

Scripture Reading: Genesis 29:1-14

“1 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. 2 And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. 3 Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth. 4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." 5 Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." 6 So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." 7 Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them." 8 But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep." 9 Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. 12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father. 13 Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.”

'Another Woman at a Well'

This morning we return to our journey through the Book of Beginnings and I trust we can all remember a bit about what has been covered so far.

- **Just as we saw our long journey through the Books of Luke and Acts as foundational to our understanding of the New Testament...**
- **We have made the case that it is here in the Book of Genesis where the foundation is laid for ALL of God's grand story of salvation!**

We have seen the world created as the very good place that God prepared for His people, and we have seen the world destroyed as a result of man's sin. We have seen men like Noah and Abraham called out by God to carry on the line of promise that was given in the garden where God promised that the seed of the Woman would crush the head of the seed of the serpent.

And as we have watched God work in the lives of Abraham and Isaac we have strived to see Jesus...

Jesus had warned the Pharisees of His day that they had searched the Scriptures and missed Him and Jesus went on to show His own disciples on the road to Emmaus how they too should have seen His saving work in Moses and the Prophets.

Our task of seeing Jesus will be much easier in these last twenty chapters as we focus on the persons of Jacob and Joseph, men who are often seen as types of Christ!

- **And this morning will be even easier still because in our text we find Jacob meeting a woman at a well.**

When last we were studying Jacob he had experienced a sort of conversion experience when he met God at Bethel...

- **Not unlike what we saw with the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus!**

Our text this morning hints at this when it says that Jacob ‘lifted up his feet’ and journeyed on!

He was a man with a new ‘spring in his step!’ We should remember that Jacob is both fleeing from his angry brother and off to find a wife and we will see how he accomplishes both of these in the coming weeks.

- **So when he arrives we find Jacob at a well, with shepherds and sheep & a well of water & soon a woman!**

Children can you think of any places where we find such things in the New Testament?

-- Jesus is the Great Shepherd!

-- Jesus says He gives the water of life!

-- We are called the sheep of His pasture

-- We are called the Bride of Jesus!

- **So my task of finding Jesus here this morning is not too tough!**

What I want us to focus on this morning is the recurring theme that we see in the Bible of finding women at wells! I have mentioned this Scriptural theme a few times in our series promising to say more about it and this morning will be that time.

When you step back and look at the whole story we see the Bible beginning and ending with the Spirit and water! As we saw in our series on worship the Spirit of God is often related to water and fire just as Jesus, the Son of God is often seen in bread and wine!

- **And it is not a coincidence that these are the elements that we see in our sacraments!**

We are to see that we are washed by the Spirit in the waters of Baptism and that in the Lord’s Supper we partake of the flesh & blood of Jesus, the means by which our sins were forgiven!

- **Jesus, the Son of God has purchased a bride and she is washed in the waters of baptism so it should not surprise us to see women at wells or well-watered gardens!**

The Bible begins with the Spirit of God hovering over the waters and soon we have man and women in a beautiful garden that was watered by God Himself and where four great rivers flow out to the rest of the land. When we reach the end of our story we read this in Revelation 22:

“1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

As the story of salvation has unfolded after the calling of Abraham we have seen he and Isaac digging wells and Jacob will do the same.

They are a sign of life in a fallen world and the struggles against enemies who destroy them or steal them are a part of the enmity that God placed between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

- **And then we have the repeated occurrence of chosen men meeting women at wells!**

Abraham’s servant found Isaac’s wife at a well and now Jacob has found Rachel at a well.

In both cases we have shepherds and sheep involved with the well and the water and the women.

So it should be NO surprise to us when in John’s Gospel account we have Jesus meeting a woman at a well!

I want us to take a moment to review that account so that we can learn some lessons from it and help us see Jesus here in these accounts in Genesis! Jesus is traveling through Samaria and as He stops to rest the disciples go off to find some food: *[mention enmity of Jews & Samaritans.]*

John 4: "It was about the sixth hour. [high noon] 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

- She does not yet know that one greater than Jacob has come!

