

14. The Living Water

December 12, 2010

Like many of you, I like the simple taste of cool water. In a hot day, cool water quenches thirst better than anything else.

Human skin contains much water – a.k.a. ‘Body water’. For average adult male, 60% of his body weight is body water; and for adult female 55%. It is no wonder we need to be hydrated properly everyday. We need water, good water. But the most important water in our lives is ‘the Living Water.’

There are many different names and titles that point to Jesus Christ our Lord in the Bible. Just to name a few:

The True Vine; The Bread of Life; The Rose of Sharon; The Lily of the Valley; The Lamb of God; The Good Shepherd; The Way; The Light of the world; The Morning Star; The Rock, and The Living Water.

This morning we get to hang around at the well that was located in a city of Samaria, Sychar, with Jesus and an unnamed Samaritan woman and listen to their conversation.

A. JESUS AND HIS DIVINE APPOINTMENT

John 4:1-6 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.

To Jesus, it was not the time to confront the Jewish religious leaders yet. So He simply avoided them by heading up to the Galilee region by going through Samaria. There were three possible routes: along the coast, across the Jordan and up through Perea, or straight through Samaria.

No orthodox Jew would ever go to Galilee through Samaria. In fact, he would do anything to avoid that area altogether even if he had to go all the way around. The reason? Because they hated the Samaritans. They already disliked the Gentiles, but in their minds, a Samaritan was even worse, because the Samaritan was essentially a Hebrew who had intermarried with others. And so the Jews wanted nothing to do with them.

To explain this in a little more detail, the Samaritans were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, that grew out of the Assyrian captivity of the ten northern tribes in 727 B.C. Rejected by the Jews because they could not prove their genealogy, the Samaritans established their own temple and religious services on Mt. Gerizim. This only fanned the fires of prejudice. So intense was their dislike of the Samaritans that some of the Pharisees prayed that no Samaritan would be raised in the resurrection. When His enemies wanted to call Jesus an insulting name, they called Him a Samaritan in John 8.

But why in the world did Lord Jesus go through Samaria? Because He had a divine appointment with a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar.

Israel can be quite hot during summer time. As you can see on this map, Israel is about the same latitude as Sahuarita and Green Valley. So you can imagine what their summer weather is like. Jesus and His disciples had a long journey already and it was high noon which was known as the sixth hour in their local time. He was thirsty and weary. We should have been there with a couple of cold cans of Mountain Dew for our Lord Jesus, huh?

As we watch this interview between Holy God Jesus and an immoral woman, we will witness how her knowledge of Jesus increases until she recognizes Him as the Messiah.

B. BUT YOU ARE A JEW

John 4:7-10 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."

Here comes Jesus' unsuspecting appointment, carrying a water pot on her head. In those days, women normally drew water at dawn or dusk – the cooler hours of the day. It was a time to visit, to exchange the newest fashions for their sandals and purses, to idle away a little time gossiping. But this woman has come to the well at noon, the heat of the day, alone. It hints at her reputation, being loose with the men. The hot noon day sun was more bearable than the cold-shoulders and stares by other women.

It was considered totally uncool for any Jewish rabbi to speak in public to a strange woman. But our Lord could care less about the social customs for the sake of her eternal soul.

To her, it was an absolute surprise for Him to ask for a drink of water. Her life was already difficult enough, the last thing she wanted was another harassment from a Jewish rabbi.

Since apostle John wrote this Gospel at the end of his age, he could see everything with his hind sight. In results, he could add his editorials here and there. A good example can be found in the last portion of v9.

"Give Me a drink" was the Lord Jesus' way to break the ice. I am sure that you've noticed that whenever Jesus witnessed to people, He didn't use a 'sales talk', rather He employed different approaches to their comfortable levels.

In ancient times, they called spring water 'living water', because it seemed 'alive' as it bubbled up from the ground. Of course, Jesus was making a play on words with the phrase 'living water' because He meant the spiritual water that quenches our spiritual thirst and gives life. Only God's Living Water can meet human's deepest need that cannot be met by anyone or anything else. It doesn't matter with one's age, gender, or financial and educational status.

