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DEVOTIONAL
JULY –AUGUST

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THE ABUNDANT LIFE

Series Two

THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scriptural
background
John 7:37-38.
Further Reading
Ezekiel 47:1-12

THE ABUNDANT LIFE

THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the last devotional we started a two part series on the abundant life and we looked at the Abundant Life and its foundations. Basically what we concluded was that the foundation on which this abundant is based or the root from which it comes, is found in a person - a person who John referred to as the glorified Christ. We saw that it is through His death, resurrection and ascension that the power of the presence of the Holy Spirit was released to the world. We noted the relationship between the fullness of the

Holy Spirit, and the responsibility of the child of God to become a channel of the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit to those with whom the child of God comes into contact. It is clear that God's work cannot be done without the power of His presence. The effectiveness of the Christian is not dependent on human ability, BUT on the Spirit of God flowing through his life as streams of living water.

Now I know that, in many circles, this truth is considered to be simplistic and even an old fashioned that is why it is largely ignored. This is difficult to understand, because the Biblical view is that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is indispensable and basic to a fruitful victorious life.

However, that is not to say that our efforts and energies in the Kingdom of God are to be discarded or ignored, but we must recognize that without God our work and influence and efforts are ineffective. It is only as God anoints our abilities and blesses our energies and empowers our efforts that anything of eternal worth can be done in God's Kingdom. It is only as we are filled with the Spirit of God that He can flow through our lives as streams of living water. It is then that we become victorious Christians and effective instruments in the Hands of God. The effectiveness of our witness is totally dependent on the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives.

We have already made clear that Jesus is the source of the streams of the living waters of the Spirit. He gave Himself completely to a Cross, in order that the power and presence of the Holy Spirit might be released to His believing people. It is the outpoured life of the Son of God that makes possible the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Now these verses make abundantly clear that each of us can be filled with the

presence of the Holy Spirit in His fullness. On the day of Pentecost the scripture reveals that when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples they were "all filled with the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:4. And the Apostle Paul urged the believers in Ephesus to "be filled with the Spirit." This fullness is what Jesus is talking about in John 7:37-39. ".....Streams of living water will flow from within him." By this John added "**He meant the Spirit which had not been given** since Jesus had not yet been glorified." That we can be filled with the Spirit is not open for debate, because it is a Divine promise and a Biblical truth. The real question is a personal one. "are you filled with the Holy Spirit because you can be?"

Now let us further examine what Jesus is saying here. First He underlines, **THE SECRET BY WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO BE RECEIVED.** John 7:37-38. It is an open secret. The key to revealing this secret lies in three phrases Jesus uses to lead us into receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They are first, "If anyone is thirsty..." Second, "...let him come to me and drink." And third "whoever believes in me..." These three steps are vital in appropriating the Holy Spirit. First,

Jesus is saying that the soul needs **TO COME WITH THE RIGHT DESIRE FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT.** John 7:37. The word thirst expresses the intensity of that desire. If anyone is thirsty, let come to me and drink." There is nothing difficult or complicated about this step. If you want to be filled with the Spirit there must be an intense thirst for Him. This is always true if we want the fullness of God's presence in our lives. The Old Testament writers were unafraid to express this desire for God. The Psalmist David in Psalm 42 wrote "as the deer pants for the streams of water, so my soul pants for you O God. My

souls thirsts for God, for the living God..." And the Prophet Isaiah urges us to "come, all who are thirsty, come to the waters..." (Is. 55:1) And the Psalmist again cries out "...O God, you are my God. earnestly will I seek you, my soul thirsts for you." Jesus said it is they who "hunger and thirst for righteousness that will be filled." Jesus said "if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." Second,

The soul needs to **COME TO THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT.** JOHN 7:37-38. Jesus said, "if anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me..." "whoever believes in me....." The prophet Isaiah made this clear when he wrote "For I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants." Isaiah 44:3. We have already pointed out that the source of the streams of living water is the "glorified Christ." Peter on the day of Pentecost referring to Jesus declared "exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured what you now see and hear." Acts 2:33. And in John 16:7. "... it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." John 16:7 Jesus is the source of the streams of the living waters of the Spirit. The second step to receiving the Holy Spirit is to come to the right person.