13 "Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." 15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

- Jesus has offered the Good News and she wants the living water... But the Gospel comes into real life at a cost...

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

- I think in our modern age, we should ask a simple question here: Was Jesus being loving by bringing all this up?

And the woman's response is at first what we often see when someone is asked to face their sin...

- She changes the subject!

19 "The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

- Jesus was patient with this woman and gave her an honest answer to her honest question!

25 "The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

The disciples return at this point and,

28 "The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29 "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him."

Back at the well the disciples are upset that Jesus does not eat the food they brought and, 34 "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

**36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors." 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified,
"He told me all that I ever did."**

40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

- **Jesus met a woman at the well and He brought her new life, a new life that she then shared with others!**

Later in John's account we have Jesus in the midst of one of the major Jewish feasts and in chapter seven we read:

"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Remember that I pointed out that the Spirit and water are found from the beginning to the end of the Bible! There is some debate about what Jesus is referencing in the Scripture, but I believe that it is the words of Ezekiel that should come to mind as he is given the picture of the glorious New Temple that was to come... Much more glorious than that of Kings Solomon or Herod, but the one God would build for His Son: The Church, the Bride of Jesus!

I will have to leave the lengthy description that begins at chapter 40 as your homework but in Chapter 47 Ezekiel is brought to the front of the Temple where he sees water "flowing from under the threshold of the temple."

The man, who I think was Jesus, leads him out a thousand cubits and when he crosses the river it comes up to his ankles. They go out another thousand cubits and the water is knee high! A thousand more and it is waist deep. And finally after another thousand cubits Ezekiel declares that it is "a river that could not be crossed."

Now there are many today looking for a time where a literal Temple that is described here by the Prophet Ezekiel will be built in Jerusalem and I am yet to have any of them explain what this river means or how it would function! But Ezekiel does have it explained to him and this is why I believe it is what Jesus had in mind when He declares that living water would flow from us!

Now I want to read this discussion with what Jesus said in mind along with the Great Commission and the fact that as Michael has rightly pointed out several times, when the Old Testament refers to the Sea it is often the Gentiles:

6 "He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. 7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. *[Remember those trees in Revelation?!]* 8 "Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes."

- **Jesus gave us a Great Commission and said we would be fishers of men!**

10 "It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.

11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt.

[remember the tares or weeds that the enemy planted?]

12 Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."

Listen again to what we read in Revelation 22: "1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

- **So the \$64,000 question, and there I may be dating myself, but the BIG question to ask is when will those nations be healed?**

Many put this off into some future reign of Jesus, but what did Jesus say would happen to those who came to Him? Out of them would flow rivers of living waters which we are told is the Spirit of God Who was poured out at Pentecost!

So here is a good way to see how we are doing in our Christian walk...

- **Are we healing the nations or tearing down the nations?**
- **Are the actions in our lives improving the world or bringing it down?**
- **How do we treat God's Creation?**
- **How do we treat those made in the image of God?**
- **How do we treat our fellow members of the Body of Jesus?**
- **These are questions we should ask and answer day by day!**

This is what it should mean for us to be the water of life that flows forth to a needy world.

It is all possible because of the work of Jesus which will sing about in a moment with a hymn that highlights how the blood of Christ washes us clean...

Something Michael has covered well in the Revelation of Jesus Christ where in Chapter five we find the hosts in heaven singing "a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; & we shall reign on the earth.""

And again we read in chapter 7:

"9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

12 saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

- **And finally when we reach the end of that book, and the story of salvation we see the great Shepherd of His sheep giving them the water of life!**

Revelation 22: "17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

- **Yes Jacob rolled back a rock and watered the sheep for his future bride, but I hope you can see that it involve SO much more when we see it in the light of God's story of salvation!**

Communion Meditation: Psalm 63

Where we were in our time of confession...

"O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. 2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. 3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. 4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips."