

February 23, 2014

Lesson 20: Living Water

John 7:37-52

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." ' Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.



When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, 'This is really the prophet.' Others said, 'This is the Messiah.' But some asked, 'Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?' So there was a division in the crowd because of him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, 'Why did you not arrest him?' The police answered, 'Never has anyone spoken like this!' Then the Pharisees replied, 'Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.' Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, 'Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?' They replied, 'Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.'

Living Water

John 7:37-52

“The police
answered,
‘Never has
anyone spoken
like this!’”

February 20, 2014

The Big Story Truth: Jesus is God made flesh. Jesus makes God visible and accessible to the world. Faith is perceiving this truth!

About This Scripture Passage: This scripture passage begins with making reference to the final day of a festival. The festival that is being referred to is the Festival of the Tabernacles. It was a festival celebrating the harvest and remembering God's provision during the wilderness journey. At the end of the celebration of the Festival of the Tabernacles was a particular ritual in which the priests would go to the pool of Siloam to draw water and would carry it through the Water Gate and then pour the water on the altar. All the while the people would be singing, playing instruments, dancing, and waving branches. It's just after this ritual is completed that Jesus declared, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink." By this point in the Gospel, it is clear to us as readers that Jesus is

God made flesh and that Jesus has the authority to interrupt these rituals to declare that God is doing a new thing. The response of those hearing Jesus though, is mixed. The religious leaders are convinced that they know the law and Jesus is not to be believed... but the reality is that Jesus coming into the world means that we can't reduce God to what we think should be. The ability to perceive Jesus as God is the living faith!



Making the Connection: This is another occasion where judging by appearances would lead a person to miss what God is doing all together. As the commentator Gail O'Day writes, "Jesus' coming into the world as the incarnate Word of God requires that one perceive reality differently. The Word became flesh (John 1:4). If one judges by appearances only, one risks stopping at the the flesh and never recognizing God, who is present and available in that flesh. Judgement based on appearances risks reducing Jesus to fit who or what we think he should be rather than allowing his fullness, incarnate Word, to work its way on our systems and structures of perception." This story of Jesus in the temple raises the question for us of how we know what God is doing? How do we recognize and name God's work around us? A key skill for our kids is to learn how to recognize God's work and movement in their own lives and in the world around them. That takes practice, and the work of the Spirit! But we can be helping our kids, prompting them to look for God's Spirit and God's work around them. Even what looks ordinary can be holy!

Where in the World Are We?

The Festival of the Tabernacles takes place at the temple in Jerusalem. The map of Jerusalem shown here highlights the location of the altar, the water gate, and the pool of Siloam.

For Your Reflection:

How do you experience God present in your daily life?

Where have you experienced the holy today?