The third step is to **COME WITH THE RIGHT RESPONSE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.** John 7:37-39. Note what Jesus said, "let him come to and DRINK." "Whoever believes in me." The important words here are "let him.....drink." and "whoever believes in Me..." Drinking in this context refers to believing. It means that we align ourselves with Him, trusting Him and obeying His

commandments. It means a complete commitment to Him. A church board was discussing the possibility of inviting D.L. Moody the famous evangelist to hold some services in their church. There was one individual who really didn't care for The evangelist and grumbled does "Mr. Moody have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit." "No," replied another board member "but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Rev. Moody." D. L. Moody had abandoned himself to the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. He had come with the right response to the Holy Spirit, and had drunk deeply of the waters of the Spirit and from within him flowed streams of living water. The secret of receiving the Holy Spirit is first the right desire. "If anyone thirst" Second to come to the right person. Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let come to me.." And third we must come with right response. Jesus said "whoever believes in me." And let him come to me and drink. Drinking is the act of faith and commitment.

Now let us move with the flow of what is being said in these verses and look at, **THE SCOPE WHICH THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ENCOMPASSES.** John 7:37-39. Jesus said that "whoever believes in Me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him...." God does not want us to live in the dimensions of mediocrity. He does want us to know the fullness of all the God intends and has provided for us. He wants to fill our lives with His Holy Spirit, so that the streams of the living waters of love and grace and power flow from within us. It is important to recognize that this flow begins when the Spirit of God becomes, **AN INWARD POSSESSION OR AN INWARD REALITY.** John 7:37-39. Note what Jesus said, the streams of the living waters of the Holy Spirit would flow from "**within**" a person. The

R.S.V. uses the word heart for inmost being. The heart is where man lives and it is who a man is. The Bible says that as a man thinks in his heart so he is. It is seat of thought and intellect. If God is going to fill live of a person with His Holy Spirit, He begins with the heart. One has said that the "heart of a good man is the sanctuary of God in this world." When the laws of God are written solely on sheets of paper that is where they remain. They do not touch the life of a person, nor do they cleanse his character or transform his conduct. The prophets in the Old Testament spoke of a day when the laws of God would be inscribed into the hearts and mind of people, and would cause them to walk according to those laws. They would not be motivated simply by the written laws, but by those which had been written on the hearts and minds of their souls who were filled with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is not an inanimate force He is a living dynamic person. The life that overflows with God, must know and personally experience the reality of God's presence in his inner being. If God is going to reach the world through men and woman with the healing, redeeming liberating power of His presence, he must first fill, possess and rule in their hearts. Jesus said to His disciples on one occasion that the "Holy Spirit was with them and would be **"in them."** He would live within their hearts. Jesus also said to the woman of Samaria that He would put "**within her**" a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The reality of authentic religion lies within the heart. The dynamic of Christian influence and the power of Christian witness is dependent in being immersed in the Spirit of God. John the Baptist announced that Jesus would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit and with fire. If the Spirit is going to work in and through the

dimensions of a person's life, that person must first of all possess the Holy Spirit. The outward flow of the Spirit revealed as streams of living water commences surely in the inward possession of the Spirit. To be a blessing we must have the blessing of God upon our lives. To have a loving witness, we must have the love of Christ. To be a power for God we must have the presence of God. What is in the spring of your heart will be revealed in the flow of your actions. To reveal Christ we must know Christ personally. Jesus said that the "streams of living water will flow from within you."

But the Spirit of God must not only be an inward possession, He must have, **OUTWARD EXPRESSION** John 7:38. The operative words are "will flow from within him...." These words suggest to me that for the Spirit of God to flow through our lives redemptively, effectively and powerfully, He must be able to flow through them easily. In other words all channels must be clear and clean. There will no blockages or hindrances to the flow of the Spirit. And so if the Spirit is to flow through us easily, the channels must be clear. Furthermore these words also suggest to me that the Spirit of God is always seeking an outlet. He is always seeking to express Himself through people. He is continually reaching out to our world in its brokenness and sin through human instruments. One has correctly said that, "no one can possess the Spirit of God and keep the Spirit to himself." If we keep the blessing, power and the Spirit to ourselves, we will strangle His life within us. We must always reach out to others. "Where the Spirit is, He will flow forth, and if there is flowing forth He is not there." A telling picture of this truth is portrayed in the New Testament church.

