“The Times of Refreshing and Restitution”

Psalm 93:1-5

November 13, 2016

Please open your Bible with me to the Gospel of John and find chapter four and verse nine. One of the most astounding and astonishing statements Jesus ever made and something no one else in all of human history has claimed is this.

John 4:9 *“Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, how is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. (10)**Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou*

*wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee* ***living water****. (11)* *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that* ***living water****? (12)* *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?*

*(13)* *Jesus answered and said unto her, whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: (14)* *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him* ***a well of water springing up into everlasting life****. (15)**The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”*

Here’s one of the most astounding statements ever made; “The water that I shall give him.” There is a type of water that quenches one particular kind of thirst. And it’s this water that is on my heart today. I want to say something today about water. So, I’ve titled today’s sermon “The Times of Refreshing and Restitution.” Shall we pray?

This woman is a “woman of Samaria;” a place where the typical Jew rarely, if ever, traveled; and really the Jews had no contact with; was the region known as Samaria. The Jews despised the Samaritans.

Yet, Jesus chose to pass through Samaria on His way to the Galilee and He stops at a well for a drink of water. And while He’s there, He meets a woman who had come to draw water up out of the well.

And what does He offer her? He offers her something no one has ever before or ever since offered; water that would spring up inside her into everlasting life. He calls it “*living water*.” Verse thirteen. John 4:13 *“Jesus answered and said unto her, whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: (14)* *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him* ***a well of water springing up into everlasting life****.”*

Now, turn with me to John chapter seven. Here we find the Jews gathered in Jerusalem for an annual feast called the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. And on the very last day of the feast, here’s what we find Jesus saying. John 7:37 *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall* ***flow rivers of living water****.*

*(39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”*

Who, but Jesus Christ, could offer “Living Water”?

I’ve, many times, had the experience of being “nearly dehydrated.” Can you remember a time when you were so parched, so completely dry that you felt physically ill? I know exactly what it’s like. And, what happens once you’ve had a large glass of cool, fresh water? The effects are near miraculous.

You feel the effects of that water inside your body. You are refreshed. But “refreshed” means a whole lot more than a physical rejuvenation. It’s emotional as well. And it’s also mental. When you’re dehydrated and you get water into your system, you’re energized; re-energized. Your entire outlook improves. You get strength from the water.

Now, turn with me to the Book of Acts at chapter 3 to find some more water.

Now, you know that everything has a beginning. If you could just count the number of things you’ve started and didn’t finish. You started a book and there it sits on your coffee table or night stand. You started to take piano lessons and there the piano sits waiting for you to come back home. You started to exercise. You bought a tread-climber. And there it sits. You started to de-clutter your garage, got sidetracked; and hope to get back at it before the end of the year. So, everything has a beginning.

The Book of Acts is what you might call a “book of beginnings.” It contains the history of the *beginning* of the greatest living entity ever; the Church; the Church of the Living God. Acts, though, is not our first history book. But, it is the first *Church* history book.

In Acts, you find the Jesus’ twelve trainees increasing to 120. And that 120 adding 3,000. And later, a large contingent of Jewish priests; then there’s one day when no less than 5,000 men come to salvation. So, Acts tells a story; *your* story; my story; the story of *our* beginning; the record of *your* beginning.

Over the years I’ve heard things like. “How did the Baptist Church begin?” Or, didn’t John Wesley start the Methodist Church? And wasn’t Martin Luther the one who started the Lutheran Church?

Well, what we find in Acts is the beginning of the Church of *Christ*. Now, it was back in the Gospels where we find Jesus using the term “Church” for the very first time. Here’s what He said. *“I will build My Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.”* The Church you read about in Acts is the “Jesus Church,” the one He promised to build. And the Apostle Paul will later call it *“the Church of God.”*

Now, have you ever wondered why Acts is called Acts? You might think it’s because in it we read about the *Acts* of the Apostles. And most Bibles title it “The Acts of the Apostles.” The Early Church Fathers, though, called it “The Acts of the Holy Apostles.” And I think it might better be called “The Acts of the Holy Ghost”? Acts has 28 chapters. And the Spirit is mentioned 24 times. And there are only a few Apostles mentioned in the book. So, there’s a much greater emphasis upon the accomplishments of the Spirit. It’s called “Acts” because it’s a record of the things that were done by the Holy Spirit through the Early Church.

So, follow with me at this third chapter. Acts 3 is Peter’s second sermon to the Jewish community. But in order for Peter to get this opportunity to preach to the Jews, God arranged for a man, a lame man, a man crippled from birth, a beggar who sat at the front door of the Temple, to be healed by these words of Peter.

