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## LIFE IN HIS NAME

### OVERCOMING WEARINESS

John 7:37-39:

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus is speaking here to individuals who are tired in their souls. This tiredness is deeper than physical fatigue. This is the experience of your spirit just being completely worn out and ready to expire. You feel like you have nothing left. Your soul is dehydrated. Your soul is getting a dehydration headache because you are weary and tired. This is different from physical fatigue. We can understand that there is a certain prescription for physical weariness. We need to rest. We need to get physically refreshed. We need to eat right and take care of our bodies. We understand that. This is different and it provokes a question. Well, how do I get rest for my soul? How is my soul restored? At the same time we recognize that there is a certain connection between the body and the soul. We are one. We don't want to drive that separation too deeply, yet recognize that there is a specific human condition that Jesus is addressing here.

The idea is that this metaphor of spiritual thirst is a metaphor for spiritual weariness. In fact, Tony Reinke has said that these two are connected. He writes, “Spiritual weariness and spiritual thirst are two metaphors for the same needs in the human soul.” A parallel passage would be Matthew 11:28-29, where Jesus said, “Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find” – listen – “you will find rest for your souls.” Jesus is claiming in Matthew 11:28-29 and in John 7:37-39 that he is the cure for soul weariness. He is the way that you get rest for your soul. He is the way that your soul gets restored. He is the eternal solution to a tired life.

Dads, have you ever found yourself saying, “I just want peace”? Some moms are shaking their heads “yes.” Have you ever found yourself saying, “I just need a little space; I'm just so tired of the financial pressure; I just want a little quiet; I just want a little break”? These are symptoms of feeling

like we are completely giving out. I could be wrong. I hope I'm not presuming, but I think this is an appropriate topic for Father's Day, and probably an appropriate topic for all of us. I suspect that it's not just dads, but we are all prone to this condition.

In this amazing passage, Jesus invites all who are thirsty to come to him. There is an invitation here. It's not first and foremost something for you to go do, like another thing to burden yourself with. There is a promise that Jesus gives. There is an invitation and a promise. What you need to bring to this passage is your weariness. Then see what Jesus has to say as he promises to be the cure for your soul weariness. I want to break it down into three things that you need to know to overcome weariness in Christ. Jesus gives us this promise.

- I. Jesus is the cure.

Jesus is the answer. That's the main idea but let's break it down as the first thing that we need to know. There is something unique about these three verses. In them, we are told that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that God has ever promised. As Jesus gives this promise and this invitation, he claims to be offering a fulfillment of scripture. Verse 38: "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" He is presenting a promise of life in him, and he is telling us that this is the fulfillment of scripture. How is it the fulfillment of scripture? Well, the clue for us is in the very first phrase of the passage, verse 37, where we are told, "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."

If we had taken the time to read the entire chapter of John Chapter 7, we would understand that the feast that is referenced here is the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths. The idea is that the children of Israel would celebrate this feast for seven days then there would be an eighth day, like a bonus day. They would construct these shelters, we would think "tents," but they didn't live in a day where they could run over to the local sporting goods store and buy a tent. They constructed tents out of palm branches and leafy branches of various sorts. They would stay in these crude shelters as a part of the feast celebration. On the final day of the feast, there would be a water ceremony where the high priest would go to the pool of Siloam. There would be a big procession that would follow him. He would take water in a vessel and they would go through the water gate leading into the inner court of the temple. There, before the altar, the high priest would pour out this water as an offering to God.

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On that occasion, on that feast, Jesus stands up with this vivid imagery of water, claiming to quench your ultimate thirst, claiming really more than that, claiming to be the fulfillment of all that the feast of tabernacles represents. That's where we begin -- when Jesus said "I am fulfilling the scripture; I am standing up to you at the climax of this speech, in light of this water ceremony, to tell you I am all that that feast represents, I am bringing to you and promising to you the fulfillment of all that God has ever promised."

So, what did the Feast of Tabernacles represent? Really, two things.

1. The whole symbolism of the temporary structure looked back to the time when the children of Israel lived in the wilderness. God delivered them out of Egypt, and they were miraculously saved and led out of Egypt. Then they lived for 40 years in the wilderness and God provided for them in that time. He supernaturally provided for them food and water. One of the images in the background of this feast is how Jesus supernaturally provided water for the children of Israel in the wilderness. The children of Israel worshipped God in this way at the Feast of the Tabernacles, saying, "God, look at how you saved us, look at how you have provided for us in the past in supernatural ways."
2. Then secondly, there was the symbolism of water and rain for the harvest. The feast took place around September or October, right in that time period. It celebrated the harvest and looked to God for the provisions that were needed for a good harvest and thanked him for the provision of rain.

