

Jesus Quenches Our Thirst

- ✦ He finds the thirsty soul. (vv.1-15)
- ✦ He gives living water. (vv.16-26)
- ✦ He uses us to refresh others. (vv.27-42)

In the Name of Jesus, the soul's best Friend, dear fellow travelers with God:

If it were up to me, my sermons would last about 18 minutes. I work to fit the manuscript on a single sheet of paper, front and back. The reason I bring only the text into the pulpit is to put myself completely into God's hands. I've always believed something Pastor Don Patterson said to me when he preached here a few years ago: "The sermon belongs to Jesus." He is Lord and Master. I see the clock in back better with glasses than my old contacts, but my concern is how to fit everything in. And you won't want the sermon to end – if you feel the thirst of your soul. Some "boring" sermons I've heard, really helped me; I felt my thirst. Some great sermons missed me because I felt satisfied at the time. **Jesus Quenches Our Thirst.** As His popularity surpassed John, souls were satisfied, and Jesus left the Jordan.

✦ He finds the thirsty soul. (vv.1-15)

"Now he had to go through Samaria." (1-4) For a Jew it was like going into gang territory. Samaritans were despised as half-breeds unwelcome on Jewish land. Centuries earlier the Assyrians imported foreigners who tried to worship the LORD God with idols at the same time. These Samaritans harassed the Jews. So Jews usually travelled around, along the Mediterranean or Transjordan. No way would a Jewish man stop and have a conversation with a Samaritan woman. Especially, not one like this.

"Jews do not associate with Samaritans." (5-9) Yet Jesus was asking this Samaritan woman for a drink. Jesus is so focused on His saving mission, that He will do whatever it takes to save a single soul. If you were lost in gangland, He would look until He found you to get you out. Jesus also gives great gifts no one else can give. He said to the woman, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."* (10) Can you hear the tenderness in His voice? His invitation? Can you sense how God uses His kindness to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4) When no one else wants you, God does.

The Samaritan woman is absolutely incredulous. *"Sir, you don't even have bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this living water?"* (11-12) Jesus could have told her right away He is the almighty God, but that is not His way. He knows she's dying of thirst. And Jesus is not like us. I have to keep praying for Him to empty me of myself to fill me with Himself. **Jesus Quenches Our Thirst.**

He keeps focusing on the water of God's Word for her **thirsty soul**. *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I will give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I will give him will become in him a spring of water bubbling up to eternal life."* (vv.13-14) Now He has her attention, because she's asking, *"Sir, give me this water."* (15) My life would be much easier!

What makes your soul thirsty? As God's children, spiritual babies, we don't always know. Maybe you really went out of your way to help someone or serve some special need at church. You weren't looking for praise or thanks, but afterwards you felt a big letdown because no one seemed to notice. Or maybe someone let slip a thoughtless, negative comment. Now you're fighting hurt and anger. You're **thirsty**, my friend. Anytime our hearts and lips are not overflowing with praise, we need Jesus.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from a draft translation by the undersigned for the Wartburg Project – John.

✦ He gives living water. (vv.16-26)

Maybe you've figured out that this "*living water*" is God's Word. You may even remember the two main teachings of the Bible: Law and Gospel. After catching her with kindness, Jesus will lead on with the Law to show the woman her sin. This gets personal: "*Go, call your husband and come back here.*" "*I have no husband.*" "*You are right when you say, 'I have no husband.' You have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.*" (16-18)

How fast can you change the subject? "*Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews insist that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.*" (19-20)

Jesus is lifting her above religious arguments to sound doctrine and faithful worship. "*God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.*" (21-24)

She's like a baby troubled by a bad dream, about to put her head on God's shoulder to rest. Her heart and lips are so close to **living water**. Yet she reacts like people who hear Bible passages that prove them wrong: "*I know that Messiah is coming....When he comes, he will explain everything to us.*" Jesus now puts the cup of cool water to her lips: "*I AM the one speaking to you.*" (25-26)²

See Jesus' determination? He loves you just as deeply as He loved the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. She had nothing but sin to offer Him; neither do we. But Jesus **gives living water** to the thirsty soul. It's why He came for individuals like you and me. And as if that's not awesome enough...

✦ He uses us to refresh others. (vv.27-42)

The disciples came back, surprised at the situation, but did not question Jesus or the woman. (27) She was satisfied because she drank the "*living water*" from Jesus. Already it was bubbling up like an artesian well that could not be capped. "*The woman left her water jar.*" Back in town *she said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"* (28-30)

The disciples were so close and yet so far away from the Lord. So He keeps drawing them closer to let them feel their thirst. Then He can **refresh** them too. Jesus is training His disciples as He trains **us to refresh others**: "*My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work... 'One sows, and another reaps.' I sent you to reap what you did not work for. Others have done the hard work, and you have benefitted from their labor.*" (31-38)

Jesus' words often come to mind when I'm ministering to a dying member. Someone else baptized that baby long ago. Parents, teachers, pastors preached and counseled so many years. Here I am with the priceless privilege to usher this blood-bought soul into the presence of God! I am reaping a harvest from the labor of others who sowed the Gospel seed. Jesus loves it this way. **He uses us to refresh others.**

Samaritans from that town...said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said. Now we have heard for ourselves. And we know that this really is the Savior of the world." (39-42) First came her confession: "*Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.*" When we confess our faults, it tears down barriers. If you've made unkind comments, go back and confess. If your best efforts fell short, admit it. Drink the *living water*. "*Could this be the Christ?*" You know the answer.

Most Americans seem to relax best with a cup in hand. Add a wilderness expedition with friends and they'll say, "It doesn't get any better than this!" My dear friends of Jesus, we are in a wilderness, bound for glory in paradise. We drink together along the way as Christ's "*living water*" wells up to eternal life. It will get better. You don't have to wait and see. **Refresh others.** Enjoy now.

My sermon is done. Yours is just beginning. Amen.

² This is the first of twenty-four times John records Jesus, ἐγώ εἰμι, literally, "I am." This is Jesus' claim to be the LORD God, the eternal I AM, who met Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). Capital letters show Jesus' deity as true God. For the study behind this sermon or for copies email m.cordes@comcast.net. New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church
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