

Need a Drink? Come to Jesus!

✠ He gives living water... (vv.4-14)

✠ ...to thirsty souls. (vv.15-26)

In the name of Jesus, our compassionate, determined Savior, dearly redeemed:

Have you ever known someone who had no use for God or His Son Jesus? What a strange theme for a sermon on that subject: **Need a Drink? Come to Jesus!** We're about to meet a woman who had no desire for Jesus to come to her and even less for her to seek Him. She was filled with so much anti-Semitism that whatever Jesus had, she was certain she did not need. She would have un-friended Him in social media and made sure to unsubscribe from all His emails. **Come to Jesus** – no way! And still...

✠ He gives living water... (vv.4-14)

Have you noticed some of the folks who complain the most about bigotry and prejudice have more than enough of their own? Only one human being has ever been free from all favoritism. He's the Son of God who came to be the Savior of sinful souls who occupy 100% of all the bodies on earth. Ours too.

On the other hand, most of us have had the privilege of knowing one, maybe two rare individuals who cared about others without a care for themselves. They could give even to those who had nothing to give in return. And yet none of them could see into the future or offer what all of us really need. Here you start to understand how deep and determined is God's love for you and everyone you know.

In a way, Jesus did not need to do any of this. Why would He leave the glories of heaven for poverty on this earth? Why keep preaching when powerful enemies were lining up to kill Him for His message? As preacher, why leave adoring crowds behind for a tiring journey on foot? As a Jew, why face bigotry that wants to slap you in the face? Check the previous chapter: *"The one who comes from above is superior to everyone....He testifies about what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. The one who has received his testimony has certified that God is true....The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who rejects the Son will not see life; instead, God's wrath remains on him."* (John 3:31-36 EHV) Jesus is so sure no one can escape God's wrath without Him that He's willing to go all the way to cross. But first, *"He had to go through Samaria."* (John 4:4 EHV)

Most of the prejudice we face comes from recent problems. But the Samaritan-versus-Jew racism was seven centuries deep. Isaiah the prophet had seen the cruel Assyrian Empire deport the ten tribes of Israel's northern kingdom. In their place, Assyria imported nonbelievers who mixed their idols with worship of the true God. They rejected all the Old Testament except Moses' Five Books, the *Pentateuch*. Samaritans insisted the only right place to worship was not in Jerusalem, but at their capital of Samaria. Such a hateful feud! So why would Jesus step into the middle of that, especially tired, dusty and hungry?

We'll see when we realize why this Samaritan woman was out there by herself at such an odd hour. First, she's shocked to see a Jewish man sitting at their Samaritan well. Then he asks her for a drink! Was she scowling when she asked, *"How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?"* This must be the strangest man she's ever met. His answer makes her so curious: *"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."* Can't you just hear her saying something like, "Dude, you don't even have a bucket!" Then she jumps back to past history to humiliate him for thinking he's greater than their ancestor Jacob who gave them that deep well and used it himself. But the strange Jew is not embarrassed or finished! *Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty*

again, but whoever drinks the water I will give him will never be thirsty ever again. Rather, the water I will give him will become in him a spring of water, bubbling up to eternal life.”

What the Jews called “*living water*” was constantly moving, aerated, not stagnant like their cisterns catching rain water or worse, dead like the Dead Sea that has no outlet. But this unexpected Jewish visitor was talking about “*living water*” in a way she’d never heard before. To drink the “*living water*” he was offering meant a person would become like an artesian well that could not be capped. It would have to just keep on “*bubbling up*” with refreshment forever *to eternal life*. She wasn’t sure what he meant, but no matter how much water she drank from the well that day, she’d for sure be back.

✠ ...to thirsty souls. (vv.15-26)

“Sir, give me this water,” the woman said to him, “so I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” She was about to find out how thirsty she really was.

It’s so easy to breeze past Jesus’ simple request and miss what it says about him. Anyone could tell she was an outcast because women usually went to the well together morning and evening – not alone in the middle of the day. But how in the world could Jesus know the rest of her story?

Jesus told her, “Go, call your husband, and come back here.” “I have no husband,” the woman answered. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say, ‘I have no husband.’ In fact, you have had five husbands, and the man you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

Ever notice how quickly people start agreeing with you if you criticize yourself? Here he is agreeing with her, but how could he know her back story? Yes, how? Unless Jesus is God!

She tries to change the subject, arguing religion. Jesus keeps pointing to the heart of worshiping God from the inside out – “*in spirit and in truth.*” That’s all God wants! She can’t stand the heat and tries once more: “*I know that Messiah is coming*” (the one called Christ). “*When he comes, he will explain everything to us.*” *Jesus said to her, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”* I AM has come!

Note how the Master managed this evangelism call when all is fatigue and prejudice. He leads with a kind invitation and feeds with the “*living water*” of law and gospel. She has to feel her thirst first before Jesus can soothe her soul and make her whole. He skillfully stays on point though she’s totally out of joint. Finally he gives her to drink pure and sweet: “*I...am he.*” Your Messiah has come!

Dear friends, you just have to read the rest of the story in John 4:27-42. She just drank the “*living water*”! Watch her leave her water jar behind. See her race into town. Listen to her calling to neighbors who had no use for such a shameful woman. Hear the way she confesses everything evil about herself and everything great about the Jewish man at the well – in just two sentences: “*Come, see the man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?*” (4:29 EHV) They all followed her out to hear Jesus because she confessed, “*He told me everything I ever did.*” After listening two days, they told her, “*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.*” (4:42 EHV) Jesus quenched their ...**thirsty souls** too!

Can you taste the sweet comfort of this “*living water*” for your own thirsty soul? Whatever your guilt – Let’s be honest with ourselves! – Jesus comes in Word and sacrament to offer you refreshment and relief. He knows all about you, yet loves you anyway. He came to seek and to save the lost.

But what about our loved ones? A relative had lost her faith and kept refusing to pray with her parents, all while she was dying of cancer. My visit was so disappointing as her heart was hard and unresponsive. “Lord, I did the best I could, but you love her most of all. Have mercy on her as you’ve had on me. And send someone else to break through.” A month before she died, sweet, sweet faith returned! After her funeral her pastor said, “You would not believe who God used to reach her, the last person you’d think of for a missionary.” Thank-you, Jesus, for this **Drink** for me and for all! Amen.