

Our Father in heaven, we pray
you will come this morning, rending the heavens and coming down into
this place, strengthening us with might in the inner man,
that Christ may come flooding into our hearts by faith, rooting
us and grounding us in the stability that comes from the knowledge
that we have been loved with an everlasting love. We pray
this morning, Father, if there be lost souls in this sanctuary,
perhaps members of this church, visitors to this church, O God,
children of this church, we pray you will reach out, Lord Jesus,
and touch their hearts and draw them to you. You will hunt them
down, O Lord, and bring them home to the Father, rejoicing
as the good shepherd who laid down his life for the flock.
We offer these prayers in Jesus' name. Amen. Please take your
seats and turn with me and your copy of the Word of God to John's
Gospel, chapter 4. We're going to read the scriptures
this morning. From chapter 4, this glorious tapestry of mercy. Let's begin in verse
1. We're going to read down to verse
26. This is the word of God. Please
take heed how you hear. Now when Jesus learned that the
Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more
disciples than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize,
but only his disciples, he left Judea and departed again for
Galilee, and he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town
of Samaria called Sychar near the field that Jacob had given
to his son, Joseph, Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, wearied
as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was
about the sixth hour. That's noon. A woman from Samaria
came to draw water. Jesus said to her, give me a
drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy
food. The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a
Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? For Jews have no dealings with
Samaritans. Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God and
who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have
asked him and he would have given you living water. The woman said
to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well
is deep. Where do you get that living
water from? Are you greater than our father
Jacob? He gave us the well and drank
from it himself, as did his son and his livestock. Jesus said
to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will become thirsty
again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him
will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him
will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.
The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I will
not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water. Jesus said
to her, Go call your husband. Come here. The woman answered
him, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, you are right
in saying I have no husband, for you have had five husbands,
and the one you have now is not your husband. Well, you said
it's true. Woman said to him, sir, I perceive

that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship. Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I, who speak to you, am he. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of God endures forever. We live in a thirsty world. full of thirsty people, all longing for satisfaction. All of you here in this room, those of you who know God and those of you who do not, those of you who are members in this church, those of you who are visitors, all of you are united by yearning for satisfaction. You all want to find one of Willy Wonka's everlasting gobstoppers. The kind you suck, and they never get smaller, and they never lose their taste. They're designed for children, you remember, boys and girls, who had very little pocket money. And we're all looking for everlasting gobstoppers, not literally candy, of course, but we're looking for something in life that is so big and so good and so true and so long-lasting, it'll satisfy the thirst of our souls forever. And we look for that in all manner of different places. And the question this morning I have for you is, how are you doing in your thirst for satisfaction? Maybe you're a young optimist here this morning, and your whole life's ahead of you. You're full of dreams, and you haven't lived long enough to have some of them become nightmares. Remember, you're like the girl I met once, the barista in Starbucks back in Savannah, donkeys years ago, and I'm standing in the line, and she's talking to several punters down the line from me, serving them coffee, and they're talking about the Powerball lottery that's about to kind of burst, as it were, and the hundreds of millions, I forget how big it was, but it was the biggest Powerball lottery America had ever seen. And she was talking about all the things she would buy if she won that lottery ticket. And I couldn't resist it, curmudgeon that I am. And so I leant forward and said, you do know there's one thing money can't buy? And she said, what? And before I could answer, an old man behind me in the line said, happiness. And she said, I know, she said, but I'd love the chance to prove the cynics wrong. Or maybe you're a bit older than young, you're maybe middle-aged, you're not over the hill, but the view sure is great. And you've been around long enough for life to land a couple of massive left hooks on your chin,

and you're not knocked out, but you're on your feet, and you're kind of a bit more realistic. And it's like the azaleas, you know, they bloom once a year for a few weeks, and you enjoy them when they last. But you know before long the blooms will fade, the flowers will fall, and you'll be left back again with a pretty drab green bush. And so you enjoy the bloom, but not too much. And when the blooms go, you're philosophical, you fertilize them, and you water them, and you prune them for next year's bloom. And you're more realistic. Maybe you're a step even beyond

