

The Heartbeat of the Holy Spirit

by Ian Barclay

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Jesus Christ as the source of Holy Spirit blessing, and highlights the secret of Holy Spirit blessing as having a deep inner thirst for something that only Jesus Christ can give, coming to Jesus, drinking from Jesus, and believing in Jesus.

Duration: 40:22

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23, Isaiah 55:1, Isaiah 58:11, Zechariah 13:1, John 7:2-37

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by recounting a story of a river catching fire and how it became a significant event in the community. He then discusses the impact of the Holy Spirit falling in power, emphasizing that it is a community-touching and destiny-touching event. The speaker also mentions the different reactions to Jesus, including the disbelief of the politicians and the initial disbelief of Jesus' own brothers. Finally, the speaker highlights the writer of the gospel's message that Jesus is the mystery at the heart of reality and the reality at the heart of mystery.

Transcript

We're going to look at John's Gospel and chapter 7 for a moment. Now, we've looked at the great heartbeat of the universe, the heartbeat of provision, and we're looking now at the heartbeat of the Holy Spirit. Look back at verse 2 of chapter 7. But when the feast of tabernacles was near, and verse 14, not until halfway through the feast did Jesus go up to the temple, and verse 37, on the last and the greatest day of the feast.

I'm sure that you're familiar with all the things that happen in tabernacles, but I'm going to just remind you, if I may, everybody for the whole feast of tabernacles would meet with the priest at the Temple of Herod. Everyone would have things in their hands. In their left hands, they would have an etroque, which was a citrus fruit.

It was a reminder that God had brought the people into the promised land, a land flowing with good things. In their right hands, they held a lulav, three branches of trees, a willow, and a myrtle, and a palm, a reminder that when they traveled from Egypt to the promised land, that they'd had to live in little tabernacles. And so the people would have their etroque in their left hand, and their lulav in their right hand, and they would meet with the priest outside the Temple of Herod.

The priest would have neither of those things in his hand. He would simply have a little gold jug that, in Hebrew measurement, held three logs of water, somewhere about one liter of water in our measurement. And the priest would turn and lead the people all the way down through Jerusalem, the old part of Jerusalem, through the water gate, out into where the Pool of Siloam is situated, and the priest would bend down, and he would put his little jug into the Pool of Siloam, and as he came up, everybody would chant.

With joy, people will draw water from the wells of salvation. Then the priest, having got his little jug full of water, would turn, and he would walk right the way back up through Jerusalem, towards the Temple, and as he walked, the people would sing the great Psalms, the great praise Psalms, Psalm 113 through to Psalm 118. And having got into the Temple area, the priest would walk around the altar of burnt offering, and then he would mount the ramp above it, and he would hold the little jug above the altar of burnt offering.

And it was said to be one of the great blessings of Tabernacles, if you could see the water leave the jug at Tabernacles, as it went down onto the altar of burnt offering, and become steam as it burst, hissed away. Now because it was such an important thing to see the water, when the priest had lifted the golden jug, ready to pour it out over the altar of burnt offering, he would pause for a moment, a sort of dramatic pause, while people tried to be in a place where they could actually see the water. And that dramatic moment, most scholars think that it was at that particular point that a soccer hooligan cried out in the crowd, if anyone is thirsty.

Now it's not a soccer hooligan, of course, it's that strange preacher healer from Jerusalem, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. And as I say, scholars think that it is at that particular moment that that cry came out from amidst the crowd. Of course what Jesus is trying to do, as he does right the way through John's gospel, is to refocus the attention of the people.

What was happening was there that sort of religious moment for the Jewish people at Tabernacles, but Jesus was trying to say that he was the source of Holy Spirit blessing. I suppose what we really have in John chapter 7 is a great number of verdicts about Jesus Christ. Let's just quickly look at those as we move through the chapter, move back to verse 1. Jesus is the source of Holy Spirit blessing, but look at the verdict of his human family, verses 1 to 9. Verse 5 is the key verse there, and his human family, it's irrational disbelief.

Look at verse 5, even his own brothers did not believe in him. Of course two of his brothers are going to change after his death. Supremely James is going to change.

