

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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TO THE

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Living Stream Ministry
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LIFE'S CRY TO THE THIRSTY ONES

In chapter five of John there is a contrast between life and religion, but there is no actual persecution. This persecution begins in chapter seven.

While the religionists were having a feast, they plotted to kill Jesus (John 7:1-2). This is an accurate picture of today's religion, for religion, in principle, is the same today. On the one hand, the religionists worship God, while on the other hand they plot to kill God's real seekers. If you are a true seeker after life, you must be prepared to find that religion will attempt to kill you. This has happened from the first century down to the present time. In every century the real seekers after life have been persecuted by the religionists. Madame Guyon, for example, was imprisoned by the religionists of her day. As long as you go along with the Lord according to the inner life and not according to the outward things, you will be persecuted by the religious people.

The Lord is God the Creator (1:1, 10). However, as a man He suffered the persecution of

His creatures (7:1). It was not an easy thing for the Creator to suffer the persecution from His creatures. What patience He must have had! What humiliation it must have been! But the Lord did it. Even the religious feast provided an opportunity for this persecution (7:2, 11). The religionists took advantage of the religious feast to persecute the Lord Jesus.

LIFE'S SUFFERING OF PEOPLE'S UNBELIEF

The persecuting Jews were seeking to kill the Lord Jesus (7:1, 19-20, 25, 30, 32). Since the Jewish religionists were plotting against the Lord Jesus, He had to be somewhat careful. If He had been even a little careless, He would have fallen into their hands. He was not able to act freely. Although the Lord is the Almighty God, He, as a man under persecution, was limited in His activity. While the religionists were seeking to kill Him on the one hand, His unbelieving brothers were challenging Him to seek worldly glory on the other hand (7:3-4). His brothers seemed to say to Him, “Why don’t you go to Jerusalem? You should make a big name for yourself.” Both the persecution of the Jews and the challenge from His brothers came from one enemy, Satan.

Satan stirred up the Jews to seek to kill the Lord and he stirred up His unbelieving brothers to challenge Him to go to Jerusalem and to make a name for Himself that He might receive glory. The situation is the same today. Occasionally some brothers propose that we do certain things to get a name and be publicized. But it is awful to be publicized and to have a name. If you are going to have a name, it is better to get a bad name.

LIFE'S LIMITATION IN TIME

In [7:6-9](#) we see that the Lord was limited in time. The Lord said to His brothers, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready” ([7:6](#)). Although the Lord is the eternal, infinite, unlimited God ([Rom. 9:5](#)), He lived on earth as a man, limited even in the matter of time. The Lord was willing to lose His freedom, to be bound in the matter of time, and to do the will of the Father so that He could minister the living water of life to us. The whole of [chapter seven](#) reveals how the Lord acted as a man limited in every respect.

LIFE'S SEEKING OF GOD'S GLORY

The Lord is the Almighty God ([Isa. 9:6](#)), but

as a man under persecution He was limited in His activity ([John 7:10](#)). He would not act freely. Although the Lord is the omniscient God, He, as a lowly man, appeared to be illiterate. “The Jews then marveled and said, How does this man know letters, having never learned?” ([7:15](#)). Although the Lord had little education, He knew everything. He not only knew the letters; He knew the minds, hearts, and spirits of men. The Lord would not seek His own glory, but the glory of God ([7:17-18](#)).

LIFE’S SOURCE AND ORIGIN— GOD THE FATHER

The Lord’s source and origin are God the Father ([7:25-36](#); [13:3](#)). Although His source was God the Father, He came as a man from Nazareth of Galilee ([7:27](#), [41-42](#), [52](#); [1:45-46](#)). For quite a while I was not happy with the Lord concerning what I felt was His lack of frankness in [John 7](#). It seemed to me that He was somewhat sneaky. He told people that His source was God the Father, but He came from Nazareth. There is a vital principle here: with everything concerning the Lord, the outward appearance will never look good, but the inward content will be marvelous. Do not be troubled by outward

appearance. The people who looked at Jesus outwardly saw Him as just a Nazarene. He had no form, comeliness, beauty, or attraction. But within, He is the very God. Even some may not dress appropriately for the meetings. But I have come to see that there is a treasure in those earthen vessels. The Lord has told me not to care for the outward appearance. The Nazarene has an unattractive appearance but an excellent and heavenly content.

