If you have ever been to Camp Wakondaho in Yosemite, KY you know that it is in the middle of nowhere! In the town of Yosemite there is a gas station, a post office, and a tackle shop and it is a 30 minute drive to Danville to pick up supplies at Walmart. When things go wrong during a week of camp, there are few places to turn.

Two summers ago, we had a very hot week at the high school camp that I was counseling, we were experiencing temperatures in the high 90’s every day and with only one air conditioned building we tried to find various ways to stay cool and hydrated until, it happened…. One of the campers noticed that our water was running out of the faucet brown. After a call to town we learned that there had been a water main break and were told that the water would be shut off. 100 plus youth and adults, one building with air conditioning and no water. Now, this is when you suddenly feel yourself getting very thirsty, not knowing how long our water would be shut off we began coming up with plan B. Can we stay at camp? Should we send everyone home? While we planned for the long term, the short term plan was to buy bottled water. The camp manager left to make the 30 minute drive to Walmart to buy enough bottled water for everyone for at least 48 hours. When he returned his car was weighted down with gallon jugs of water. Each youth and adult was handed a jug of water and a sharpie to write their name on their jug. The first drink from that room temperature bottle was perfect, refreshing and the best water we had ever tasted. The water was turned on a few hours later and camp was resumed, but we all continued to carry our jugs of water around camp, just in case.
Have you ever really been thirsty? Stranded without a drink and unsure when you will be able to quench your thirst?

The text this morning takes us to the Feast of the Tabernacle, on the last day of the feast. For 7 days there was a procession with music where the priest would lead the crowd from the Temple to the Pool of Siloam where the priest filled a golden pitcher with water and carried it to Temple. Pouring it on a burnt offering, while another priest poured a drink-offering of wine on the other side of the altar. People chanted and cheered during the festival, and then on the 8th day, the day Jesus is speaking of in this passage, on this day the ceremony was not repeated, this day awaited the gift of rain. On this day, Jesus breaks with tradition calling out all that are thirsty to come and drink from the Living Water, Jesus was not referring to the fountain that had been visited during the festival, but he was referring to himself as a fountain of Living water.

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me.” Jesus is calling out to help us in our need to filled with a drink from the living water, but Jesus is not talking about any water, drinking water, bathing water, but he is talking about our spiritual thirst and our need to receive spiritual water. He is calling out to everyone who needs to be rejuvenated or to drink for the first time, those who have been faithful in their lives and those who have struggled in their faith. He is talking about the condition that many of us can suffer from on a monthly, weekly or a daily basis. When our spirits become dry, parched and we are lacking the necessary, thirst quenching water of life.
A few weeks ago I went on a retreat with a group called the Bethany Fellows. It is a group of clergy who are newly ordained to help with the transition from seminary to serving a congregation full time. This retreat happened to fall the week after Rolex. Holy Week is a busy week for any minister then the following week I was getting ready for Rolex and by Sunday, after Rolex was cleaned up I was exhausted. I had not taken time to stop; I was drained and thirsty, very thirsty. On Monday I flew out to Bethany Fellows in Dallas, the timing was perfect. The day I dreaded the most was the 24 hours of silence, I kept thinking how bored I would be, but I really surprised myself; it was one of the best days. I sat in a chair at the retreat center that overlooked the water on Lake Dallas, I walked along the sand, listening to the waves and I walked the grounds simply listening to the sounds of nature. My thirst was quenched, the spirit was revealed to me in silence and in nature and I drank from the Living Water, refreshing my spirit.

We have all had days when work or life is overwhelming when there is a deadline due and you spend hours putting everything you have into a project or presentation. When your children need to be at 3 different soccer practices, a dance recital and in the last week especially awards programs, talent shows and final appointments with teachers. When life simply gets in the way and all we can do it keep our nose to the grindstone until our head hits the pillow and the day is finished. These times are when our spirit is most in need of living water, when we don’t take the time to stop for a short devotion; we don’t sit and pray alone or together as a family. In the busyness, in tedious meetings and in daily stresses our spiritual life can suffer leaving us thirsty and spirit dry.
Pentecost is the day that the spirit is revealed to us that we are given the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to dance within our presence and to fill our spirits. In Jesus worst moments, during his crucifixion his spirit was poured out, when he was most vulnerable his spirit is released. When his disciples were most vulnerable, as Jesus was lifted up into heaven, the spirit is given to them. The Holy Spirit blossoms within our midst when we seem at our most vulnerable.