Jesus stands up in light of this feast and offers himself as the fulfillment of it. I think it would be helpful for us just to stop and consider this for a moment. Maybe it will help you, if you are a Christian, to think in terms of this image, okay? Think in terms of just seeing your life as paralleling the children of Israel and their departure out of Egypt. You were in bondage to sin, unable to save yourself, and you were saved by the Passover Lamb. The blood of the Lamb of God was shed so that you could be delivered from that bondage, and you are headed to a Promised Land. That Promised Land is heaven. And your Christian life parallels that 40 year wilderness period. You are trusting in God, for God to provide for you all that you need through this wilderness journey. The world is not your home. Heaven is your home. We are learning to be sustained by Jesus Christ in this life. That's the picture. John Newton said that his whole life could be summed up in terms of that wilderness experience and learning to depend on God.

This is actually very interesting and very helpful for us. The scripture tells us that two million people get out in the wilderness and they need food and water. We have been seeing this imagery all throughout the gospel of John, right? They needed water, and when they got thirsty they came to Moses and they complained. They didn't always have a very good attitude about it. Sometimes they had a very bad attitude about it. They would come to Moses and God supernaturally provided water from a rock for the children of Israel.

Listen very carefully. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 the Apostle Paul tells us "For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea..." I have just read part of the passage, but he is basically saying that the children of Israel were led by Moses, the Red Sea was parted supernaturally, God's presence was with them, and he led them by a cloud of his presence. It says they "...all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ." Paul takes that image of them drinking from the Rock and he says, "You know what? They didn't really understand this, but they were drinking from Christ. It was Christ who was sustaining them."

So now let's go back to Exodus 17 and look at that picture of the Rock when they drank from the Rock. In Exodus Chapter 17:1-7 you have one of these occasions where the children of Israel, the entire congregation come before Moses. In verses 2-6 it says:

Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink."

So, you are Moses. You have two million people to provide water for. They are ready to stone you. God tells you, "Take that rod, go strike a rock, and I will give you water." Moses was a great man of

faith, right? Because if water doesn't come from that rock, in the next scene Moses is dead. And he does -- amazing faith in this great man of God.

Go to Numbers Chapter 20, the second occasion needing water. Verses 2-5:

Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink."

Do you realize what's going on here? This is like a Christian today saying, "I was just better off when I was unsaved. I was better off when I was lost and going to hell." We just grumble before God, rather than seeing the great work of God that we have been invited to participate in. They are saying these unthinkable things to Moses like: "We were just better off in slavery." Verses 6-8:

Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Take the staff..." (We see now something similar to what we saw back in Exodus 17) "Take the staff and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water.

What's different? He was told to strike the rock in Exodus 17. Now what is he told to do? "Tell the rock." You may feel, fathers and mothers, like talking to your children is like talking to rocks sometimes, but Moses is really told to talk to the rock. Why? Christ is the Rock. Christ was struck in Exodus 17. What does that represent? It represents the cross. He was crucified once. Now, where does that water come from? The spoken word, the proclamation of that message. Now Moses is told to speak to the rock. But Moses is a little fed up, so let's see what happens. He is told:

...tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

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Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them." These are the waters of Meribah...

You know, we hear this story and look at all that Moses went through -- the incredible faith and miracles that God did, the things he put up with as a leader - very difficult. Moses is a model of leadership. Then he makes this one mistake and God says, "You know what? As a consequence of your sin you are not going to go into the Promised Land." It seems harsh to us, but this New Testament understanding gives us some insight that these commands from God were not just arbitrary. There was something deeply represented. Jesus is claiming to be the fulfillment of all that God has ever promised. Soul thirst, soul weariness is quenched, is healed in Jesus Christ.

Let me just encourage you here for a moment before we leave this first point. I want to see if we can get some faith for God healing our souls. What happens for us is that we are often tempted to seek the healing of our souls in other places. In Jeremiah 2:13 there is a familiar Old Testament reference where the prophet Isaiah, speaking the word of God, says, "...for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

In ancient days, because water was such a precious resource, they would dig a hole in the ground. Then they would put a plaster material all around that hole and form this collecting place for water. When it rained, water would run off the roof and off the pathway and everywhere then be collected in this cistern and the people would use it. Even right after it rained, that water was not really ideal water, but when the plaster would crack and break, the water would run out. You would just have small puddles and little pockets of dirty water around the cistern.

God uses this vivid image to say to his people, "You know what? You have forsaken me. I am the fountain of living water and you are looking for fulfillment in broken cisterns. You are looking for this relationship to bring you ultimate happiness. You are looking for this job to bring you ultimate happiness. You are looking for this next material possession. You are looking for this identity. You

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are looking at created things to make you ultimately happy. Your sin is twofold. 1) You have forsaken God. 2) You have made something that God created god in your life.”