LIFE'S CRY TO THE THIRSTY ONES

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood and cried out to the thirsty ones ([7:37-39](#)). The last day signifies the ending of all the enjoyment of any success in human life. Regardless of the kind of success you have, there will be a last day. For instance, although you may have a marvelous marriage, your marriage will not last forever.

The phrase “the last day” occurs in both [chapters six and seven](#) ([6:39-40](#); [7:37](#)). However, these are two different kinds of last days. The last day in [chapter six](#) is the ultimate last day in the remote future when the Lord will raise us up. The last day in [chapter seven](#) refers to the many last days during our human life. The greatest last

day is in the future, but before that day, during our human life, there are many last days. There will be a last day for an article of clothing that you value; there will be a last day for your marriage. Everything has its last day. The feast of Tabernacles continued for seven days, but the seventh day was the last day of the feast. The last simply means an end. Regardless of how wealthy you are, there is an end. Regardless of how healthy you are, there is an end. There is a last day for your riches, a last day to your health, a last day with your family, a last day with your dear wife or husband, a last day with your parents, a last day with your children, a last day with all of your circumstances—in short, a last day!

When I reached the age of forty, people began to tell me, “Life begins at forty.” But others told me, “Brother, you must realize that after forty, life is in the afternoon. When you were born, life began at dawn. At forty, life has reached the noon hour. After forty, life is in the afternoon. Probably sometime after sixty, life will be ended.” Sooner or later, there will come the last day of life.

Look at the picture. Israel labored for the whole year until they harvested the corn and wine. They received everything by the labor of their hands. Finally, their labor was over, and all that

was left for them to do was to come together and enjoy their harvest for seven days. The seventh day was their biggest day, yet it was the end. The last day was the day that they were all dismissed.

THE CRY TO COME AND DRINK

While the people were being dismissed on the last day of the feast, the Lord stood up and cried, “If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink” ([7:37](#)). The people were not satisfied. The things that they were enjoying during the past seven days had failed to quench their thirst. If they would come and drink of Christ, they would have rivers of living water flowing out from within their innermost being. The living water is the Holy Spirit who will flow out of the smitten rock.

As we shall see, when the Lord spoke these words, the Holy Spirit was “not yet,” because the Lord had not yet been smitten and had not yet been glorified ([7:39](#)). What does it mean for the Lord to be glorified? It simply means that He was to be resurrected ([Luke 24:26](#)). The Lord was transfigured from His frail body into a glorious Spirit by means of His death and resurrection. Before the cross, the Lord was the rock, but He was not yet smitten or crucified on the cross.

When He was crucified and resurrected, the living water flowed out of Him and into us in order to quench our thirst. At the last day of your feast—at the end of your rejoicing and enjoyment when you still feel thirsty—you must come to this Jesus and receive the living water to quench your thirst.

There was a young lady who lived in a very wealthy family. She sought enjoyment continually. Once she attended a dancing party with the highest class of people in England. She enjoyed it very much and had a wonderful time. After the party was over, she came home. As she was taking off her dancing garments, she felt so thirsty. She threw away all of her dancing garments and shoes, exclaiming, “How can these things help me!” After rejoicing in all of her enjoyments, she still felt very thirsty. Then an inner voice whispered within her, “You must pray to God.” But she said to herself, “I do not believe that there is a God, how can I pray to Him?” But the voice continued to whisper, “Just try to say something to God. Say: ‘God, if there is a God, just satisfy me.’” Finally, she prayed in such a way. The very next day her whole life was changed. She was satisfied. Her thirst was quenched by the living water given by the Lord.

If you study the biographies of the saints, you

will discover many other similar stories. Many people who were highly educated, very successful, and very wealthy had much to rejoice in, but eventually they felt that they had failed because everything became dry to them. But then came the call, “Whoever is thirsty, come to Me and drink.” Although you may be enjoying many good days, there will eventually come the last day when all of your enjoyment is over and you will feel thirsty. Remember, it is only the Lord Jesus Himself who can offer you the living water to quench your thirst.

