

# “The River of Life” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost / Confirmation Day May 24, 2025

- I. **John 7:37-39** – previously read
- II. **Today is what many call the birthday of the Christian Church.**
  - a. For you Lily, some people think that this is graduation day.
  - b. But we have talked about this many times, right?
    - i. Confirmation is not graduating... it is simply confirming, or saying yes to the Baptism you had long ago.
    - ii. All that you have learned over the last couple of years is so important for every Christian to know and understand – from who God is, to how He has saved you... and now you sit here, ready to live out your faith.
    - iii. Let’s say we go down to the Department of Motor Vehicles after studying for our driver’s test, go through the driving test, the exam, and finally get our driver’s license!
      1. Which one of us takes that license, puts it in a frame, hangs it on the wall for everyone to look at... but never drives a car?
      2. That’s the way of confirmation, as we have some of the tools and knowledge, but we want to live out our faith in the world.
  - c. So today we celebrate... and we celebrate the birthday of the Church... but most of all we remember who the Holy Spirit points to... Jesus Christ.
- III. **Jesus is really the main point of this day**, as He makes an amazing claim.
  - a. Now, our Gospel lesson says that Jesus stood up on the last day of the feast, but this is not the Feast of Pentecost like our reading in Acts, but the Feast of Booths or Tents.
    - i. The people were remembering the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness... as they lived in tents... but most importantly, that God provided everything they needed.
    - ii. Now, God provided manna from heaven so they could eat every day... and He provided them with clothes and shelters that never wore out... and He even gave them water when Moses struck the rock.
    - iii. So, to remember that God gave them water, they did something called, the “pouring out of the water.”
      1. They would go to the Pool of Siloam and gather water in a container... then pour it out by the altar of the temple.
      2. You see, the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel once saw a vision that in the end times, water would pour out of the temple entrance and make its way down the valley into the Dead Sea and bring all things to life again.
      3. Even today, that valley that this water would run through is a giant cemetery... it is a picture of the dead... the dry bones...

and the Dead Sea beyond it that had no life possible... all given life by the river of life that would flow out of God's abundance.

- b. So, after the water was poured out in this great ceremony, Jesus yells out for all to hear... Let anyone who believes in Me quench their thirst, because the Scriptures are clear that Jesus is the source of living water... or the Holy Spirit will pour forth from Him.
- c. Jesus is the Rock from which the rivers of living water flow – the Holy Spirit.
  - i. The Holy Spirit is the one who goes forth and calls us to faith (just like He did for you in your Baptism, Lily)... He gathers us as believers in Jesus (why we are here in church today)... enlightens us with the Holy Scriptures and the Truth of Jesus Christ (which He did through Confirmation for you Lily, and all of us through Bible studies and church)... and continues to work in us to walk with God.
  - ii. Jesus is telling everyone at that celebration that He is something much bigger than they know... He is the source of the river of life – He is God – and as we believe in Him, we will drink deeply of this river of life.

#### IV. **The world around us is spiritually thirsty.**

- a. Just think of how all the things around us that say they will stop our thirst, but they are really like offering a cup of sand to someone dying of thirst in the desert.
- b. It's no coincidence that the Scriptures constantly remind us of things like dry bones, death, the need for water, the poisonous water of the Dead Sea, and wandering.
  - i. Think about the woman at the well in John 4, as she wandered through 5 husbands and was living in sin with the 6<sup>th</sup> guy... all the while she was dying of thirst that could not be quenched by relationships.
  - ii. In our modern time, it's the same old story, as people seek out the living among the dead... expecting to quench their thirst with social media attention... wealth and fame... relationships... getting fit... owning a home or a business...
  - iii. Maybe in our older years it's less about popularity and more about comfort... security... retirement accounts... keeping our health from failing... or trying to hold onto the "good old days."
- c. But no matter our age, the world cannot make living water...It might be able to distract us for a while... but it cannot give eternal life.

#### V. **Our only source of life is Jesus Christ.**

- a. Yes, the Holy Spirit was sent forth by the Father and the Son to open our eyes to the truth of Scripture and be sure that we believe in the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- b. This is our great peace and hope, because without Jesus and the Holy Spirit flowing from Him, we wander in a desert without water... through a

valley of dry bones and tombs... around a poisonous sea that supports no life at all.

- c. Jesus went the way of death on a cross in order to fulfill the rescue plan – that His sacrificial death would cover our debt of sin... our constant wandering away from the source of life.
  - i. He then rose again and ascended into heaven so the next part of the plan could take place... the outpouring of the Holy Spirit... the rivers of living water flowing out to the nations.
  - ii. All of that was for you... including you, Lily, because your Lord loves you.
  - iii. He has always had a plan and life for you... from the waters of Holy Baptism and the gift of faith... to these days where He continues to serve you through His Word, His body and blood, and His forgiveness, life, and salvation.
- d. Every generation tries to quench its thirst with the world's water... but this world can only leave the soul thirsty.
  - i. The world offers water that cannot keep people alive... but Christ is still the Rock in the wilderness... and even to the dead... this river brings life.
- e. And so Lily, and to all gathered here today, Jesus is the main thing... as He keeps you in His loving arms... forgiving... supporting... and blessing you in your baptismal grace. Amen