Men, we are tempted to do this all the time. You know, probably the #1 thing that I hear in counseling from men...I'll tell you the #1 complaint that men share and the #1 complaint that women share. Would you like to hear that? They don't always use these words, but quite frequently a man will say, "I don't feel respected by my wife." Most often a wife will say, "I don't feel loved by my husband." It's very interesting, because in Ephesians 5 we are taught that a husband and wife are to mutually sacrifice themselves for one another. They are to give themselves to one another and to deny themselves. But the language that's used is: a wife is told to respect her husband, and a husband is told to love his wife. God is addressing there the differences in gender and the deeper needs of our soul and how we hear and receive love.

A man often doesn't hear this, and I see this, where a wife will sit and say to him: "You know, I just don't feel important in your life. I want you to do this, and I wish you would do that, and I wish you would say this." He is sitting there thinking, "What is her deal? Nothing is enough." Sometimes he is verbalizing this. He is thinking, "You know, I did this, and I did this, and I did that, but none of that is noticed. All I hear is all these things." She is saying to him, "These things make me feel important in your life. These things nurture my soul. These things make me feel like you care more about me than that blasted video game."

He is feeling like, "I can't believe the way she speaks to me. I feel so disrespected, so taken for granted." If the relationship gets toxic enough, the words get harsher and harsher, and meaner and meaner. Many times they go back to these singular roots, where God is saying to the husband, "Treasure your wife. This is the most important calling that I have given you in life, and you succeed in this calling when she feels that she is treasured by you." That may seem arbitrary and random and unreasonable to you. The way she is asking for it may not make any sense. And God would say to you, if I might paraphrase in my own words, trying to take the truth out of Ephesians 5, "It doesn't matter what you think. She is not a man. She doesn't want to be loved the way you want to be loved."

Then, God is saying to wives: "Follow your husband's leadership." Alright, there are some elbows going on right now. This is not helpful. You are not helping your cause. God is saying to wives, "Believe that I can lead you through this man, this imperfect man. Speak words of faith, words of

respect. Follow his leadership even though it's imperfect, and build him up. How you speak matters, and how you act matters!"

You can see when the relationship goes bad God calls men to initiate. They'll take this little step, but the wife can be so discouraged that that little step is taken and she just snuffs it out. "Aww, he wants something. Yeah, he gave me flowers. I wonder what he did wrong. He wants something." Right? Then he has no spiritual strength in that moment. "Fine. Treat me like that. Buy your own flowers."

These are generalizations. Why am I sharing this with you? In these moments we begin to experience this deep soul frustration. If we're not careful, we are digging out a cistern and we are putting plaster around it. It's not holding and we are saying, "This is the essence of life for me." The word of God is saying, "It is not the essence of life."

If you are hurting today because your family is just broken - your marriage, your parents, your parenting - whatever it may be, I have good news for you. It's not ultimate. Jesus is ultimate. The absolute exhaustion that you have felt at times is restored in Jesus. That's good news. "...for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

Point #1 - Jesus is the cure. How? You are telling me from this passage that I am looking at other places, but I need to look to Jesus. How is this need met?

### II. Jesus gives the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit makes all things new. The Holy Spirit will live and flow from the heart of every believer, making all things habitually new. So, after Jesus gives the invitation, after he delivers the promise, we are given this clarifying verse, verse 39: "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." We have seen this in John 4:14 already: "...whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Jesus is saying, "My Holy Spirit within you will be a source welling up, flowing from within you, of living water."

So, the cure takes place in our hearts. The heart is the key. Proverbs 4:23: Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life." Since I am making marriage and family applications

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today, what does that mean? That means that when you begin to experience that disappointment, that resentment that can come because of hurt within family, guard your heart. Guard your heart against bitterness, against cultivating a vindictive, bitter root. Learn to practice the words of Ephesians to not let the sun go down on your anger, to purpose when anger is there to deal with it. The heart is the key. It's not just the external keeping peace, it's really in your heart, embracing your children, your parents, your spouse, your brother in the Lord, your sister in the Lord, your pastor. Amen? That was supposed to be a little bit funny. Keep your heart with all vigilance.

How? Ezekiel 36:26-27: "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." The promise of the new covenant is that the Spirit of God will soften your heart, give life in the inner person, so that by the strength of God that comes to you in Christ by the Spirit of God, you can live. 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Listen, if you are here today and not a believer, a follower in Jesus Christ, thank you for being present here. The promise of scripture is: Jesus wants to give you a new life. He wants to give you a new heart. Believe in him and receive the gift of salvation.

I. Jesus is the cure. II. He gives you the Spirit.

III. The Spirit makes Christ known.

Now we are getting down to the nitty gritty of how we are renewed. You are in a state of exhaustion -- maybe natural, maybe supernatural, maybe because of disappointment, maybe because of trial, maybe because of spiritual opposition. Christ has made these promises to you. He has given you the Spirit. Now, what does the Spirit do in you? The Holy Spirit reveals Christ. The Holy Spirit makes Christ known.

