows eternally is able to quench man’s thirst forever.

There is a historical background to what the Lord Jesus said. The Jews who heard this word knew their history. When their forefathers were thirsty in the wilderness, God performed a miracle. He split the rock, and living water flowed out to quench their thirst. God performed this miracle to solve the problem of their thirst. However, the split rock typifies Christ, whose body would be split on the cross so that living water would flow out to quench the thirst in the spirit of man.

After the Jews entered into Canaan, they held the Feast of Tabernacles each year to remind them that their forefathers lived in tents in the wilderness. Hence, the Lord seemed to be saying, “Your forefathers wandered in the wilderness, and they drank water that flowed out from the rock. Today you are wandering in the wilderness of this world, but one day you will realize that there is no water, because your joy will come to an end. Then you will feel the thirst of human life, just as you are thirsty on the last day of this feast. If you feel thirsty, come to Me and drink.”

The Lord Jesus cried out that day to the Jews, and He is still crying out today. You have sensed the thirst of the human life, so you should come to Him. He is the Savior of life who is able to quench your thirst. His body was broken on the cross, just as the rock was split in the wilderness, and the living water flowed out from Him. After He died on the cross, He rose from the dead and was glorified. Then the Spirit of life descended, and the living water flowed out. If anyone receives the Lord Jesus, the living water will become rivers flowing forth. These rivers will quench his thirst so that he lives a watered and full human life. These rivers will also overflow from within him to reach others and quench their thirst. This is the real need of thirsty humanity. This is the salvation that the thirsty need.

Question for Discussion: What is the feeling of thirst? Have you ever felt the thirst within? Share your experience.

Reference: *Changing Death into Life,* Ch. 6.