that. You've become an old cynic. Life's been hard on you. And you've got to that stage in life where work is a lot less fun, and fun is a lot more work. You're not a pessimist. You're an optimist with experience. And you kind of make your way through life with a bit of an eeyore. You know, my cup isn't half full. It's just twice as big as I would like it to be. Well, I preached to you this morning a Savior who's offering to satisfy the thirsts of your soul through time and through eternity. Augustine once said, thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee. Has your heart found its rest in me, Jesus says? Have I satisfied the thirst of your soul? I want you to see three things in our text this morning about Jesus. The first two are longer points, and the last point is very brief. The first thing we see is, we see a Savior who is willing to hunt you down. Secondly, we'll see a savior who's willing to call you out. And thirdly, we see a savior who's willing to fill you up. Let's work together through the text. First of all, we see a savior who's willing to hunt you down. And you see that there in those opening verses when it says, verse four, he had to pass through Samaria. That little word, had to, in the Greek, is a little word, D-E-I, in Greek. It's got nothing to do with wokeness, though, you're glad to understand. But it means, it's called, actually, the particle of divine necessity. It describes something that absolutely has to happen, something that must happen. Jesus uses it all the time. In John 3, you must be born again. Must. The Son of Man must be lifted up. John the Baptist used it. He must increase and I must decrease. Christ, in other words, felt compelled to make this journey into Samaria. Why? because he had to find this woman,

this lost woman. He had to save her. And through her, he had to save the whole town of Sychar. He feels compelled. As he heads out to hunt this woman down, and he's not just hunting her down this morning, he's hunting you down, he's hunting me down, we see his willingness to reach across every boundary you could imagine. He reaches across the geographic boundary. It's the middle of summer, it's hot, right? He has to walk 30 miles, Sychar's 30 miles north of Jerusalem where he's been. It's a long, arduous

journey over hills and mountains and down through valleys and over rivers and streams. the baking heat of the day, the freezing chill of the evening, the night in the Middle East. And by the time he gets to the well, it says he's weary from the journey. He's exhausted, worn out. The way you feel, man, when you've been out in the yard all afternoon, middle of August, and you've been cutting the grass, and doing the blowing, and doing the edging, maybe laying down a couple of yards of mulch, and you come in, and you're dog tired, and your wife comes up to you with that look in her eye that means trouble, and she says to you, honey, can you help me? Before you get changed, or maybe you've just got changed, you've had your shower, and you're kind of resting, and the lazy boy watching the television, and she says, honey, Can you help me? No problem, you say. And she says, the missionaries are coming into town next week, and there's some clothes, some of the old worn-out clothes, not worn-out, but they don't fit our kids anymore. The last season's clothes, maybe, and they don't fit the kids anymore. They've outgrown them. But they're up in the attic, in a box at the back. There's missionaries coming in, and they'll be just the right size and shape for those kids. Would you go up to the attic? and get the boxes down, and you say to her, no problem at all. No, you don't. You say, honey, I've been out in the yard all day. I'm dehydrated. It's 300 degrees up in the attic right now, and you want me to go up there and get boxes? That's how Christ felt. He was tired, but he reaches out to this woman. He's weary. Geographic boundaries. More than that, cultural boundaries. He's going through Samaria, which is the last thing any self-respecting Jew would ever do. She's amazed he would talk to her, for Jews, we're told, verse nine, have no dealings with Samaritans. There are cultural differences there, right? So in God's, economy, racial and cultural differences are designed to be like the facets of a diamond that reflect the light in a myriad of rainbow colors. God is too glorious for any one race or one culture to show his glory properly, right? So you've got the Germans and their their love of details and engineering. You've got our Asian brothers, excuse the stereotypes, but you've got the Asian brothers who love mathematics and music and all of that kind of, you've got the Irish, they love to fight. I was at Twin Lakes this week and there was an African-American, it's really encouraging to see the young men going into the ministry in the PCA this year, and so many, and there's a couple of just really fantastic young African-American brothers, and one of them Noah's coming to the Townsend actually to work with the PCA church, and he was just full of zeal for the Lord, and I was remarking to him about just the glory of cultures, and how I just love, there's something uniquely wonderful about black men who love Christ. It's like the regal majesty of the Zulu warrior, right? Their athleticism,