You remember he's going to be such a committed worshipper, James, in the temple of Jerusalem, that when he died and they laid out his body for burial, so frequently had he been kneeling on the stone steps of the temple after this particular time, that his knees got great calluses. And in early church history, James is always referred to as Camel's Knees James because of the calluses. But at this moment the whole family is irritated disbelief.

Even his own brothers didn't believe in him. And then in verses 10 to 13 you've got the verdict of the Jerusalem mob, and that really is grumbling contempt. You've got that in verse 12, that's the key verse.

Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. That's a marvelous word, whispering, there. In the language of the New Testament the word is Gungusmos, and you can really, if you actually

say Gungusmos, it's a non- onomatopoeic word, you'd actually hear people grumbling.

You know, people at the back of St. John's on a Sunday morning, Gungusmos, Gungusmos, Gungusmos. What has John Day done now? Gungusmos, Gungusmos. It's that sort of word there.

It's grumbling contempt. That's what you've got there in verse 12. And so in verses 14 through to 24 you've got the the verdict of the pilgrims in the temple.

And really their verdict is that Jesus is a neurotic country bumpkin. Look at verse 20. You are demon-possessed.

Who is trying to kill you? And verse 15. How did this man get this learning? If you were with us last night we were looking at the remarkable verses that open John's gospel. And so this is John who is writing, and he says, in beginning, before space-time history began, is the word, God's reason.

And now John wants us to see that some people are saying, how did this man, how did this man get this learning? John wants us to notice that because it's important that we see that they're saying that about God's Word, God's Christ. So the source of Holy Spirit blessing, the verdict of his family, the verdict of the Jerusalem mob, the verdict of the pilgrims in the temple, and the verdict of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. We've got that there in verses 25 through to 31.

And that's really a mixture of faith, cautious faith and doubt. Verse 26 is the key verse there. Have the authorities concluded that he is the Christ? Verse 30.

They tried to seize him. And then verse 31. Many of the crowd put their trust in him.

Not a very committed reason for trust. It's those in the crowd can't really imagine people working bigger miracles than Jesus Christ. And then this is the bit that I love.

The verdict of the temple guard, verses 32 to 36 and verses 40 to 46. The temple guard are policemen. And really, it's important that we look at what these policemen are saying.

There is no one more cynical in any community than policemen, because they have seen everything. They're not going to see a worse crime. They've seen, they're not going to see another motor accident that is worse than the ones that they've seen.

Policemen are so cynical. But look at these policemen speaking in verse 46. No one ever possessed, no one ever spoke the way that this man did.

That is Mordecai Bergerac speaking. Or that is, I don't know how you want to describe him, but it's he of the dirty raincoat and the glass eye that's talking there. Seen everything before and yet this policeman says no one ever spoke the way that this man did.

And then in verses 47 to 51, you've got the verdict of the politicians, the senator and the chief priests and the Pharisees. And really that's cold disbelief. Verse 47 is the key verse.

You mean that he has deceived you also, they say to Nicodemus when Nicodemus says you can't condemn Jesus without listening to what he has to say. They've got no, they're in no mood for political niceties or legal niceties. They don't want to listen to Jesus.

And then I suppose you've got to add to that the verdict of the writer of this gospel. And the writer of this gospel, he's got two things that he wants to say to us right the way through. That Jesus is the mystery at the heart of reality and he is the reality at the heart of mystery.

That's what John is saying to us right the way from the beginning to the end of his gospel. So the source of Holy Spirit blessing. I see one or two of you are just drawing your coat around you.

I've got to speak with my coat off. So anyone wants to borrow a coat just come and grab it from up here. Please have my coat if it'll keep you warm.

The source of Holy Spirit blessing. Then would you notice the secret of Holy Spirit blessing. And here we come to verse 37.

If any man is thirsty let him come to me and let him drink who believes in me. I like the NIV here and especially the marginal reading that has four verbs there in that little phrase. And I think those four verbs are the secret of Holy Spirit blessing.

I think we're all going to start sneezing like that if we stay here much longer. But I mean it's marvelous. The source of Holy Spirit blessing.

The secret of Holy Spirit blessing are these four verbs. We want to have this Holy Spirit blessing. There are four things that we have to do.