I am sure that you all remember the visitor to Jesus in chapter 3 – Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. I see a very interesting thing here:

You couldn't find two more polar opposites in human beings than Nicodemus, the Jew of Judea, and this unnamed woman of Samaria. Totally opposite from each other. Check this out:

He was a Jew; She was a Samaritan.

He was a Pharisee; She belonged to a rival religion.

He was a politician; She had no political or social status whatsoever.

He was a scholar; She was uneducated.

He was highly moral; The woman was immoral, as you will see pretty soon.

He had a name, Nicodemus; She's nameless, at least we don't know her name.

He was a man; She was a woman.

He came at night; She came at noon.

With Nicodemus, he came seeking Jesus; With this woman at the well, Jesus came seeking her in Samaria.

You've got Nicodemus that represents a group of people that no one is too high and too mighty and too lofty so as to be above the need for the Gospel. The woman represents the other side of the spectrum that can't sink too low to be noticed and wanted by Christ. Stunning in their juxtaposition to each other.

People need the Lord Jesus no matter where they are and whoever they are – whether they are highly educated, rich, moral, influential like Nicodemus, or uneducated, poor, immoral, and nobody like this Samaritan woman. Without Jesus in their lives, people are dying with spiritual dehydration and they don't even know it.

Someone said, "If our greatest need would've been for information, God would've sent us an educator. If our greatest need would've been technology, God would've sent us a scientist. If our greatest need was money, God would've sent us an economist. But our greatest need was forgiveness and so He sent us a Savior." Here's the Savior going to Jerusalem, Judea, and now to Samaria. The need is universal.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

C. ARE YOU GREATER THAN OUR FATHER JACOB?

John 4:11-15 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."

I could be wrong on this, but I believe that this Samaritan woman was rather cynical and sarcastic, when she asked Jesus a question in v11 and 12, as well as when she responded to Him in 15. It was more of 'who-do-you-think-you-are' question to put Him in His place. But the Lord responds to her by patiently appealing to her immediate physical desire for water and greater spiritual thirst.

In v15, we find her still meandering down a dead-end path in physical realm by missing Jesus' point entirely. Obviously, the seed of the Word from Jesus fell on shallow soil and didn't go anywhere.

D. YOU ARE A PROPHET

John 4:16-20 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."

The only way to prepare the soil of her heart was to plow it up with conviction. That is the reason why Jesus told her to go get her husband. He forced her to take a good long look at herself in a full-length spiritual mirror of God's law and to admit her own sin.

I don't know about you, I'd prefer not to look at myself in a mirror right after I wake up in the morning. What I see there is far worse than what I already know.

Some pastors or Bible teachers would say, "If you become a born-again Christian, you will have a better life." In response to that statement, some unbelievers would think, "I don't have a bad life. Why should I become a Christian? I am doing just fine without Jesus."

Listen, there can be no conversion without conviction. There must first be conviction and repentance, and then there can be saving faith in Christ.

Did you notice her answer in v17? For the first time, it was the shortest answer she made so far. Her motor mouth was shut, because her conscience was pricked. But she wouldn't stay there long, so she shifted her direction to more comfortable way, a semi-spiritual way, by evading Jesus' statement. But what she said only reveals her ignorance about worshiping the Lord properly.

It is like many people who are at their wit's ends. They say, "Oh, my life is crumbling, I'd better go to church. I need religion," as if that is going to appease God and give them His favor. It doesn't work that way. This situation might describe one of you. Before anything else, before you put your life in order physically, you must be right with God spiritually. Don't think that He owes you something, because He doesn't. Come to Him with humility and repentance. That is a good start.

When you come to the sense of your sin, you don't need ritual or religion, you need Jesus Christ. Religion's a joke and not a very funny one. It is far more comfortable to discuss religion than to face one's sins. God doesn't accept that.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Without Jesus in their lives, people are dying with spiritual dehydration and they don't even know it.

2) There can be no conversion without conviction. There must first be conviction and repentance, and then there can be saving faith in Christ.