their dynamism. Or Vodibachan in the pulpit. I could never preach like Vodibachan. He's just got that wonderful power and zeal and wit that's uniquely black and uniquely glorious, right? That's the way culture should be. We should be all resonating the glory of God, but in a fallen world, it's not like that. Our cultural differences can bring a degree of awkwardness. Sometimes that awkwardness can be quite funny. I remember when I was at RTS as a young student, I wasn't one of the interns at First Press, but they were all going to Atlanta to a conference, and they invited me, and I went with them. And to kind of save money, we got a hotel on the other side of town. And we didn't realize, but we were the only white boys in that whole hotel. And in the morning, we'd get up and go to breakfast. And we walked down towards the elevator. And Caleb, one of the interns, steps forward as the elevator doors open. And there are these huge, like 6 foot 5, black men in suits standing in the elevator. I think they were linebackers from the Atlanta Falcons. And they were standing there like this. And Caleb walks forward and goes, ah. And they say, it's OK. You can come on in. So we go in and stand amongst them. And they're looking down at us. It was delightful. And one of them looks at his friend and goes, boy, I thought he was in the hood. And it was delightful. But it was funny. And sometimes it can be a little, Uncomfortable, those differences, too. Whenever I was in India at a wedding, I was a medical student at this little church out in the middle of nowhere, north of Bangalore. Went to this wedding, and they served the food on leaves. We don't do that. And they're putting all the food down. And I didn't know what I was eating. I had to eat it with my hands, and the food actually was pretty good, but I didn't know what I was eating. It was like that scene in Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom when they bring all of those delicacies before Indy and his friend, and the waiter brings the monkey's head and lifts the top off and goes, monkeys bring the delicacy, and everyone's horrified. And that's why I felt it was kind of a cultural, I don't know, sometimes those cultural differences can be very freight with anger and bitterness. And that's the way it was here with the Samaritans and the Jews. These cultural differences went back hundreds of years, almost 1,000 years to 722 BC, whenever the Assyrians came down and took the northern tribes of Israel off captive into exile. And of course, they replaced the northern 10 tribes of Israel with refugees from other nations they had conquered. And those refugees intermarried with the few Jews that remained there, and they became kind of a cursed half-breed. And they mixed a little bit of Yahwehism, a little bit of Torah, with a lot of paganism, and the Jews despised them. The rabbi said, he who eats the bread of a Samaritan eats the flesh of a swine. If a rabbi

met a Samaritan in the road, he would step off the road into the ditch so that their shadows wouldn't even touch. That's how bad they were in the Jews' mindset. Even their shadows were unclean. And Jesus reaches Not just from heaven to earth. By the Jew he reaches all the way out to the Samaritans. He crosses all of the barriers. There's also the barrier of gender. The rabbis again taught that it was unlawful for a man to greet a woman in public, even if she was his wife. And you get that sense, she's in me, it's how is it that you would you ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria. And the disciples come back and they're in me, it's about 27, just then the disciples came back and they marveled that he was talking with a woman, with a woman. He reaches across the boundaries, all of the barriers that would normally keep people away from others, he reaches across them. And then there's the moral boundary. This woman wasn't just any woman. Did you notice she comes by herself at noonday. All the rest of the Samaritan girls went at 7 a.m. as the sun was rising before it got too hot. They went together for safety and security in the cool of the day. This woman goes by herself in the heat of the day. Why? Because the Samaritan woman wanted nothing to do with her. She's traded her sexual purity again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again. To their mind, she's little better than a stripper, a prostitute, like one of the Bourbon Street girls dressed in laundry in a shop window, offering herself to anyone who will have her. And Jesus comes to her, and he reaches out to her, and he's reaching out to you this morning. It's a wonderful thing, this passage. You see Jesus reaching this woman. She's not just a typical sinner. She's as bad as bad can be, and Christ is reaching out to her, and he's reaching out to you this morning. You might feel yourself to be just an inch above the pit of hell itself, as bad as bad can be, but if you'll have Jesus, he'll have you. He hunts her down. Secondly, he calls her out. It's very embarrassing, but it starts off so tenderly. Give me a drink, he says. This is the one who made the oceans. The sea is his, for it was he who made it. The springs and rivers of a thousand hills belong to him. And he looks at this sinner and says, give me a drink. And the conversation begins. And he offers her this water. If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. And the woman said to you, you have nothing to draw water with. The well is deep. Where do you get that living water? And in her mind, Christ is offering just an eternal supply of water, like a faucet in your house. She's thinking about Christ as a labor-saving device. And Jesus confronts her materialism. He's taking her beyond this world, beyond her body. He's taking her to another world. He's taking her to the depths

of her soul and to the heights of heaven. And he's speaking of a deeper satisfaction than anything in this world can provide. Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to everlasting life. And she had a perfect picture, this woman, who can only think of Christ as the labor-saving device in this world, of our world today, that they view you as just a body. As if you had no other desires but food and drink and sex, that's it. As if there was nothing more to being a human being than just the complicated fizzing of chemicals, norepinephrine, epinephrine, acetylcholine, dopamine, sugar, fizzing in your head. But there's more to you than just a body. You're not just a soup of chemicals wrapped up in a sack of skin, as one atheist put it. You're a soul, a never-dying soul, made by God, made to know God and to experience God and to feel the life-giving presence of God flooding your soul forever and a day. And Christ is confronting this woman. He's confronting her materialism. He confronts also her sin. He says to her, when she says, give me this water, go call your husband. And it's amazing how the conversation gets awkward. If you count the Greek words, I'm indebted to Ted Donnelly for this insight. In verse nine, when she speaks, she uses 16 words. In verse 11 and 12, when she speaks, uses 41 words. In verse 15, when she speaks, 13 words. And then in verse 17, just after Christ says, go call your husband, She uses three words, I've no husband. Oh, it's embarrassing. And Jesus comes so tenderly. You are right in saying I have no husband, for you have had five husbands. And the one you now have is not your husband. What you said is true. And Jesus here, why is he doing that? Because he's gotta confront her sin. He's gotta confront her sin, her sinful habit of looking for pleasure where pleasure cannot be found. In this woman's heart, she thinks to herself, if I can just find a man who will love me, all of the sad things of life will come untrue. And she's tried it again and again and again and again and again and again, and it's brought her nothing but misery and shame. And of course, she's half right and she's all wrong. If she can find a man to love her, it'll make her happy forever. The question is, which man? And where can he be found? And he's not found down here, he's found up there. The Son of God coming down into this world in our flesh to become our sin, to bear away our curse, and to bring us home to God. And Jesus is offering himself, as it were, to be her seventh husband. Do you know him? He knows you. And she gets a bit uncomfortable, a lot uncomfortable. She says, I perceive you're a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, Gerizim, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place