Acts 3:6 *“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”*

And the doors open; not the doors into the Temple; but the doors of the people’s hearts. The healing of the lame man is a catalyst. It struck everyone that a man who been born without the ability to walk was now walking. And how? By the power that is in “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”

So, with a lame man healed right before their eyes, the people were ready to listen to Peter; verse eleven. Acts 3:11 *“And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. (12) And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?”*

And Peter began to preach and to teach. And his preaching is really just a reminder of what had happened; which is, so often, just what preaching is – a reminder of what God has done *and* a reminder of what we need to do in light of it.

“God, your God, the God of Abraham, has sent His Son into the world. You rejected Him. You chose a murderer instead; Barabbas. Then you killed the Prince of Life. Yet the Father raised up His Son from the dead. And the only way this man stands before you strong and hale is by simple faith in the Name of Jesus Christ. So, you need to repent and be converted.”

Look with me at verse thirteen. Acts 3:13 *“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. (14) But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;*

*(15) And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. (16) And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

*(17) And now, brethren, I wot [know] that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. (18) But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. (19) Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”*

Now, here’s why I titled today’s sermon “The Times of Refreshing And Restitution.” Look again at verse nineteen [re-read]. *(19) “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when* ***the times of refreshing*** *shall come from the presence of the Lord.”*

And, going on to verse twenty, we find this. Acts 3:20 *“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: (21) Whom the heaven must receive until* ***the times of restitution*** *of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”*

Refreshing and restitution; the times of refreshing and the times of restitution. What are they and when are they?

Folks, this is the beginning of the Church. And Peter is being used of the LORD and he is being directed of the Holy Spirit to reveal that a new thing is taking place.

So, let me share with you the following.

First, the times of refreshing; what, when, and how.

The story we found back in John chapter four spells out just what the “times of refreshing” are.

John 4:10 *“**Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee* ***living water****. (11)* *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that* ***living water****?*

*(14)* *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him* ***a well of water springing up into everlasting life****. (15)**The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”*

There’s a type of water called living water. And Jesus Christ is the Only One Who has ever offer living water. Now, you might not have sinned like the Woman of Samaria had. You might not be one of those who crucified Jesus like the Jews had. But, apart from Christ, all of us are spiritually dry and the only answer to that spiritual dryness is to receive His offer of living water. We need it more than we need anything else in the world.

And Peter tells you exactly what happens when you repent and are converted. Look again at verse nineteen of Acts 3 and you will see that there are two results. *(19) “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when* ***the times of refreshing*** *shall come from the presence of the Lord.”*

One, your sins are blotted out.

And two, the times of refreshing from the LORD come into you.

Whenever anyone comes into contact with Christ for the first time, its’s a “sin removing” contact. At the moment you repent and trust in Christ, God deals with you in the one area that no one else can deal with you; your sins.

Your sins are what separates you from God. And the moment you meet Christ is the moment your sins are removed from you.

When the woman of Samaria believed on Christ as the Jewish Messiah; she was granted forgiveness of all her sins.

And anyone who receives the forgiveness of sins also receives “the times of refreshing.” You receive a *“well of water springing up into everlasting life.”*

And, according to John 7:38, we know exactly what that is. John 7:28 *“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”*

The times of refreshing is something beyond anything in this world. At the moment of your salvation, God’s Holy Spirit comes to live within your spirit.

And, it’s pure spiritual refreshment to have God’s Spirit living within you. It’s an entirely new realm into which you’ve passed at the moment you are saved. You are now indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God.

Ezekiel 37:14 *“And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live,…”*

I Corinthians 3:16 *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”*

I Corinthians 6:19 *“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”*

The times of refreshing spoken by Peter here in this sermon in Acts 3 is a reference to the coming and indwelling of the Spirit. You see, it’s the Spirit in you that changes everything.

So, I want to say something to you about the Holy Spirit.

What is His ministry to you? The Spirit in you becomes exactly what you need in order to live as a new creation in Christ. The Spirit for you is a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life.

God knows exactly what each of us need to live in this world as one of His children. And so, He’s provided Someone who will be with you constantly. You now have God’s very life living inside you. And just like that cool glass of water rejuv-enates and refreshes your body, the Spirit within you is here to rejuvenate and refresh you spiritually.

By nature, we are deserts, spiritually speaking. By nature, we prone to walk in spiritual dryness. But, as a child of God, you are now become a Spirit-indwelt man. You are now a Spirit-indwelt woman. As a Saint, you are now living in the “times of refreshing.” And, as Peter says, this has come upon you from the very presence of the LORD Himself.

