

## **“You Must Have the Spirit to Believe in Jesus”**

**John 7:32-52 (vv. 37-39)**

**Teacher: Minister Alice Tamrie**

### **I. Biblical context and Historical Background**

This lesson demonstrates how the Holy Spirit leads, guides and directs us in the way of our Lord that Jesus is a witness of this power. The Spirit of God empowers, enables, and equips the believer’s spirit once conviction through salvation is sought. It is even captivating how strong and bold it makes you live the life of obedience to the Word of God. We are called to have meaningful and purposeful lives for ourselves and others. Yet, challenges, conflicts, and controversial issues are forever chasing the believer in Christ Jesus. We must not lose sight of our goal and fall into the troubles of this world. Yes, we are in this world but not of this world. Over and over again we are encouraged to follow the Spirit as a believer and still yet hold on! Jesus is our witness again in the book of John! However, the gospel messenger gives us a way out through this Man called Jesus, bold and speaking publicly. He is now in the beginning of conflict as he begins his ministry for the next three years in his assigned purpose in ministering and making disciples. In context, Jesus gives us the reason for this season of his life. We see how Jesus gives us a summary over the past few weeks in our Sunday School lessons and challenges us in Chapters 6-7 how “His Words are Alive and Powerful as the Spirit”; He blows our minds in questioning- “Can the Finite Man Give advice to the Infinitely Wise God?”; and Jesus further challenges us that “Those who claim to Know the law are trying to Kill the Law-Giver!” Being spiritually blind one cannot see Jesus the Man and Jesus the Christ because the Spirit is not in them. The fact is that conviction by the Spirit must be given to the spirit “in” us as believers to unbelievers. Discipleship development means to accept Jesus in our life which is inclusive of a life filled with challenges, controversy and conflict, it is not all glory moments.

- John 7:1-13 demonstrates the spiritual/ministerial journey is inclusive of Taunts/Mockery/humiliation and it will intensify
- John 7:10-13: Your ministry is not of this world, though you are in it!

- John 7:14-19: The secret of getting truth and the acid test of a true servant means being filled with the Spirit!
- John 20-29: Demonstrates The Popular Debate of Objection
- John 7:30-36: A Reaction from the Enemy and your response

We are challenged and encouraged to walk as He did with conviction and “know” that God (“...He who sent me...” John 7:28-29) through the Spirit is with us. The enemy of our souls seek to have us seized/whispered about/accused/mocked/deceived /retorted as a believer, but we move on and say when necessary in a loud, but affirmative voice with the Spirit that Jesus is the Christ! This is the climactic appeal and He is the true witness.

## II. The Lesson: You Must Have the Spirit to Believe in Jesus!

**“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified” (John 7:37-39).**

Here we see by the Spirit a climactic appeal to our spirit! The Feast of Tabernacles was a memorial to the wandering in the wilderness, where water and food was scarce. When they emerged from the desert and enjoyed regular rainfall and plentiful crops, it was joy! In the Jewish tradition, this day is where the priests would lead a procession by the recital of Isaiah 12:3: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” Historically Deuteronomy 16:13 (7 days) and Leviticus 23:36 (8 days) follows the routine of this celebration for the Exodus and made it more meaningful. Jesus couldn’t help himself, he had to cry out (7:28). He wanted to make himself and his claims known to the entire multitude present!!

On the last day, the people marched around seven times around the altar in memory of the seven circuits around the walls of Jericho. Perhaps at this point, the priests was pouring water on the altar as a memorial offering. It was a grand party festival of sorts – as a calf, ram, lambs would be offered for propitiation of sins. He knew what this meant more than anything and Jesus’ voice rang out: “Let

anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them” (v. 38). On that day, at that moment in time, Jesus took the opportunity to make a public announcement concerning himself... he cried out in the Spirit to the crowd’s spirit! This is an awesome contrast to the small amount of water poured out each day during the feast, there will be a river of water coming out of those who believe in Christ. Not only will they be satisfied themselves, but they will also become a river so that others may drink and be satisfied (vs. 39). John explains that Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit who would satisfy personal thirst and produce “rivers of flowing fountain of living water” for the satisfaction of others. It’s an invitation to us all even today –anyone- who is thirsty to come to Jesus! Yes, this is a “come to Jesus moment;” in time, today, anyone, who is thirsty for the Holy Spirit, can drink of it by faith in Jesus Christ. All of this is a spiritual moment. What a wonderful contrasting moment to see in the Spirit what it invites us to see! Jesus saw everything through spiritual eyes, so must we! Even me! Lord Jesus, thank Him for our liberation! Whoever! Anyone!

- a) **Discussion:** contrast your day of salvation;
- b) contrast Juneteenth for the Beloved African American Community is our “coming out” day, now a National Holiday! We must remember our Exodus!

“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them” (v. 38). Whoever believes! The offering of water memorialized God’s provision for you and I for the thirst we have for Jesus, for thirsty people in the wilderness, but the water had been poured out and had left them unsatisfied. Now Jesus appeals to the individual: “Whoever believes in me.” He was requiring an individual response of faith rather than a collective observance of a ritual! And let him drink. No matter the translation, KJV or NIV, or AMF, it means the same! The living water “will flow from within them”. Spiritually, it’s a personal invitation. This verse connects the manifestation of the Spirit with the believer rather than with Christ. It is an invitation from every Sunday School lesson, every sermon preached, regardless it is an invitation from the Holy Spirit “pouring out” (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ez. 39:29, Joel 2:28-32).

Jesus took the symbolism of the OT and applied it to the gift he intended to bestow on the disciples after his passion was completed. He enlarged this teaching for them in his farewell!! (John 14:16-17, 25-26; 15:26; 16:12-15). By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (**v. 39**). John demonstrates Jesus' passion was a strong revelation about the Holy Spirit, for it divided the era of the law from that of the Spirit (1:17). Ezek. 36:26-27: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." Folks, it is not the ritual, it is the Spirit that gives you a new heart, a chance of life, repentance, conviction, salvation. It's a piercing of the heart that moves us to change by grace. Up to this time, Jesus had not been "glorified". This refers to establishing status or to enhancing a reputation. In this particular context it refers to Jesus' death, which, despite all appearances, would be the entrance to glory for him (7:39; 11:4; 12:16).

The death and resurrection of Jesus would demonstrate the perfection of god's love and power through humiliation. Phil 2:8-9 "He humbled himself and became obedient to death-even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." This implies that we will be humiliated in our walk with Jesus as a new convert, or a recommitted believer with a new heart. But we are strengthened by the "Holy Spirit in" us which will move you to follow him as a disciple. Let's not forget that it's more than the rituals in this walk as a believer; as along with it comes the hallelujah moments in our discipleship development. It takes Sunday School, preaching moments, meditation, and praying time. Along the way we will die to the old things and be resurrected to new understanding in the Spirit.

### **III. Life Applications There are times in our lives as disciples of Jesus**

Christ when controversy, challenges and conflict will come, it will began but it will have a purposeful conclusion if we stick with Jesus. The Holy Spirit "in" us – which empowers and equips is "the river that flows within" along Jesus. **You must have the Spirit to believe in Jesus.**