

How about a couple of riddles to get us started this morning. Are you ready? What kind of lighting did Noah use while he was inside the ark? **Flood**lights. Why couldn't Noah's family play cards on the Ark, though? Because Noah was standing on the deck! What happens when you throw a green stone in the Red Sea? It gets wet.

Okay, last one, and this one is actually a serious riddle: How can someone who is thirsty become a source of refreshment for others? Well, today we're going to see how it happens through the living waters of Pentecost. Through these "living waters," not only is your own thirst quenched but then from you streams of living water flow out to others, to quench **their** thirst. That's what this Day of Pentecost is all about. Let's take a closer look.

In the Gospel for today, from John 7, Jesus begins by saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." That thirsty person is you. Oh, not that everybody **feels** that thirst. There are a lot of people walking around, dying from lack of spiritual water, who don't even realize their need. They think everything is okay: "I don't need God. I don't need to 'be saved' or anything like that. If I **do** decide to dabble in spirituality, it will be on my own terms, and it will fit my own beliefs and opinions." That's the view of many people in our culture today.

But Jesus calls attention to our need by offering us a drink that will quench our thirst. He offers us the water of life, and that causes us to realize that without Him we're dying. We **need** what Jesus has to give. "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."

Here is what that thirst looks like: You and I discover that we're sinners, wandering aimlessly in a dry desert of our own making. We used to live in a garden where the waters were abundant. But we thought we knew better than God, and because of that, we lost our access to the water of life. Sin became like sand in our mouth, dry and gritty. Our throats became parched, and we were unable to quench the burning sensation.

But Jesus has something to give to people who are dying of thirst: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." Jesus calls **us**; He invites **us** to come. Come to the only place where your thirst can be quenched. Come to Jesus. He's the only One who can give you what you need. Only Jesus has the forgiveness that washes away your sins. Only He has the righteousness that satisfies your thirst. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Only Jesus has this water of life. Come to Him and drink.

And so, you do come, and you do drink. You believe in Jesus Christ your Savior. And He satisfies that thirst which would otherwise end in death. Jesus gives you life- His life, new life, eternal life. Think of what Jesus told the woman at the well: "Whoever drinks the water that I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give Him will become in Him a spring of water welling up to everlasting life." Yes, this is the water that you drink: Jesus' gift of the water of life. His life-giving water that becomes in you a never-ending spring welling up to eternal life. Come to Him and drink,' that's another way of saying, 'believe in Him and cling to Him by faith, because He is your very life!' Where else could you go? Faith is that simple trust in the Savior - to rely on Him for your salvation, and not on yourself. Faith is simply being at the receiving end of God's gifts. It is that empty, open hand which receives the gifts God so freely offers. Faith means giving up on our own works and holding on to the work that God does for us. Faith is listening to Jesus' invitation, "Come to Me and drink," and then responding, "Yes, Lord, here I come. Thank you for giving me Your water of life."

Today, on this Day of Pentecost, we're reminded that even this "coming to Jesus," faith itself is a gift of God. The Holy Spirit is the One Who brings us to Jesus. Remember what we learned to confess in the Small Catechism: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him." That's another way of saying: "I believe that I **cannot** believe. Because of my sinfulness, I didn't want to come to Christ- indeed, I couldn't come- **unless** the Holy Spirit had first come to me and preached Christ to me and worked in my heart the faith that brings me to Him." But thanks be to God, the Spirit has done this faith-creating work! "The Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

So now you **do** believe. You've come to Jesus. You've had your thirst quenched by drinking His water of forgiveness and life. You trust in the One Who died on the cross for you, taking your sins upon Himself, so that you would not die eternally. You trust in Him Who rose from the dead on Easter morning, showing that what He did on the cross truly worked- that He really did pay the full price for our sin and now, as a result, death has lost its grip on those who trust in Him. You believe in the Lord Who ascended into heaven, not to leave us or abandon us, but to be with us in a new and even greater way.

This same Jesus promises to pour out from heaven the Holy Spirit, to empower the church to bear witness to Christ to all the nations of the world. "*Go Ye into All the World*" as our choir sang it today. That's what

Pentecost is all about. That's what Jesus is talking about when He says: "Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will **flow** from within him." You see, not only has your own thirst been quenched, but you also then become a source of refreshment for others. You become a channel for God's blessings, a conduit for the water of life to flow **through** out to spiritually thirsty people living in this desperately dry and weary, sin polluted world. You become a vessel for bringing Jesus' life, love, and forgiveness to others. The living water which you yourself receive- that drink of life wells up within you, and now streams of living water flow out **from** you to bless those around you.

That's what happened to Peter on that first Christian Pentecost. He had come to know Jesus' abundant forgiveness firsthand. Remember how Peter denied three times that He even knew Jesus, and this taking place on the night of Jesus' arrest and trial? Now at Pentecost, 50 days after Christ's victory over death, Jesus grants Peter and the others the gift of the Holy Spirit. He does this so that they will proclaim the Good News to the world. That's what Peter does. He preaches the message of the crucified and risen Christ. He calls his listeners to faith, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins." And so, the church grows. The living waters of Pentecost flow out from Peter to quench the thirst of many.

**You** may not be a Peter, you may never have the opportunity to preach to three thousand people at one time. In fact, most Christians are not called to preach publicly at all, not as ordained servants of the Word. But that does not mean there won't be streams of living water flowing out from you. There will be! Watch it happen! The life of Jesus you have received will overflow and spill out and splash blessings on the people around you. The waters will flow - in your words and actions, in the love and forgiveness you show to others, in the testimony you speak to others of what Christ has done for you through the work of your church.

So, how **can** someone who is thirsty become a source of refreshment for others? "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." Those are the words of Jesus from our text today **and** that's the answer to my last riddle from the beginning of the sermon. But it's no joke. It's for real! Come and see the wonders of the living waters of Pentecost: Not only is your own thirst quenched, but the streams of life will also flow out from within you to others. Come to Jesus, then, in the power of the Spirit. Come and drink and live! Amen.