The Pentecost story is one that is retold every year it is the story of the beginning, of the beginning of the church and the power of the Holy Spirit that comes into our lives unexpected and alive like a violent rushing wind. The Spirit sweeps into our lives after a period of waiting. After the ascension has taken place we wait, for something, for the return of Christ, for God to speak to us, but in the waiting something unexpected and amazing happens. The Holy Spirit comes to refill us, to awaken us because after 40 days of waiting we are thirsty, we are parched and we are tired. The Holy Spirit ascended to fill that void, to fill our cups with Living Water to quench the thirst that had dried our mouths for 40 days. What excitement, and rejuvenation of our spirit, of our faith, but how long does it last? Can this movement of the spirit fulfill us for days, weeks or the entire year or is it possible that we will need to be refilled at some time, which our thirst will return.

When you look at a body of water there are two ways the water can act in its environment. It can simply remain in the same place or it can flow out of its surroundings refilling waterways, and flowing into rivers and streams.

We can also take on these patterns, we have 2 options to let the Living Water remain in or flow out. We have been told since we were children that God makes each of us in God’s image. God
shaped and molded each of us unique and gifted; God developed us as intellectual and spiritual beings equipping each of us with gifts that can be shared with the world. If we hold our gifts in us we remain steady, in the same place. But if we choose to flow out we can reach out, connect with others and share our gifts, in our giving and flowing of our spirit into our gifts we will be rejuvenated, refilled and refreshed with new water.

Using our gifts, sharing our faith, refilling ourselves with prayer ours spirit may have moments of thirst, but we will constantly be refilling and refueling our spirit. Staying in the same place, “remaining in” can be comfortable, but if we continue on the same path, never changing never moving, our spirit can become drained and emptied. If we only come to worship on Sunday morning, but never pray during the week, never sit for 5 minutes of devotion, never share our faith, never use our gifts our spirit will drain our faith will be stagnant and our thirst will never be quenched. Which option is easiest? Probably staying the same, it requires little work, but what benefits can we see? How will our faith continue to grow and shape our surroundings?

I found online a list of “5 Ways to Overcome a Spiritual Draught” if you are in a draught, know someone or want to prevent your spirit from getting too dry here is a list to try. It suggests: (http://www.churchleaders.com/youth/youth-leaders-articles/145520-how-to-overcome-being-spiritually-dry.html)

1. Serve in other areas of ministry. God never intended for us to grow solely by sitting or even at home reading the Bible and praying. Each of us are called to serve sacrificially, using our gifts to serve God by serving others.
2. **Read scripture as if you’re searching for something.** It’s easy to skim through familiar passages, so slow down and read it as if you’re searching for something, because you are! The Holy Spirit wants to teach you be revealed to you through the Word, so look for it and expect it. In fact, I usually highlight passages as they “jump off the page.” It’s always encouraging to go back and read over those highlights again at the end of the day or a few days later and see how those were exactly the passages God wanted us to use in our life in different ways.

3. **Listen for the Lord in prayer.** Treat prayer as two-way communication with God: us speaking to God through prayer and listening for the Holy Spirit, who resides in each of us as believers, to guide our thoughts to what God wants us to pray for.

4. **Actively share your faith.** It forces us to articulate what we believe and why, helps us think through our theology, and it’s especially fun to see how the God brings verses and thoughts to mind during the discussion.

5. **Not over-formatting my quiet times.** It’s easy to get stuck in a rut and limit personal time with God to reading a few verses of scripture, spending twice as much time reading one person’s opinion of those verses in a devotional book, and then praying through a “to-do” list to God. Since we don’t treat any other relationship in such a regimented manner, it’s helpful to change things up and keep it fluid. Sometimes you can pray the whole time and never crack open the Bible. Sometimes you can read the whole time instead. Other times engage in worship with some music in the car. Give yourself the freedom to be creative and enjoy the relationship with God.
We have accepted the invitation from Jesus to be given the Living Water, we have drank, quenching our spiritual thirst, but if we don’t allow the spirit to be part of our faith enacting us to share our gifts and our faith our spirit will become dry. We can’t live without water and we can’t live without the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not asking for those who are physically thirsty to come forward to have a drink of water, he is inviting each of us to drink from the Living Water. To quench our spiritual thirst. Filling our cups not only for ourselves, but for others because Living Water is not to be kept for ourselves, but shared. Continue to fill your cup, filling your spirit, so that you may never be thirsty.