THE FLOW OF RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

The Lord Jesus said, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water” ([7:38](#)). In [John 4:14](#) the Lord said that whoever drinks of the water that He gives us will have in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life. In [chapter seven](#) the Lord goes somewhat further, saying that anyone who drinks of Him will have the flow of the rivers of water of life. The Lord did not speak of just one flow but of rivers. The unique river of living water is the Holy Spirit. Out of this unique river, many rivers will flow out. These “rivers of living water” are the many

flows of the different aspects of life (cf. Rom. 15:30; 1 Thes. 1:6; 2 Thes. 2:13; Gal. 5:22-23) of the one unique “river of water of life” (Rev. 22:1), which is God’s “Spirit of life” (Rom. 8:2). One river is the river of peace, and other rivers are joy, comfort, righteousness, life, holiness, love, patience, and humility. I do not know how many rivers there are. These rivers of living water flow out from the depths of our being. This is Christ as life. In the principle set forth in [chapter two](#), this flowing of the rivers of living water is also the changing of death into life. Death is of the source of the tree of knowledge, and life is of the source of the tree of life.

What would happen if we came to a meeting and we all sat there without the flow of living water? It would surely be a dead meeting. If no one had anything to flow out, death would be prevailing. However, if everyone would flow with some rivers, eventually the meeting would be flooded over. It would be full of life. This is the changing of death into life.

THE SPIRIT WAS NOT YET

[Verse 39](#) says, “But this He said concerning the Spirit, Whom those who believed in Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not

yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Many Christians do not understand the words “not yet” in this verse. The King James Version adds the word “given” in italics, showing that the translators were troubled by this verse. But [verse 39](#) does not mean that the Spirit “was not yet given”; it means that the Spirit was “not yet.” The Spirit was not there yet. The Spirit of God was there from the very beginning ([Gen. 1:1-2](#)), but the Spirit as “the Spirit of Christ” ([Rom. 8:9](#)), “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” ([Phil. 1:19](#)), was “not yet” at the time the Lord Jesus spoke this word, because He was not yet glorified. Jesus was glorified when He was resurrected ([Luke 24:26](#)). After His resurrection, the Spirit of God became the Spirit of the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Jesus Christ, who was breathed into the disciples by Christ in the evening of the day He was resurrected ([John 20:22](#)). The Spirit is now the “another Comforter,” who is “the Spirit of reality” promised by Christ before His death ([John 14:16-17](#)). When the Spirit was the Spirit of God, He had only the divine element. When He became the Spirit of Jesus Christ through Christ’s incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, He had both the divine and human element, with all the essence and reality of the incarnation,

crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. Hence, He is now the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus Christ as the living water for us to receive.

We have seen that Jesus was glorified when He was resurrected. In resurrection, the Lord became the life-giving Spirit ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). The last Adam, who was Christ in the flesh, became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection. Since then, the Spirit of Jesus Christ has both the divine and human elements, including the reality of the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ.

In [Genesis 1](#) we have the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is just God Himself coming out to reach His creation. At the time of [Genesis 1](#), within the Spirit of God there was only divinity. One day God became incarnated to be a man who was Jesus Christ. Thirty-three and a half years later, Christ was crucified. After crucifixion, He passed through resurrection and ascension, and the Spirit of God became the Spirit of the incarnated and resurrected Jesus Christ. Now the Spirit of Jesus Christ is reaching out to touch human beings. Formerly, it was the Spirit of God reaching out to touch God's creation only with divinity, but now the Spirit of Jesus Christ comes out to reach human beings with divinity, humanity, the effectiveness of His all-inclusive death,

and with the element of resurrection. Before Christ was resurrected, such a Spirit was “not yet.”

We may use the illustration of a glass of pure water into which many other ingredients are added. The pure water passes through one stage, and the milk is added. It passes through other stages in which honey, tea, and salt are added. Eventually, it becomes an all-inclusive drink. Before the pure water passed all these stations, such a wonderful drink was “not yet,” although the pure water in the glass was there already. Now it is an all-inclusive drink. Likewise, the Spirit promised by the Lord Jesus in [7:39](#) and [14:16-17](#) is not the Spirit with only divinity as His content, but the Spirit with divinity, humanity, the all-inclusive death, resurrection, and ascension. Now we not only have the Spirit of God, but also the Spirit of Jesus Christ. It is such an all-inclusive Spirit that gives us the flow of the rivers of water of life.

