

# LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of May 24

Happy Pentecost! This weekend we celebrate the birth of the Church. In John, chapter seven, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit when he shouts:

“Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘**Rivers of living water** will flow from his heart’” (John 7:37b-38).

## Introduction

When Jesus says *Rivers of Living Water* he is speaking of “the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory” (John 7:39). When the Day of Pentecost comes, Jesus’ words are fulfilled and rivers of living water flow from heaven upon believers gathered in Jerusalem.

When Jesus gave his life on the cross, a shift in heaven and earth more magnanimous than the colliding of tectonic plates, opened direct access to God. Jesus Christ, the blessed Son of God, paid for all sin for all time and took back the keys of death and the grave (Revelations 1:18), making a way for all who believe in him to experience salvation and eternal life – a personal relationship with the Father sealed by his indwelling Holy Spirit.

Jesus’ resurrection proves mission accomplished, and for forty days, his physical appearance was witnessed by followers (see Acts 10:39-41; 1 Corinthians 15:3-9). Before his ascension, Jesus told his disciples: “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4-5; Luke 24:29). The outpouring of God’s Spirit was an event prophesied numerous times in the Old Testament (e.g. Ezekiel 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-29). Today we celebrate God’s Holy Spirit and the birthday of his Church.

## Background

On the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Festival of the Harvest (Leviticus 23:15-17), a roar like a mighty windstorm filled the house where believers were gathered, and the Holy Spirit manifests in what looks like flames or tongues of fire settling on all believers present. They begin to speak in tongues as each are filled with God’s Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), fulfilling what Jesus had promised at the climax of the Festival of Shelters several months before, which is our text today.

**Read John 7:1-24, 25-39, 40-44**

## Discussion:

The first five verses of chapter seven reveal how Jesus’ brothers do not yet understand his purpose. It says Jesus wanted to stay out of Judea because the Jewish leaders were plotting his death in Judea. His brothers say: ‘... You can’t become famous if you hide like this!’ (v4) but Jesus’ mission was not to become famous, but to do the will of God. Maybe you have experienced a time when your motives for ministry or serving the Lord were misunderstood; perhaps some of your own family members became cynical and angered.

- What does Jesus model in word and action, according to vv 6-10?
- What do Jesus’ words in Luke 14:25-27 say about the cost of following him?
- What do we learn about our timing vs. God’s timing?

Jesus eventually goes to Jerusalem and midway into this Festival of Shelters, he goes up to the Temple and begins to teach. Though confusion grows among the crowd as Jesus speaks of his purpose, his clarity is undeterred: “My message is not my own, it comes from God who sent me” (v16). It seems the more direct he is, the more the people *don’t* understand. The more he speaks of being *sent* by God, the more religious leaders are enraged. In fact, at points it looks as if the growing mayhem could very well prove to be fatal (see John 6:10-13, 25-27, 30-31, 35-36, 40-44).

Here as all Jews are gathered for the festival – outdoor shelters to remember their ancestors’ dwelling in tents in the wilderness, lit menorahs 50 cubits high reminding them of God providing the cloud by day and fire by night, specially drawn water flowing over the altar commemorating water from the rock – Jesus stands and shouts on the last day, the climax of the festival: “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart’” (John 7:37-38). If his own brothers misunderstood Jesus’ true mission (vv1-4), it makes one wonder if some of the disciples may have been surprised, even fearful when Jesus publicly declares his purpose: “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me!”

- Salvation and our faith in Christ is personal, but it is not private. What do the following verses say about being willing to go public with our faith and the message of Christ? Jot down one take-away from each reference.

Matthew 10:16-20

Mark 8:38

Romans 1:16-17

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

- As many in the crowds begin to believe in Jesus, the Pharisees send Temple guards to arrest Jesus (v32). What do you make of this? People in positions of power may set out to strike fear in their ‘subject’ in an attempt to maintain their power. But what does Jesus say about this in Matthew 10:28? (see also Job 28:28)

### Further Consideration:

- Why the growing confusion at this particular Festival of Shelters, six months after the previous Passover (John 6:4) and some six months before the Passover when Jesus, the Lamb of God, would carry his cross to Golgotha (John 12:1; 19:17-20)?

### Read John 7:47-53

- When the Pharisees demanded of the Temple guards: “Why didn’t you bring him in?” (i.e. *Why did you not arrest him?*), what was the guards’ response, according to v46?
- Who speaks up in defense of Jesus receiving a hearing, according to v50?
- Compare what the Pharisees say in v52 – ‘no prophet ever come from Galilee’ – with Isaiah 9:1-2 –

“Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine” (Isaiah 9:1-2).

Where Messiah reigns, darkness gives way to light. This prophecy spoken some 700 years before Christ, is fulfilled when Jesus, the true light coming into the world, steps on to the scene and makes his ministry base in Capernaum. He calls fishermen to follow and preaches truth to thousands who come to be healed.

- When did the light of Christ dawn upon your life ? Share your story.

Salvation is not about religion or legalism. It is about a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Many religious leaders in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century could not see Christ for who he was. Many people today cannot see Christ for who he is. Close by praying for others to see him and come to faith. Pray for an outpouring of God’s Spirit upon us today.

### One Year Bible Reading

May 24: 2 Samuel 4:1-6:23, John 13:31-14:14, Psalm 119:17-32, Proverbs 15:31-32

May 25: 2 Samuel 7:1-8:18, John 14:15-31, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 15:33

May 26: 2 Samuel 9:1-11:27, John 15:1-27, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 16:1-3

May 27: 2 Samuel 12:1-31, John 16:1-33, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 16:4-5

May 28: 2 Samuel 13:1-39, John 17:1-26, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 16:6-7

May 29: 2 Samuel 14:1-15:22, John 18:1-24, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 16:8-9

May 30: 2 Samuel 15:23-16:23, John 18:25-19:22, Ps. 119:113-128, Prov.16:10-11



**Text: John 7**

### PLAIN TRUTH:

Legalism leaves you \_\_\_\_\_ as it’s based on \_\_\_\_\_, while Salvation by grace gives us \_\_\_\_\_ from God.

**May 24, 2026**