



John 4:1-26
The Living Water

NKJ John 4:1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John

2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

4 But He needed to go through Samaria.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

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?"

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."

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."

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."

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."

One of the grave mistakes that the Pharisees made was that the Messiah when he came would be the deliverer only of the Jews, and then only of those Jews who had kept the Law. Jesus systematically destroyed both of those notions and showed that He had come to be the deliverer of all those who would believe in Him regardless of their race or the enormity of their prior sins. In the previous chapter Jesus had spoken with Nicodemus, a social notable and fixture in the Sanhedrin, someone whom everyone in Jewish society approved of. In fact as we have seen, it was Nicodemus who by coming to Jesus by night was implying he might damage his own reputation were it widely known that he had spoken with him. The next conversation that is recorded is with the polar opposite of Nicodemus. Jesus' conversation here is with someone who was a social outcast of the most profound sort. Someone no one in Jewish society would have approved of for three different reasons

1) ***She was a Samaritan:*** Who were the Samaritans? Well they weren't guys with RVs with Good Sam Club stickers, and neither were they a group of people devoted to helping travelers in need, they were a mixed race people. You'll remember that under Solomon's foolish son Rehoboam, the Kingdom of Israel had been split into two. The ten Northern Tribes in Samaria, and the 2 Tribes of Benjamin and Judah in the South. The Northern tribes had become idolaters, worshipping golden calves, and eventually the Assyrians destroyed the Northern Kingdom, and deported large numbers of the people replacing them with people from throughout their empire and with whom the remnant intermarried. Eventually, the Samaritans who accepted the Pentateuch had built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim which the Jews had destroyed in 108 B.C. but the Samaritans had continued to worship on the mountain. So the Jews despised the Samaritans because they were mixed race, and not pure Jews, and also because they were heretics who did not worship were and how they were commanded. They were considered unclean, a Jew would not normally eat or converse with them.

2) ***She was a woman:*** Strict Jews generally had as little to do with women whom they weren't married to as they could, and rabbis certainly didn't speak with them.

3) ***She was what was once called a loose woman:*** Most women came to draw water for the day first thing. She probably chose to come to draw water from the well at the hottest point of the day (noon) to avoid the other women because of her reputation. Even amongst Samaritan society she was an outcast because of her loose morals having been "married" five times and now living with a man who was not her husband would have made her a pariah.

Now how did Jesus come to be in Samaria anyway? Well what is implied in the first verse about the **Pharisees knowing that Jesus made more disciples than John**, is that Jesus knew that they were beginning to view Him as a threat to their religious hegemony, just as they had viewed John as a threat, and while they might not be overly concerned about a preacher in the backwater of Galilee, they are going to be upset about anyone preaching in Judea, because that was the center of the Jewish nation. So Jesus, who does not wish to provoke a confrontation with them before the time had come for Him to be crucified withdraws to Galilee once again. You remember he had come down to Jerusalem from Cana in Galilee where he had done his first miracle at the wedding, now he is going back.

And Verse 4 says that Jesus *needed* to go through Samaria. Galilee as you know was far to the north of Jerusalem, just south of Lebanon, and the quickest way to get there was to pass through the region of

Samaria. Now strict Jews actually got there by going through the wilderness instead, which while longer, avoided the hated Samaritans. We aren't told why Jesus must go through Samaria, but it wasn't time, it was the same "must" of Luke 4:43 where Jesus said "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also" it was the must of the Mission His father had given Him. This meeting with the woman was no accident.

Godet once said "the way to gain a soul is often to ask a service of it" and so Jesus asks this Samaritan for water, and she is shocked. Initiating the conversation *was* shocking on two accounts, first here is a Jew speaking to a Samaritan, and even more here was a Jewish *MAN* speaking to a Samaritan *WOMAN*. Most Jews would not even use a water vessel that an unclean Samaritan had touched, viewing it as something defiling and here he is asking her for water.

Jesus immediately shifts the conversation, saying if only you realized the gift that God has set before you. If your spiritual eyes had been opened, you would see the Messiah has come to you and you could ask for and receive not just water, but *Living water*. Well we know what Well water, public water, sparkling water, is but *What is this living water?*

Living Water is a biblical way of referring to The Holy Spirit. Because just as water is necessary for physical life, the Holy Spirit is necessary for *spiritual life*.

Jer. 17:13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. "Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken the LORD, The fountain of living waters."

So Living Water symbolizes God, the Holy Spirit, and that is the reason why in Baptism the sprinkling of water symbolizes the giving of the Spirit who alone can give a person the washing of regeneration.

The Old Testament speaks of the time of the coming of the Messiah as the point at which the gift of the Holy Spirit would flow from Jerusalem to the whole world.

Zec. 14:8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.

9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be -- "The LORD is one," And His name one.

The woman here is still not getting it though, she is still thinking in terms of physical water – H₂O. First she says, you have nothing to draw out the water of this well, and if you *are* speaking of some other water, how can it possibly be better than water from a well dug by the great Patriarch Jacob? It's a *who do you think you are?*

Jesus then draws the great difference between the physical well and its water, and the waters of life He is offering. Physical water may quench your thirst for a time, but you get thirsty again and have to keep coming back. The living water of the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives quenches our thirst for ever, and the Spirit abides with all to whom Jesus Gives Him. The Spirit will never leave a believer, but will rather continue to dwell in His heart and provide consolation, and encouragement, and happiness, and the will to persevere no matter what the circumstance. It will continue to well up providing abundant life here on earth and eventually eternal life hereafter.