The disciples were crowded in an upper room beside themselves with fear. The world did not know that they existed. - BUT SUDDENLY!! The heavens were opened and there was the invasion of the supernatural, when the Holy Spirit moved like a mighty rushing violent wind and carried the church through closed doors on into the world. That little group of disciples did not know that the flood the Spirit was going to carry them and their descendents into the presence of Emperors - to stand in courts of Kings and to ultimately encircle the globe with salvation. The impact of the church was such that Luke wrote that they turned the world upside down. Richard Halverson said that if a man is "filled with Holy Spirit, his witness will not be optional or mandatory it will be inevitable." This was what Jesus said to His disciples in Acts 2:8. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; **and you will be my witnesses...**" Note that Jesus is saying that abundant living is not simply giving witness, but being a witness. Jesus said that "that streams of living water would flow from within" a person. The inward possession of the Spirit would result in the outward flow of the Spirit. Inward possession gives birth to outward expression. This is the scope which the fullness of the Spirit encompasses. Finally note, **THE SUFFICIENCY BY WHICH THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CHARACTERIZED.** John 7:38. Jesus said "if anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink, whoever believes in me, streams of living water will flow from within him....." What is clear here, is that the Scripture insist that this life in the Holy Spirit is abundant and fruitful. Note three truths about this life. Firstly note, **THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE OFFER OF THE FULLNESS**

OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

John 7:38. Let me emphasize again that the offer Jesus makes implies the presence of need in the hearts of men and women. If any one is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. The first step to receiving the Fullness of the Holy Spirit is to recognize an inward need. All people everywhere have spiritual thirst, for it is part of the human condition. One has said that our "need, our thirst is what we bring to our relationship with God. - Jesus diagnoses what the heart of that need is. It is the need of the heart." Jesus always begins with diagnosis. He pin points the need of the heart as thirst. What do we really thirst for? What do we really desire? Sin is our seeking relief from this thirst in something apart from God. We have been made in the image of God and we will not find satisfaction or fulfillment any where else. This invitation is inclusive of all and is exclusive of none. God does not select certain individuals to receive the Holy Spirit. He does not predestine certain elite to salvation. That would be a selective love and not an unconditional love. God's love is unconditional. He loves the world despite its sin and rebellion. "God so loved the world that who ever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." The Spirit of God knows no boundaries. He cannot be hemmed in by exclusivism. "If anyone thirst....whoever believes in me.....the streams of living water will flow from within him."

Furthermore will you note, **THE VITALITY WHICH THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS.** John 7:38. Jesus said that these streams are "streams of living water" The significant words here are "living waters." They are dynamic waters. It is as though Jesus looked across that great ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles with its pomp and pageantry, its ritual and chanting and cried

out what you need is the dynamic, revitalizing waters of the Spirit. What you need is life - spiritual life. The prophet Ezekiel in a prophetic word paints a vivid picture of the vitality of the Spirit in his prophecy in the 47th chapter. He describes a river rising on the temple rock, beneath the very altar of God: descending to the plains and the desert below deepening and expanding as it goes: it flows through the burnt blistered wastes of a wilderness eastward of Jerusalem, bringing everywhere, healing fertility and life, bursting at last a mighty rushing torrent into the dead sea sweetening even those dead waters and the prophet makes an extremely significant statement which describes the driving impact or influence of the flowing river "...where the river flows everything will live." Ezekiel 47: 9. In the context of John 7:37-39 the message is that rivers of the living waters will always bring life to the Christian and to the church for where the Spirit filled soul moves there will be life. Life of Holy Spirit is the very main thing of all. A corpse has the shape, the form and the appearance of the human body but lies there still, motionless and inactive because there is no life. A church may act like the church. It may go through all the programs, rituals and procedures of a churches agenda. It may engineer all kinds of hype and call it the Holy Spirit and still have no life, no vitality and make no impact because the Spirit of the Lord does not rest upon it. There maybe a lot of activity in the church, but without the living waters of the Spirit it is futility. There is no substitute for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. First and foremost the Christian must know and experience personally the streams of the living waters of the Spirit, before their

witness can make an impact on those who they are seeking to win.