where people ought to worship. What gives? Now, that's a defense mechanism. She's trying to get the focus off her sin onto theology. It's a bit like Joe Biden way back when he was running with Obama for the presidency. He was going to be vice president, of course. And there's that awkward moment on the stage where he leans across. There's a mic here. and Biden does what only Biden can do. He puts both his feet in it, and he drops the F-bomb, and it's very embarrassing, and Obama's furious. And the next week, he's before The View, and Barbara Walters asks him about that moment. Do you know what Biden did? He laughed, and then he crossed himself. And then he explained it away. But it's interesting, why did he cross himself? He's really saying, the F-bomb's not really who I am. I know my way around a Catholic church. That's what he's saying. And that's what she's saying. She may have had umpteen husbands, but she knows enough to know there are some really important theological questions. Let's talk about them. And Jesus doesn't go off though the boy, he doesn't go off the hunt, he pursues her and he says to her. You know, because one of the convictions of our world is that as long as you have a little bit of religion, any church will do you. And Jesus says, no, it's not true. And he goes after her and he exposes her He says to her, there's nothing more important in religion than truth and salvation and experiential knowledge of God. Jesus said to her, woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know we worship. what we know. That's incredible. He's reaching across the cultural divides. He's reaching out to the Samaritan movement, but he's not denying the fact that their religion was not born in heaven. And if it doesn't come from heaven, it can't bring you to heaven. Salvation is from the Jews. You worship what you do not know. You can come to church and be involved in worship and yet worship what you do not know. Do you know God? Have you experienced his saving power? The hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. He hunts her down and he calls her out, her materialism, thinking only of this world, and the food of this world, and the water of this world. He calls out her sin, all of her boltholes, where she forsakes the Lord, the fountain of living waters, only to hew for herself broken cisterns that can hold no water. And he calls out her religion. Alas, bolthole, men hide from God. You know, there's no better place to hide from God than to be in church pretending to be seeking Him. But Christ knew her, and he knows you, and he knows me. And finally, and very briefly, he fills her up. The woman said to him, I know

that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he. Verse 28, so the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, come see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ? And they went out of the town and were coming to him. And it's a beautiful picture. John could have been a movie director in our day. He leaves the camera lens focused on the water pot. As the credits of the story are rising and the woman is walking off to the town into the blurry sunset, as it were, the camera pans down to the water pot. The water pot she came to fill. The water pot she no longer needs to fill because she's found a better water, living water, and the life-giving presence of the living God that only Christ can give. And John's asking you, and Christ is hunting you this morning, have you found that water? Oh Jesus, I'm dying to give it to you. Later in John's gospel, you'll see the spear go into Christ's heart, and from his heart comes water and blood. No time to go there now, but that's just not speaking medically of his death. The blood separating, that's true. But there's a picture here of the living water flowing out from the altar in Ezekiel's temple. It's as Christ dies that he opens the floodgate of living waters for thirsty souls. And Jesus says to you, are you thirsty this morning? Come to me and drink. And the water that I will give you will be a river of living waters welling up in your soul and you'll never thirst again, not now and not to eternity. And I'll never cast you out. Let's pray. Oh, Father in heaven, we thank you for such a wonderful Savior, a priceless Savior who has come down from heaven to seek us. He leaves the culture of heaven and he comes down to this world, the haunt of jackals and demons, to rescue lost sinners of every nation, tribe, and tongue, and to bring us back to God, reconstitute us into the diamond facet that our redeemed cultures can radiate the glory of God. But before that happens, we must be satisfied with your presence and full of your life. We pray, our Father, this morning, that you will do for us What we cannot do for ourselves, come down and feed us till we want no more with the life and living water of Christ. We offer these prayers in Jesus' name, amen.