So, instead of living in a spiritual wasteland. Believe what God has done in and to you. Believe that He has sent His Spirit to indwell you. Believe that the Spirit in you is in you to supply you with spiritual refreshment.

You see, it matters how you see your life. So, how *do* you see the Spirit’s ministry in and to you? Is He not a refreshing spiritual stream for you? Obviously this matter of refreshment is very important to the LORD. It’s the main reason why He sent His Spirit to live in you.

He knows you are not able to live in your own strength. He knows you are not able to pray as you should. He knows you are in great need of being led. So, He’s sent His spirit to refresh you when you pray; to refresh you when you need direction; to refresh you when you face obstacles in life to refresh you because you are so prone to try to live your life under your own power.

Now, lastly, how does He do this? Let’s listen to Jesus be very practical on this matter. John 14:26 *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”*

Again, hear with me the words of Jesus. John 15:26 *“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of* ***me****:…”*

Jesus calls Him the Comforter. The term means “Someone called alongside to help.” The title Jesus gives us as to Who the Spirit is is this. “Comforter” = “One called alongside.” You have Someone Who is as near as your breath. And His role is that of an Encouraging Counselor. It must be somewhat similar to the way you are quote “comforted” when you’ve been parched and are now been rejuvenated by a refreshing drink of water, you are also “comforted” by the help the Holy Spirit brings to you.

Now, there are those who try to live a double-minded life; trying to keep the spiritual life as a separate thing from the ordinary, everyday life. But that is exactly the opposite of what this passage is teaching.

You need the Spirit when you’re washing the clothes and when you are driving your car and when you are raking leaves or working on your house. When was the last time you lost something; something important; something you really needed? Did you look to the LORD for “Help”? Did you go to the Helper for Help?

When was the last time you needed wisdom? Did you go to the Spirit for His help? You see, there is no spiritual life versus ordinary life. The Spirit in you is here to help you every single day. Did you know that every day He intercedes for you?

Paul teaches us this in Romans 8:26 *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

This Refresher is ready every day to help your infirmities; your weaknesses. By nature you are weak and needy. And God has sent His Spirit into your heart so you will cry out to Him.

Daily, constantly, at every single situation you encounter, the Spirit is your Intercessor. He’s your Helper. “Can’t pray?” Ask and He will help. He will do for you what you need.

So, folks, please don’t live a double-minded life of “I live my life in two realms; the physical and the spiritual.” Everything in your life is affected by the spiritual realm.

And lastly then, what is the Spirit’s goal?

The Spirit’s ministry to you is, in large part, a teaching ministry. The Holy Spirit is a Teacher. John 14:26 *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”* He is God’s Teacher in you; here to teach you what Jesus is like.

So, folks, if His ministry in you is to teach you what need to know about Jesus, the question is this. Are you learning about Christ? Are you teachable in the matter of learning what Jesus is truly like? Are you depending upon the Spirit as your Teacher? You see. That’s His ministry. He’s a “Christ-Teacher.” He’s in you, ready and willing to teach you how you can better know Him.

He’s come into your life to glorify Christ by bringing Him to your attention. John 16:14 *“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”*

If you are learning Christ; if you are learning His ways; if you are learning to focus on Him; that is the Spirit teaching you. That’s the River of Life in you bringing you to a fuller knowledge and greater understanding of the Person of the Son of God.

Whatever you are passing through, the Spirit’s work in you is to get you closer and closer to Christ. He’s conforming you to the likeness of Jesus every day; every situation; every difficulty in every area of your life. You see, the Spirit’s work is a work refreshment; a strengthening of your spirit so that your growth is spiritual growth. And spiritual growth is gaining personal strength as you learn Christ. Ephesians 4:20 *“But ye have not so learned Christ; (21) If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:…”*

Yes, there are other aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. But you are called daily to be a Holy Spirit student; a disciple, a learner. You are learning Christ. Each situation you encounter is another opportunity for the Spirit to refresh you; to provide you with spiritual strength to deal with whatever life sends your way.

So, are you calling on Him to help? He’s able to help you no matter what you need help for. Are you looking to Him to teach you? And, are you coming to focus more and more of your attention on Christ? If not, why not?

The Refreshing Spirit is a Helper and a Teacher. Is that what He is to you? If not, why not?

Acts 9:31 *“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”*

Your number one need today is not what you think. It’s that you learn to rely upon the Holy Spirit. He’s ready, willing, and able to fill and lead and pray for and teach and comfort you. Will you submit all that you are to Him today?

Shall we pray?

Please find with me hymn number # \_\_\_\_\_ “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”