

March 20, 2011  
Lent 2

*"Jesus Is Your Water of Life"*

### **JOHN 4:5-26**

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**S**o he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. <sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "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." <sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" <sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." <sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." <sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." <sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup> Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." <sup>25</sup> The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." <sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

We need water to survive. I just heard in the news this past week that every home should have extra jugs of water just in case there is a major disaster. It is hard to survive more than three days without water. Health experts tell us we should be drinking 8 glasses of water a day. We need the water to purge the toxins from our bodies, help our blood flow and bring nutrients to our hungry cells. Water lubricates our eyes, mouth and throat. Without water there would be no life on this earth.

When Jesus lived on this earth he needed daily water to drink just as we do. In the words just read to you we find Jesus sitting at a well in Samaria, tired, hungry and thirsty. He asks a Samaritan woman to give him a drink of water from Jacob's well, a well that still exists to this day. Jesus did not use his power as God to supply himself with water to drink.

This wonderful water in Jacob's well provided Jesus with an opportunity to talk about himself as the water of life. He still comes to people today and offers himself as the water of life here in his life giving Word. He has come into your life and given you the blessing of living forever under your heavenly Father's never changing love and protection.

### **He creates the thirst**

Jesus goes out of his way to find this Samaritan woman just as he went out of his way to find you. "So he came to a town in Samaria called Zychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given this his son Joseph." Jesus had to go through Samaria because he wanted to reach out to the Samaritan people. The Jews hated the Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews. Samaritans were half breeds. 700 years before Jesus time the Assyrians conquered this region, took large numbers of Jewish people away as slaves and let their own people resettle the land. Jews and Gentiles married and produced offspring that were considered unclean by other Jews. The Samaritans even had their own place of worship at Mount Gerizim because Jews did not want them near the temple in Jerusalem. Jews who traveled north from Judea went out of their way to avoid the Samaritans. Do you remember seeing pictures of the white only drinking fountains in the South. Jesus loved all people, even the Samaritans. Yellow, black and white they are precious in his sight.

Jesus does the unthinkable. He asks the woman for water to drink from Jacob's well. "Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour." Look at Jesus face. See how tired he was. Look at his lips and see how thirsty he was from traveling. His disciples went into the village to buy food because they were hungry. Jesus was hungry. I think of my father working on the family farm. There were days he was so tired he could hardly walk another step by the end of day. I think of Jesus so tired from long nights in prayers and long days working with people. So, tired and yet so determined to reach out to the Samaritan people with the blessings of his eternal forgiveness and love.

When we care for people we want to grow tired and wearied praying for them and helping them to share the blessings we have in Jesus. Some of you have been praying for people in your family to come to Jesus or to grow stronger in their faith and not turn against him. Take courage from Jesus as you see him expend himself for these people. He will give you the strength to not grow weary and faint. He expended himself for you.

He asks this woman for something to drink. The woman is taken back by this request. "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" How strange it was, a Jewish man talking to a Samaritan, a Jewish man allowing a half breed to touch the water he was about to drink. This is no ordinary Jew filled with prejudice and hatred for Samaritans. This is Jesus. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus, the water of life, is there for everyone.

Jesus talks to her. He begins creating in her a thirst and longing for the water of life he has to offer. "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 give you living water." The woman was familiar with water that collected in underground cisterns, the stagnant rain water that became almost undrinkable. She knew about water that seeped into the well from underground crevices and cracks. That's how the water collected at the bottom of Jacob's well. She also knew about living water that bubbled up from ground, spring water, always cold and fresh. How can this man offer her such living water? She reminds Jesus that he does not even have a bucket and rope to lower into Jacob's well to draw out water. How can he offer her living water?

On the outside Jesus does not seem to have much to offer anyone as he sits at the well that day, tired, hungry and thirsty. He doesn't look like he has much to offer anyone as he hangs on the cross, struggling for every last breath of life, bleeding, dying, groaning on that awful tree. The preaching of the cross is to those that perish foolishness. This humble carpenter's son from Nazareth is Lord and God from all eternity. He, and only he, can offer you pardon and cleansing for sin. He is the water of life.

He reaches out to her. The Shepherd reaches out for the lost sheep with life changing words just as he does for you and me today. "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal love." Jesus is talking about life giving water. He is talking about God's eternal love that he has to offer people who don't deserve God's love because of their sin, people like you and me. That love becomes such a powerful force in our lives that it wells up to eternal life. "Nothing in all creation will ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." You can dump 50 loads of dirt on this water of life and it will keep bubbling up and flowing and sustaining and providing us peace and comfort for every day of our lives. The Lord knows how many loads of dirt you tried to dump on this love this past week, and now it bubbles up fresh and cold and pure and refreshing and life sustaining.

She doesn't get it, or maybe she is starting to think more deeply about spiritual things as she says to Jesus, "Sir give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." The woman comes to draw water in the middle of the day when others aren't around. She doesn't have many friends, and she doesn't feel very close to God because of the lifestyle she has chosen. Jesus asks her to call her husband. She tells a half truth about not having a husband. Jesus catches her in her lie and says, "The fact is that you have had five husbands, and the man you are living with is not your husband."

Is Jesus being cruel to this poor woman by exposing her sin of adultery? Listen to what the devotional booklet Meditations has to say about this in the upcoming devotion for this week Wednesday. "How easily we fool ourselves into thinking that a sinful habit or lifestyle is not big deal as long as we aren't hurting anyone." God knows what we are doing. The psalmist David who once tried to hide his sin of adultery confessed, "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me." Jesus did not use his power as God to provide himself with something to drink. He did use his power as God to look into this woman's heart and see how she was trying to cover up her sin. Imagine a jar full of old beans that has been in the back of the refrigerator for months, sealed up tight. Yes, that happened during those college days didn't it? Open the lid and be prepared for terrible stench to fill the room. God's Word takes the lid off our sin and exposes us for what we truly are. It opens our eyes and opens our hearts to see how much we need Jesus.

### **He satisfied the thirst**

How does the woman react to this man sitting at the well who knew everything she ever did in her life? She says, "I can see that you are a prophet." Old Testament prophets were given special revelations from the Lord. They could see things that ordinary eyes could not see. She asks this man she thought was a prophet, "Where should we worship, here in Samaria on Mount Gerizim or should we be worshipping in Jerusalem." Is she just raising a religious question to avoid talking about her problem of sin, or is she genuinely concerned about finding the right place to worship to deal properly with her problem of sin? It has been said that this current generation in which we are living is a deeply religious generation. There is a deep yearning to be close to God, to be loved by God and to be accepted by God. That yearning can only be found in Jesus not in other religions or in ourselves.

Oh, what beautiful words Jesus offers about true worship. "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the are the kind of worshippers the Father speaks. God is spirit and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth." The word "worship" is used nine times in these few verses. The word has the thought of bending down before someone. True worship is not found in man made religions and customs and rituals. True worship begins when we come to God in spirit and in truth. It means kneeling before God and accepting the blessings that God has to offer us. It means accepting the truth that the mighty God, the creator of the universe, offers us the gift of his Son. It means believing the truth that Jesus gives us his body and blood in bread and wine, and we receive this blessing from the Lord.

The woman expresses her hope that someday this true worship will be clear to her and to all people. "The woman said, 'I know that Messiah (called the Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'" Then her deepest longings are filled. Her thirst is quenched. Jesus says to her, "I who speak to you am he." Jesus speaks to you this morning and tells you, "I am he." I am your water of life." Amen.