

## **“Only Thirsty People Allowed.”**

(John 7)

The last couple of weeks we saw, “keeping the feast, but rejecting Christ.” Last week we saw, “keeping the ideas, but rejecting Christ.” The illustration of expectations couldn’t be clearer: the leaders had a framework for Christ to fit in; since He didn’t fit that framework, they rejected Him.

*“They preferred the abstract to the incarnate.”*

Today we will see the last stretch of this party — the invitation. This is the most wonderful invitation ever! It’s better than anything the world could offer: fame, riches, travels, success, comfort...

### **1. Sovereign, Heavenly, & Unstoppable Invitation (32–36)**

As the guards are coming to arrest Jesus, He says, “I will be with you a bit longer, but then you won’t find Me anymore; where I go, you cannot go.”

**Sovereignty & Unstoppable:** This statement amazes me, because it is a clear response to their arrest attempt. Jesus is saying: *You don’t arrest Me; I give Myself up. You don’t execute Me; I give My life as a sacrifice. You don’t take Me to the cross; I walk to the cross!* Not on your time and terms, but on My own time and terms.

Jesus is about to make the most important announcement of the feast, and His adversaries are trying to stop Him — but they can’t!

The leaders, as usual, misunderstood what He said, and they suggested that He might go elsewhere to teach the “Greeks.” You may interpret “Greeks” in two different ways: (a) the Jews who speak Greek because they live outside Israel; or (b) the Gentile world, the pagans. It doesn’t matter how you interpret it — their prejudice is exposed either way. Basically, what they are saying to Jesus is this: *You may go to the Greeks;*

*they may listen to You, rejoice with You, accept Your teachings. You may go — the “Greeks” deserve Your “low-quality teaching”; we don’t.*

**Heavenly:** Their geography failed, as they thought of planet earth; Jesus had Heaven in mind. They may send guards to arrest Jesus at the feast, but they can never go to Heaven where He dwells.

*“He wasn’t going to Greece; He was going to Glory.”*

**Application:** We should learn from their mistake: *seek the Lord while you may find Him.* Seek the Lord today! Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is too late — seek Him today, every day, always!

## **2. Wholesome Invitation (37–39)**

First, context: It is said that this was the “happiest” of the feasts in Israel. This celebration had a special spiritual meaning: God’s provision for the people during the 40 years they wandered in the desert, living in booths. God protected, provided, and prospered Israel despite all adversity. There is a special reference in the Old Testament when the people were thirsty in the desert, and God provided water from the Rock (twice!). The Apostle Paul later says that that Rock was Christ!

On the last day of the feast, the priests would bring water from the pool of Siloam (which means “the one sent”) and pour it on the altar. As they approached the altar, they sang Isaiah 12:3: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” It is at that very moment that Jesus stands up and, in a loud voice, claims to be the water of life. Jesus is the Christ — the Anointed, the Sent One.

Now, let’s analyze this beautiful invitation:

**A — It’s universal and private at the same time:**

“Let anyone...” It’s for the rich and poor, tall and short, child or elderly. “Who is thirsty.”

There is an eligibility criterion: **only thirsty people allowed.** If money, fame, comfort, entertainment, or a significant other, quenches one’s thirst, he won’t come.

*“If the world satisfies you, Jesus won’t attract you.”*

### **B — It’s gracious and costly at the same time:**

“Come to Me and drink.” This heavenly water is freely given; there is no price tag on it. Nevertheless, one must take courage and come to Him — leaving all idols behind.

*“The water is free — but idols must be left behind.”*

### **C — It’s faith and experiential at the same time:**

“Whoever believes in Me...” That action takes faith. What does it mean to believe in Christ? To live for Him and devote yourself to Him. “Rivers of living water will flow from within.” This is not an invitation to a religion, denomination, or dogmas; it is a personal relationship with Him — one that flows from the inside out, like a river.

*“Believe with your mind, feel with your heart.”*

### **D — It’s Word and Spirit:**

“As Scripture has said...” This is not a made-up religion, nor a pick-and-choose Christianity; it is the Scriptural Jesus — the whole Jesus — the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, the Lord! “But this He meant the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit who was given to the church in Acts 2. Everyone who believes is sealed with the Holy Spirit.

*“The Scriptures speak; the Spirit seals.”*

### **E — It’s urgent in the eyes of both the Giver and the receiver:**

“Jesus stood up and shouted with a loud voice!” Usually, the thirsty individual is the one who desperately pursues water; however, Jesus — the fountain of eternal life — is depicted pursuing the thirsty heart.

*“The thirsty usually chase water — but here the Water chases the thirsty.”*

### 3. Avoiding the D's: (40-end)

There is a famous piece of advice for those considering opening a business with a partner: address the D's in the written contract — death, disability, debt, damages, default, delay, dispute...

The crowd's reaction to Jesus can be summarized in three D's:

- **Division:** people were divided about Him. "Division blinded them."
- **Deceive:** people accused Him of being a deceiver. "Deception accused Him." (In Greek, the word carries the same negative meaning it does in English.)
- **Dry:** people were dry! The seed of the Word hit the ground like it hit asphalt. "Dryness hardened them."

### Conclusion

**Geography:** We may summarize that the people who rejected Jesus did so because they were "familiar" with Him. They knew where He grew up (Nazareth), His family ("son" of Joseph), and guessed where He could possibly go next (to teach the Greeks). They knew Jesus only according to the flesh, not according to the Spirit.

*"They knew Jesus geographically, not spiritually."*

**Geography:** However, Jesus and His invitation have another kind of geography! As you know, in dry Jerusalem there are no rivers. Therefore, when Jesus says that He has rivers to give to those who believe in Him, He speaks of heavenly things.

*"Jerusalem had no rivers — so Jesus offered heavenly ones."*

"Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."

*(Revelation 22:17)*