The first is that we're to have this thirst. That's a marvelous word. You would recognize it.

Dipsao is the ordinary word for being thirsty in the New Testament. Comes into the English language of course in dipsomaniac and words like that. But it really has means having a deep thirst for something.

Deep inner thirst for something that only Jesus Christ can satisfy. What if I can just read to you from one of C.S. Lewis's books for a moment. Remember the silver chair.

Do you remember in those Narnia stories that the lion is the Christ figure and Jill represents the believer. Let me just read a couple of paragraphs from this silver chair. Are you not thirsty said the lion.

I'm dying of thirst said Jill. Then drink said the lion. May I. Could I. Would you mind going away while I do said Jill.

The lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at his motionless bulk she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic.

Will you promise not to do anything to me if I come said Jill. I make no promise said the lion. Jill was now so thirsty that without realizing it she'd actually come a step nearer.

Do you eat girls she said. I've swallowed up girls and boys women and men kings and emperors cities and realms said the lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting nor as if it was sorry nor as if it were angry.

It just said it. I daren't come and drink said Jill. Then you will die of thirst said the lion.

Oh dear said Jill without noticing it coming yet another step nearer. I suppose I'll have to go and look for another stream then. There is no other stream said the lion.

It never occurred to Jill to disbelieve the lion. No one who had ever seen his stern face could do that. Her mind suddenly made itself up.

It was the worst thing that she'd ever had to do but she went forward to the stream knelt down and began scooping up the water in her hand. It was the coldest and most refreshing water that she had ever tasted. So the source of Holy Spirit blessing is Jesus Christ.

The secret of Holy Spirit blessing is we have this deep inner thirst for something that only Jesus Christ can give. So we thirst and we come. Now that's a strange word because really the emphasis on this word is going in a particular direction.

It's what the old teachers used to speak about when they said living in an attitude of repentance. You've had the team here from Caponry. I love going to Caponry.

We go to Caponry once every year to lecture there. I count that such a great privilege with those over 200 students from all parts of the world. When I lecture some of them are Russian and Romanian and Japanese and Chinese.

I can't cope with their language. I have to lecture in English of course and at the end of the lecture I give a few moments for questions and they will put up their hands and I will point to them and then they struggle to give me the question that is in their mind. Sometimes they drop into their natural tongue and when they do that they're covered with embarrassment and then try and put the word in English.

I love that because that's a picture of the spiritual life. Once we are converted to Christ we're going the way of Christ. That doesn't mean that we don't sin.

We certainly sin. Often we fail and we drop into if you want what you might like to call our natural state and then we're covered with confusion and we get up and we're going in God's direction again. And that's what this word is speaking about.

It's not saying that we don't ever fail but it is saying that if you look at our lives over a period of time that we're moving in God's direction and that's so important if we want to really be blessed in spiritual things. So the source of Holy Spirit blessing is Jesus Christ. The secret of Holy Spirit blessing are these four verbs here.

We thirst. We have this deep inner longing for something that only Jesus Christ can give and then we're moving. We're going to Christ.

We don't ever quite get there in this lifetime but we're moving in his direction. We're living in this attitude of repentance. Occasionally we drop into the old way of life but we pick ourselves up and we get going and then we drink and that word means that we appropriate to ourselves all that God has for us.

We're living in marvelous days of rediscovery of worship and I'm thrilled about all the things that we've discovered about worship but let me just show you one of the most important things that I feel that we've yet to learn about worship. If you're one of those people that can turn over quickly in your Bible could you turn to the letter of James and chapter 1. One of the great worship words appears here. The main word for worship in the New Testament means going towards to kiss or going towards to adore.

That's what it means to worship. That word comes 66 times in the New Testament and this word that we're looking at here is a very rare word. It currently comes two or three times.

Thrasakaya is the word at the end of James chapter 1 for worship though it's more often translated religion but you'll have to take my word for it that it is a worshipping word and it has to do about worship. Look at verse 26. If anyone considers himself worshipping and does not keep a tight rein on his tongue he deceives himself and his worship is worthless.

