

# Book of John #11

## Jesus is a Cool Dude

John 7b (John 7:25-52)

(This title is from Eric months ago; not sure of its origins!)

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I will be preaching on the second part of John 7; Jim did the first part last week. Today we will look at the *water* and *drinking* symbolism in this chapter and earlier in the book.

First, let's talk about **Sukkot**. It's an outside box that has slats on the top; it's a temporary structure that you would live in for a week during the festival of booths or tabernacles. Jewish people to this day still practice this in September and October (based on the lunar calendar). You



are supposed to put leafy greenery on the top, eat all your meals in it when it's not raining. In John 7, this long festival was going on while Jesus was speaking. Thousands of people would have been



there, which is a diaspora or a scattering of Jewish people. The expectation is that everyone would travel, maybe hundreds or thousands of miles to attend.

***Water and drinking:*** This symbolism reminds us of John 4 (the woman at the well) and John 6 (some cannibalistic language) where Jesus said some things that are very relevant to today's chapter.

John 4: 10, 13-14

If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a **drink**, you would have asked him and he would have given you **living water**.

Everyone who **drinks this water** will be **thirsty** again, but whoever **drinks the water** I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the **water** I give them will become in them a **spring of water** welling up to eternal life.



John 6: 35, 53-56

I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and **whoever believes in me will never be thirsty**.

Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and **drink his blood**, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and **drinks my blood** has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For **my flesh** is real food and **my blood is real drink**. Whoever **eats my flesh and drinks my blood** remains in me, and I in them.



Back to John 7: Jesus comes late to the festival, where people listen to him and respond skeptically. They just are not sure he is the Messiah. This is the context for the second part of Chapter 7.

The characters are:

- Crowd (the Jews)
- Jesus
- Jewish Leadership (one guy is pulled out), also referred to as Pharisees.
- The Temple Guards;

**John 7:25** At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? **26** Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? **27** But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”

The logic here is that if Jewish leaders were confronted with falsehoods, they should arrest the people spreading the lies. So what should they do with Jesus? Is he the Messiah? They decide he is not and move quickly to address this. They believe that If they know where Jesus is from, then he cannot be the Messiah.

**Irony** is when you set up an expectation and then you reverse it. In fact, **sarcasm** is verbal irony: if I say “great shirt” I really mean the opposite. This passage is *situationally ironic*. Imagine someone is afraid of lightning and they put on a full suit of armor made of steel to protect themselves during a thunderstorm. This actually makes the person far more at risk and is situationally ironic. Here in this passage, the *dramatic irony* is palpable. We, the audience, know prophecies and information that the people in the passage don’t know or understand. They think they know where Jesus is from which makes him not eligible to be the Messiah but it’s exactly the opposite.

**28** Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, **29** but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”

Jesus is saying they don’t know God and which offends his listeners. In reality, they think they are serious about God and Jesus tells them because they don’t know Jesus, they don’t know God.

**30** At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. **31** Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”

They knew about Jesus's miracles such as the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda which was done on the Sabbath. They knew about him feeding thousands at the sea of Galilee, healing from a distance the daughter of an official, and turning water into wine. They wonder if the true Messiah would do these kinds of miracles.

I have a quibble with John because I want more details! When they try to arrest Jesus, I want to know how he actually got away from them but John doesn't tell us. This doesn't happen yet because the time is not yet right. God's plan is not fulfilled and that's why no one can touch him.

**32** The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

**33** Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me.

**34** You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."

This reminded me of the techno 90s song "where you come from, where you go." There are many of these moments in John. At the last supper, Jesus says you can't come with him where he is going. His disciples don't get it but we can see the full dramatic irony of this. We know about Jesus's death and resurrection, his childhood and birth. We know where he is from.

**35** The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? **36** What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"

The Jewish people were scattered by Babylon; many just went where there was wealth and power in Greece. They were confused, actually, because they don't know all the facts of Jesus that we, the audience, know. Is he talking about going to Greece?

Now the climax of the this story:

**37** On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.

The watcher (John as the narrator) tells you directly that the water means the Spirit.

When people celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, typically they would gather water at a pool every night. The most serious people would go to this later at night, drawing water. The next morning, the water would be poured out extravagantly so it splashed everywhere. At the end, there was a lot of light (important to the next chapter). On the last day, even more water was poured out. This reminded them of the Israelites wandering in the desert (the temporary booths) and also when God provided water in the desert for them. They gathered the water to show that God provided for them in the desert in abundance.

On the last day, Jesus says:

**38** Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” **39** By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

This passage alludes back to John 4: 10, 13-14.

This also reminded me of a camp song “I’ve got a River of Life Flowing out of Me.”

The point of this song is beautiful, drawing on John 4, 7, and prophecies in Isaiah. It declares the truth about us today as believers in Jesus.

**40** On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.”

**41** Others said, “He is the Messiah.”

Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee?”

**42** Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” **43** Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. **44** Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

(including the temple guards!)

Jesus is from the line of David, he was born in Bethlehem. John expects us to know this. The people think he is from Galilee but not the full story. They think they know but they are wrong.

**45** Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?” (You have one job!)

**46** “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied. (They are hypnotized by Jesus! They are captivated)

**47** “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. **48** “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? **49** No! (more dramatic irony) But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”

Nicodemus believes Jesus but they don’t know it.

**50** Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, **51** “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

You haven't heard from the person you want to kill: you haven't listened to his testimony.

**52** They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

Are you one of those rednecks, too? They are right about the fact that Jesus didn't come from Galilee.

**53** Then they went home;

Does this text really belong here? I'm not going to discuss this here; I think this does belong in the Gospel of John but I'll let Sue talk about it next week.

Given the dramatic irony of this passage, what did you think you knew for certain about Jesus and then found out you were wrong? What changed your mind?