We see here that we are given a time reference. This is really important. You could miss the significance of it, but we are told that Jesus makes this promise. The promise is about the Spirit of God, but it's not yet fulfilled because Jesus has not yet been glorified. The point is that Jesus will not and cannot give the Holy Spirit until his work is complete. And his work is living a perfect life in your place, dying on the cross to pay for your sin, rising from the grave to conquer death,

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ascending into heaven to reign and to rule and to intercede for you. Jesus' complete work has to be accomplished in order for him then to give you the Holy Spirit who then will reveal Christ in his complete work in your life so that you might be renewed.

I know we are getting a little deeper, but it's not that hard if you stay with me to get this. As you come to know Christ, as the Spirit of God warms these things in your heart and highlights who Jesus is and what he has done, you are changed. You are transformed. You are renewed as you behold his glory and who he is and what he has done. I will illustrate that just from this chapter. We are going to conclude with that, but don't get excited -- it's going to take a minute.

So, what happens in this chapter? The whole chapter moves toward this culminating point in this feast. But it starts with Jesus' brothers coming to him and saying, "Hey, are you going to go to Jerusalem? Are you going to go up for the feast? Jesus, how can you get a following and make something happen if you don't come to the feast?!" It's the original Splash Brothers, for all of you MBA fans. We are hearing all about the Splash Brothers for the Warriors. Well, Jesus' brothers wanted him to make a splash.

Now, we've been reading in the book of John that Jesus doesn't work that way. Jesus comes in humility to take the sin of the world upon himself. His glory is that of glorifying God, not seeking his own glory -- completely different from how we live apart from Christ. And John has taught us what? If you don't want to live for the glory of God, you will never recognize Christ's glory. It will never be glorious to you. If you are bent on glorifying yourself and glorifying things that are created, you will never be impressed with the glory of the Son of God who lived to glorify the Father.

Can you imagine? We are talking about weariness. Jesus is going around traveling -- no home of his own, healing people, feeding thousands, walking on water, exhausted, and his own brothers don't believe in him and are pushing him to do what Satan wanted him to do in the first place. Do you ever say, "I'm just not understood"? "He doesn't get me, she doesn't get me"? They didn't get Jesus. So Jesus says, "No, I'm not going," which the chapter then clarifies to say that he is not going publicly, he is going privately.

About the middle of the feast, Jesus shows up and starts teaching, and it's like a bomb goes off. People are saying, "Man, have you ever heard anyone teach like this? It's amazing!" But they don't want to follow him and kneel before him. They are all confused. Someone says he has a demon.

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Someone says he is healing on the Sabbath when he shouldn't. Some say, "No, he is Christ." Then the religious leaders say, "You know what? We are going to arrest him." Every conceivable temptation to be completely wearied, but our Lord keeps his eye on the Father and stands up and makes this incredible promise. Can you imagine? What do you do when everyone is misunderstanding you and opposing you and not getting you and working against you? Jesus holds strong.

I am suggesting to you that the Spirit of God wants to take that truth and fill your heart with it and say, "You know what? When I am tempted to get weary, when I am tempted to be worn out, when I feel misunderstood, when I am tempted to say that this is about me and to be selfish," Jesus is standing there saying, "No, no, no, no, no. Listen, I've been there. I've lived that. I overcame that sin. I have conquered it. I know the draw it has on you in this moment -- how you just want to cultivate those attitudes that are not healthy -- but I have conquered it and I will help you."

Then we are told that some believed. Then we are told something really neat before the chapter ends. All the religious leaders are ready to kill Jesus. Scripture says that it's not his time, so they are not going to succeed. Then there is one man who stands up and starts to defend Jesus. Do you know who it is? It's Nicodemus. Do you remember Nicodemus from John Chapter 3? He came at night, asking questions, a powerful religious leader. He heard it, left, went away. Now he is starting to defend Jesus. He is not yet saved. It's so glorious. That is my Jesus. He is undone. Before it's over Nicodemus will get saved -- a bunch of these people will get saved. They will crucify him all because it is God's will for him to pay for our sin so that he can conquer the ultimate soul weariness of our lives.

Jesus is the cure. He gives us the Spirit. But what does the Spirit do? I will end with this, friends. If you are looking for the Holy Spirit to just give you the things of the world, or to just give you another thrill or another experience, then you are right there in John 7, not understanding that what the Spirit really will do in your life is reveal Christ. As you begin to see the glory of Christ, you will commune with him. Then the Spirit of God will shape your life to match his and you will live your life more and more for the glory of God, not your own desires. Scripture tells us that then we begin to experience this flowing river of life from within that cannot be exhausted.

Let's pray.

# Life In His Name - Overcoming Weariness

John 7 | Sunday, June 19, 2016 | By Brian Brookins

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