In verse 15 she picks up a little more of what Jesus is saying, but now she is thinking more in terms of indoor plumbing. *Oh if only I could have that so I didn't have to come here to the well to draw*, she wants it because she wants to be freed from the daily drudgery and social embarrassment of drawing water. She's willing to take any water from Jesus that will improve the existing circumstances of her life.

Now friends, I want you to note this and note it well, it is an EASY THING to bring the unconverted person to a desire for a better life here and now, and because of that countless men in history have framed Christianity in terms of being the answer to giving you the best possible life here and now. And I mean long before Joel Osteen, you saw it in the social gospel message of the liberals of the 19th century, and the Health and Wealth Crusaders, and also the conservatives who peddle Christianity as the answer to building a better society.

But that my friends is not the gospel message, and Jesus is not content to leave her wishing vainly for a better life here, he is going to give her eternal life. What He wants her to have is nothing less than salvation. So He presses on to convict her of sin, *"go call your husband."* I don't have one she answers. Jesus of course knows all about her track record in the marriage department, and he sets it before her in stark terms.

He is not trying to embarrass her, but to set the moral ruin of her life before her, show her that her greatest need is not to be freed from daily drudgery or embarrassment, but to be freed from the shackles of sin and the curse of the broken law. His aim therefore is to convict her of her sin. To break down her self-sufficiency that he might free her and build her up again on the solid foundation of faith alone in God's promised Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST.

She acknowledges that He is Prophet, how else could he know these things, we tend to forget how impossible it would be to know these things before the internet, before modern information retrieval, before everybody had a permanent record and credit history and so on. But Jesus knows her, better than she knows herself. And now she is finally speaking on the moral and religious plane, but she is still moving the argument away from her sin, and the only answer for it. She acknowledges the spiritual dimension of her life, but is still arguing for the possibility that something other than the living water, namely the worship of the Samaritans *might* be able to meet it.

She is posing one of those classic deflecting arguments you will often see when you are witnessing, particularly when someone's conscience has in fact been pricked. First the person will be frantic to depersonalize the conversation, to go from the uncomfortable, *me and my personal standing before a Holy God*, to a more comfortable discussion about impersonal theological niceties, and then second they introduce the party issue, well you CHRISTIANS are always saying... as though the fact that you are part of an organized religion automatically makes what you say biased and suspect, and then they will try to introduce the "fuzz factor" – That it is all a matter of preference and opinion and that there are no final answers to these questions about religion, *you* say Jesus is the answer, but others say the answer is found in the teachings of Joe Smith or Mohommed. You Jews say we have to worship in Jerusalem, but our Fathers said we have to worship on the mountain. Implication: you have your authorities, we have ours, who is to say who is right. Its like saying I know you say that 2+2=4 but because some say it is three and others say it is five, we can never know for certain.

Now next week we will discuss in more detail what Jesus means about "Worship in Spirit in Truth" but for the moment, I want to focus in on His application of it to her. Notice Jesus doesn't mince words

about false religion. He doesn't spout off any of the ridiculous modern platitudes about how "we all worship the same God in different ways" or how there are some good things he can appreciate about Samaritan worship. And brothers and sisters, can I encourage you to emulate that practice? Look you don't tell your kids, "***I so appreciate your 2+2=3 answer. I happen to personally prefer 4 but we are so close, can we agree to compromise on 3.5?***" And there we are talking about just getting to the right number not the difference between going to heaven or going to hell. Look don't be abrasive and hostile but don't tell Mormons or Muslims we all worship the same God and spend all your time trying to build bridges. If you love these people TELL THEM WHAT JESUS SAID not what you think they'll want to hear! Jesus said to this woman, Samaritan religion isn't true, you don't even know the God you claim to be worshipping. Salvation comes through the Jews, because to them were given the oracles of God and from them the Messiah is coming.

But he says, this isn't a Jewish verses Samaritan thing, and the time is coming when these disputes will become moot. The living water may have started in Jerusalem, but now that the Messiah has come, salvation through God's Spirit and Truth (that is His Scripture) is flowing out to the entire world. So if you are going to truly be His worshipper, it will come by the life-giving work of His Spirit in Your Heart, not by standing in the temple in Jerusalem or any particular place.

Application: In the Old Testament God brought this accusation against His people: ***Jer. 2:13 "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns -- broken cisterns that can hold no water.***

People go to many broken cisterns of false religion to quench their thirst, but they never find that contentment they are seeking. They end up finding themselves empty again. There is a spiritual void in each of us so large, that only God Himself can fill it. And as Augustine said "***O Lord, You have made us for Yourself and Our Hearts are restless until they rest in you.***"

I myself spent years wandering from cistern to cistern, finding no peace, nothing that really quenched my spiritual thirst. It wasn't until I was brought face to face with my Messiah, broken of my self-sufficiency, convicted of my sin, and made to and believe and trust in Jesus Alone for my salvation that I was give that water that never ends. Has that happened to you yet?