Worship that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. Yes we're discovering marvelous things about worship that is tremendous but unless we discover this other aspect of worship, worship is what a believer does for seven days a week and if what we're doing from Monday to Saturday doesn't correspond with what we're doing on Sunday then what we're doing on Sunday is negated by what we're doing the rest of the week. It doesn't matter how liberated our worship is on a Sunday and that it is backed up by a life that is saying the same thing then we are we're missing out, we're negating our worship.

We are to drink, we're to appropriate all that God has for us. Part of that is liberated worship but we've yet to make this discovery that all that we do is worship and we must match our Sunday worship with Monday through Saturday worship as well. So the source of Holy Spirit blessing is Jesus Christ and the secret of Holy Spirit blessing are these four words thirst, come, drink, and believe.

Believe is an extraordinary word in the New Testament because it has the sense that it bears weight, that it we can stand on it, it will hold us up. My father in Scotland was one of the early aviators in the days that aeroplanes used to be made of bits of wood and bits of paper and bits of string and what-have-you and he used to tell a story, it's a very silly story you must forgive it, about a pilot running out of petrol and landing by a farm.

Farmer had never seen or heard an aeroplane before so he came out and the pilot said to him have you got any petrol and he said oh yes and the pilot said could I buy some I've run out and the farmer sold him some petrol and so he put it into his aeroplane and he said to the farmer would you like to see your farm from the air and the farmer said oh that wouldn't hold me I'm quite a heavy man and the pilot said oh that first cockpit is where I sit and that second cockpit is for a passenger there's a helmet and a flying jacket in there and goggles in there let's put them on you and that will keep you warm while we're flying we'll just go up and do a circle around the farm so you can see the farm and that's what happened farmer went around the farm with the wing down so he could see the farm

and then they landed by the farm again and taxied up to the farmhouse and the pilot got out and he helped the farmer out and he said the pilot said to the farmer there you are I told you it would take your weight and the farmer said ha ha you pilots haven't got oils in the back of your head you know you didn't see what I was doing I never really sat down I held myself up about three inches off the seat I said it was a silly story and it is a silly story but isn't that really like believers so far as salvation is concerned or so far as so much of the teaching in the Bible is concerned that the scripture bears weight we can believe in it we can stand on it it's not going to let us down so the source of Holy Spirit blessing and the secret of Holy Spirit blessing and then we move on and

lastly we look at the superabundance of Holy Spirit blessing and we've really got that in verse 37 on the last and the greatest day of the feast Jesus said instead in the loud still and said in the loud voice if a man is thirsty let him come to me and let him drink believes in me verse 38 as the scripture has said streams of

living water will flow from within him now here is where we really have problems in this particular verse because it's very difficult to find a scripture that has said that out of the believer is going to flow streams of living water suppose we could point to Isaiah 58 and verse 11 you will be like a well-watered garden like a spring whose waters never fail I suppose the heart of a believer is the wellspring of life Proverbs 4 and verse 23 but to actually say where

the Spirit is going to flow out from a believer that's difficult we could say where the Spirit is going to flow from God's Christ Isaiah 55 and verse 1 come all of you who are thirsty come to the waters and drink Zechariah 13 and verse 1 on that day a fountain will be opened in the house of David on that day living water will flow from Jerusalem but of course it can't really be referring to the Messiah because in verse 37 he who is to thirst is the believer he who is to come is the believer he who is to drink is the believer he who is to believe is the believer so it's not in verse 38 likely to be referring to Jesus as the hymn in the very next verse but that's not really the problem of this particular verse 39 is the really difficult bit you'll have to take my word for what it is saying

let me read to you exactly what John says he said this about the Spirit whom those who believed in him would receive for it was not yet spirit because Jesus had not yet been glorified we normally translate that by saying that the Spirit has not yet been given but that's not what John says John says listen again he said this about the Spirit whom those who believed in him would receive for it was not yet spirit because Jesus had not been glorified you can't say hey at this point that the Spirit has not been given because it was given in the Old Testament and it's already been given in the New Testament Luke 1 and verse 15 Luke says that John the baptizer was full of the Holy Spirit Luke 1 and verse 41 Elizabeth was full of the Holy Spirit Luke 2 and verse 25 Simeon was full of the Holy

Spirit so you can't say that the Holy Spirit has not yet been given so what is John talking about well the clue there is in that word glorify that's a little code word in John's writing it always remains means the death of Christ the crucifixion of Christ and that begins to tell us what verse 39 means he said this about the Spirit whom those who believed in him would receive for it was not yet spirit or if you like it was not yet the age of the Spirit because Jesus hadn't yet died and rose again and obviously since that has happened on the day of Pentecost has taken place now the Holy Spirit is the rightful belonging of every true believer so the source of Holy Spirit blessing is Jesus Christ the secret of Holy Spirit blessing is that we have that deep inner longing for spiritual things

that movement towards God that appropriation of spiritual things and that deep inner commitment to all that God says to us in his Word so the source and the secret and the super abundance once we are walking closely like that with with Christ and then when that happens we can be the possessors of the Holy Spirit now I want in conclusion if I may just to say one or two things if I can about the Holy Spirit because I think there are things that we to say in the time that we're living and I want to say them because this is something that I've been studying over the years first of all I believe that the Holy Spirit is a community touching experience and when you have the idea of the Holy Spirit simply falling on a on a church that the community doesn't feel I think that that's not speaking

about what the Bible is talking about or what has happened several times in history when revival has come we were at a convention once in in Trinidad and we were in a little town called San Fernando and San Fernando is probably like your little town here just a row of shops really and a church really just one street of shops San Fernando but if you walk down the high street there you might never notice that in between two houses there's a bigger space than between the other houses between most of the houses there's

only a gap of about a foot but between two houses there's a gap of about seven feet and there's a wall there and if you looked over the wall you would see that there's a river there called the Garracara and it flows under the high street and right on the side of that river is

the baker's shop and the baker has done the same things for all of his business life he bakes his bread in the morning and then he takes the bread out of the ovens and puts them in the shop window and he cleans out the fire that has heated his ovens the red hot coal and ashes and he takes it to his window and he just throws it into this river the Garracara and the Garracara carries it out into the Caribbean Ocean except on this one day that I'm referring to and the day was the 14th of February 1970 just after we've been there just we were there just after this event and the baker baked his bread took it out of the oven put it in the shop window took out the hot coals from his fire went to the window and threw these hot coals into the Garracara River he didn't know that five minutes

earlier the biggest oil refinery petroleum refinery in the Commonwealth had had an overspill of about a million gallons of petrol and they were flushing it out through the Garracara at the moment that the baker threw the red hot coals into the river the river went up in flames and he dialed everybody dialed the fire service they dialed their equivalent of 999 and said to the fire service the river is on fire I beg your pardon the river is on fire I beg your pardon the river is on fire what did you say the river is on fire and you can't go through San Fernando today if you're in a bus or a private car or a taxi everybody stops at that little bridge and says this is where the river caught fire on the 14th of February 1970 when the Holy Spirit falls in power it is a community touching event

that's the first thing that I want us to notice secondly it's a destiny touching event I've met some of you at Spring Harvest and we go most years there for the Bible readings and a lot of people want to be helped or counseled and you sometimes get little notes from people saying there's somebody coming to your chalet to be counseled we had a note somebody was coming at two o'clock to be counseled we had our lunch and cleared our little sitting room in the chalet and Hazel put on some coffee and at two o'clock this young lady arrived and we sat her down and gave her a cup of coffee and I said to her what do you want and she said I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit and I said that's marvelous why do you want to be filled with the Spirit and she said well I have difficult getting up in

the morning and if I was filled with a Holy Spirit I could bounce out of bed at 530 onto my knees and pray and I said well that's a very interesting theory let me read to you from the Acts of the Apostles and I read from Acts chapter 6 and verse 3 where they're told to pick seven men full of the Spirit she says that's what I want I went on in reading in Acts 6 and I got as far as verse 8 that there were there's a man like Stephen full of the powers wonders and signs the only time that we've got those three words together in the New Testament she says that's what I want I read on to the end of that chapter 6 of the Acts of the Apostles into chapter 7 Stephen preaching that mighty sermon she said that's exactly what I want I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that I can do great

things for God and I read on to the end of chapter 7 and I got to verse 59 where it says that they picked up stones and they stoned Stephen to death and bless her heart she said at the end of that I'm not sure but it is the Holy Spirit that I want and we had to say to her that more people have died for Christ in the 20th century than all of the other centuries put together and that if we receive the Holy Spirit in power it can change where we live and the things that we have to do and that's a tremendously important if we receive the Holy Spirit in power like this we might be called at this very time to go to South Africa extraordinary things are happening in South Africa at the moment there's a church that we go to there where they are

every Sunday having over 500 Russian seamen in

church so much so that they have to have an interpreter in Russian at the moment so that the message goes to those Russian seamen they are coming in extraordinary numbers into that church you know the church that I'm referring to St.

James's Kenilworth of course you're in a place like that is having a blessing like that there are going to be difficulties and you remember just a few weeks ago that some men ran in there and they just filled part of the sanctuary with bullets from an automatic machine guns now the extraordinary thing that has happened there is that every one of those people that were killed in that massacre were absolutely committed true believers including one Russian seaman who was about to get married the following week and of course these particular events that particular massacre has only multiplied the blessing and the numbers are attending that that church what we're looking at here is the Holy Spirit is a community touching event and is a destiny touching event and here is the third

thing I want to say in that the overflow of the Holy Spirit is something creative life-touching event look at John 7 and verse 38 whoever believes in me as the scripture has said streams of living water will flow from within him that's a very difficult verse because the within him is the coelia that's normally translated womb in the New Testament it's actually not the womb it's a space where the womb is but but it's it's referring to a male whoever believes in me as the scripture has said streams of living water will flow from within him from his womb he's going to become creative and I believe that absolutely about the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit is something that gives unusual life to the way that we live I often teach in various places Paul's letter to the Ephesians which is the

great teaching document to the church I've just written a book on Ephesians for the inter-varsity fellowship and you remember what Paul says in Ephesians about the Holy Spirit he says don't be drunk with new wine but be filled with the Spirit that's the main teaching document to the church on the Spirit and it goes on to speak about marriages and families and jobs sometimes people say why doesn't Paul mention the more esoteric gifts of the Spirit is it because he doesn't believe in them and the answer is of course Paul believes in all of the gifts of the Spirit but all of those gifts of the Spirit can be counterfeited it's possible to counterfeit tongues or prophecy or healings all of those can be counterfeited the one thing that cannot be counterfeited in any way at all is holiness and

you see that's really what Paul is speaking about in Ephesians he says don't be drunk with new wine but be filled with the Spirit and that's going to be seen in your marriages and your families and your place of work you see Paul is saying to the Ephesians don't tell me that you've got a tongue or you've got prophecy and tell me that you've got problems in your marriage because as I said I won't believe that because if you've got the Holy Spirit in your life the one thing that is going to happen is that you're going to have to struggle to make sense out of your marriage or your family or your job or whatever it is because that is fundamental to the Holy Spirit and I think that it's important that we notice that in the days in which we are living because we debate about whether we can work

signs or wonders that's always been a debate in the Christian Church and I don't suppose that debate will be ended until we get to heaven but where there has been no debate ever in the Christian Church is that the Holy Spirit is given to God's people to equip them to live holy lives there's never been any debate about that but in our own time we're not looking for the Holy Spirit to equip us with holiness so the last the great day of the feast the priest holds up his little jug he's about to pour it out on the altar of burnt offering

and that healer priest from Nazareth cries out if anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink and as the scripture has says those that believe in me out of his innermost life will flow streams of living water Jesus as he's always doing in John's Gospel

says take your eyes off a man-made religion and focus on me I am the answer to all of your needs so the source of Holy Spirit blessing the secret of Holy Spirit blessing and super abundance of Holy Spirit blessing when the Holy Spirit works truly in great power the community feel it we feel it in the sense that our destiny has changed and our lives reflected in that we begin to show true holiness and all God's people said I'm encouraged by that not only can I hear you but it tells me that you're still alive and you haven't frozen to death yet God bless you now are you going to come and finish the meeting for us thank you

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