Finally note, **THE ABUNDANCY OF THE STREAMS OF LIVING WATER WHICH IS EMPHASIZED IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.** John 7:38. Jesus emphasizes the sufficiency of God's Spirit, but it is more than sufficient in its flow - It is overflowing- it is abundant! John does not talk about a dripping faucet - a stagnant pool or even trickling streams, but streams of living waters. Streams! It is a striking metaphor of the fullness and abundance of the flow of the Holy Spirit. It speaks of great possibilities of the life lived in the Spirit. Many Christians have life but not abundant life as Spurgeon would say "they have no energy welling up and overflowing to go streaming out of them like rivers... let us not be satisfied with the sip that saves, but let us go onto the baptism which buries the flesh, and raises us in the likeness of the Risen Lord; even the Baptism into the Holy Spirit and into Fire which makes us spiritual and set us all on flame with zeal for the glory of God and eagerness for usefulness by which that glory may be increased" on the earth.

To recall some of what we have said in these few verses, we note that Jesus uses the superlative to describe life in the Spirit. There are three fundamental issues on which He focuses.

First He concentrates on meeting the deep thirst in the souls of men and women. John 7:37. He uses a vivid word **"THIRST. It is only by His Spirit that the haunting emptiness in the soul's separation from God can be filled."** Man was created for God and by God and in His image, and when he is divorced from Him, there can be no fulfillment and satisfaction in anything else. That is why Jesus makes His offer and issues

this challenge. "If any man thirst let him come to me..." There can be no satisfaction in life until he finds it in God.

The second issue follows the first. Jesus is concerned that his children accept all the He has provided for them in His Holy Spirit. Jesus did not suffer and die for His children to live a mediocre spiritual experience or be spiritual cripples. There is a fullness that God has for His children in the infilling of His Spirit. It is described as "streams of living water." It is more than satisfaction; it is a fullness that overflows. This brings me to the third issue which depends on the first two. Jesus is concerned that we do not keep the life of God the Holy Spirit to ourselves. The Holy Spirit is given to us in order that He might flow through us, impacting those with whom we come in contact on a daily basis. The Spirit of God is always seeking an outlet. He reaches out to souls through our lives. When we have made ourselves available to Him by receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit, He is able to use us in a greater measure than we are aware of. The scripture says "streams of living water will flow from within him. reach the lost. They are men and women for whom Christ died on a Cross. The task may appear to be a daunting one. You may think I am one individual and any effort I might make will be futile. That maybe true if we try to work in the energy of the flesh for the hymn writer was right when he wrote that the "arm of flesh will fail you." It is true that we cannot accomplish that which can only be accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit. The problem is that in our day too many are trying to accomplish that which only can be accomplished in the power of the Spirit, and then they wonder why they are so ineffective. Let us never forget that God has not called us to be spiritual prima donnas. He has called us to

A pair of hands, one from the left and one from the right, are shown holding a globe of the Earth. The hands are positioned as if supporting the globe from underneath. The globe shows the continents of North and South America. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

be channels of His blessing and power. Effective abundant living is always dependent upon the Spirit of God. There is a power beyond us that God can place within us in the person of His Holy Spirit. Paul says that we can be "strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being..." Have we forgotten the scriptural word which tells us that "greater is He that is in you that is in the world." Have we forgotten that? This dynamic truth should energize us to move out into the harvest fields to be the channels through which the living waters of the Spirit will flow. For our lives to impact the world there has to be the fullness of the Spirit filling our lives. Tozer rightly said "there can be no doubt that the need above all other needs in the Church of God at this moment is the power of the Holy Spirit...It is time for us to seek again the leadership of the Holy Spirit. **Man's lordship has cost us too much.**" The self must surrender itself to the Cross to be crucified with Christ and then and only then can the Spirit of God fill us so that the streams of living water can flow through our lives.

The question with we are confronted is "are you paddling in the shallows? Are we really living where God can flow through us streams, or are the channels of our lives clogged up with debris so that there is but a trickle of God's power flowing through us? Why be content with spiritual mediocrity when God has a mighty fullness for us in the infilling of His Spirit? You maybe a Christian, BUT are you filled with the Holy Spirit?