Sometimes when a child needs medicine, his wise mother will hide the medicine in a drink. When the child takes the drink, he gets the medicine. There is medicine in the all-inclusive Spirit. This medicine is the killing death of Christ that is in the Holy Spirit today. The more you say, “O Lord Jesus,” the more you receive the

all-inclusive Spirit. After a few minutes, you may feel the Spirit killing your temper, pride, selfishness, and other negative things. Have you ever tried to reckon yourself dead according to Romans 6? If you have, then you know that the more you reckon yourself dead, the more you are alive. However, within the all-inclusive Spirit is the killing of the cross. The death mentioned in Romans 6 is now included in the Spirit as revealed in Romans 8. So, this all-inclusive Spirit constantly puts you on the cross as mentioned in Romans 8:13. The killing effect of the death of Christ is not merely on the cross, for, if it were, it would not be prevailing for us. That killing effect today is in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. As this Spirit moves within us, the killing effect of the cross penetrates into our being. He will kill every negative element in our being. Furthermore, in this all-inclusive drink there is the nourishing ingredient. In this Spirit is all that we need.

DIVISION CAUSED BY LIFE'S APPEARANCE

In 7:40-52 we see the division caused by the Lord's appearance. Jesus was truly a troublemaker. He caused divisions. Today, the life-seeking people will also make trouble and cause divisions.

Christ, the seed of David, was born in Bethlehem ([7:42](#); [Luke 2:4-7](#)), but He appeared as a Nazarene from Galilee ([7:52](#)). Although the Lord was born in Bethlehem, He was raised in Nazareth, a town that was despised by the people of that time. He was the seed of David, but He came as a Nazarene ([Matt. 2:23](#)). He grew up as a “root out of a dry ground,” having “no form nor comeliness,” “no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men” ([Isa. 53:2-3](#)). So we should not know Him according to the flesh ([2 Cor. 5:16](#)), but according to the Spirit. Because the Lord was raised in Nazareth, people did not consider Him as one born in Bethlehem.

Some comprehended Christ according to His outward appearance ([7:27, 41-42, 52](#)) by taking the tree of knowledge resulting in death ([Gen. 2:17](#)). Listen to their talk. “Does then the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” ([7:41-42](#)). This talk is simply the exercise of the mentality. This mental reasoning is in the principle of the tree of knowledge. However, some apprehended Christ according to His inward reality ([7:40, 50-51](#)) by taking the tree of life resulting in life ([Gen. 2:9](#)). Do not pay attention

to the outward appearance. You must see what is inside. Is there Christ within? We all must know Christ according to the inward reality and not according to the outward appearance.

The Gospel of John as a whole gives us a very impressive picture. One day the Lord Jesus went to Bethany and stayed in a little house with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary ([John 12:1-2](#)). In Jerusalem at that time was the temple. In that holy temple were the priests dressed in their priestly robes offering the sacrifices on the altar and burning the incense in the proper way. Everything in the temple was attractive. But in that little house in Bethany there was nothing—no priests, no priestly robes, no altar, no offerings, and no incense. There were just two poor sisters and one brother. At that time, was the very God in the temple or in that little house? He was in that little house. Suppose you were seeking God at that time. Where would you have gone—to that little house or to the temple? We all would have gone to the temple. Probably none of us would have gone to that little house. However, Jesus, the very embodiment of God, was not in the temple but in that little house. Eventually, there would have been a division among us with a large number going to the temple and a small number going

to the little house where Jesus was. Those who went to the temple would have thought it foolish to go to that little house to find God. Thus, we must learn to follow the Lord Jesus according to the inward reality and not according to the outward appearance. This principle will remain forever. Praise the Lord that He is with the lowly.

While the Lord was on earth, He did not have an attractive appearance. Today in the church life in His recovery it is the same; there is no attractive appearance. However, if you get inside of the church life in the Lord's recovery, you will see the beauty of Christ there. He is not the Nazarene—He is the seed of David. This is Christ! Hallelujah!

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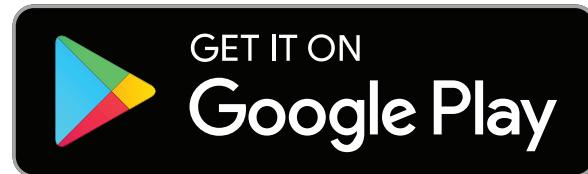
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