

Series: Discovering God's Plan for His Church

July 21, 2019

Title: Living Water

[Slide 1]

Text: John 4:4-26

Incognito

The River of the Water of Life:

[Slide 2]

Psalm 46:4-5 NIV

*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.*

*God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.*

It is with these words that an ancient worship song celebrated the Presence of God as He dwelt in Jerusalem. The Holy Place was the Temple. River symbolized God's life-giving power and provision.

[Slide 3]

In the prophet Ezekiel's vision of a restored Temple and the renewed Presence of God, he therefore sees a river flowing from the Temple's gates:

[Slide 3]

Ezekiel 47:1 NIV

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar.

The river begins as a trickle, but it grows wider and deeper, bringing life and healing to the entire land:

[Slide 4]

Ezekiel 47:12 NIV

"Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."

It is this same River of Life that the prophet John sees in his final vision of Revelation. Having seen God's Dwelling – the New Jerusalem – descend once and for all to Earth, he then says:

[Slide 5]

Revelation 22:1-3 NIV

*Then the angel showed me **the river of the water of life**, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.*

We live in a thirsty world: How wonderful would it be to have a drink from the River of Life!

A Thirsty Stranger:

John tells us that in His travels, Jesus' journey took him to a village in the neighboring province of Samaria.

[Slide 6]

John 4:4-6 NIV

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

The little phrase "*he had to*" alerts us to the fact that this was no ordinary journey. It was, instead, commissioned by God the Father. Samaria was foreign territory for Jews. Ordinarily they avoided passing through Samaria, and took the long way around it when traveling between Jerusalem and Galilee. But the Father had a special mission for Jesus -- one that was about to unfold right at Jacob's well.

While Jesus was sitting by the well, a Samaritan woman came from the nearby village. Here is a meeting that was not happening at night like the meeting with Nicodemus, but would take place under the noonday sun. Will this unnamed woman remain as confused and clueless as Nicodemus, or will the Life that is the Light of humankind shine into her heart?

"If you knew..."

The encounter begins with Jesus asking for a drink of water. The woman is shocked at his boldness:

[Slide 7]

John 4:9 NIV

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.)

Jewish men, after all, were generally forbidden to even converse with a woman who wasn't family. And when it came to Samaritans, they were forbidden to eat or drink from any object the Samaritan had used!

Jesus doesn't bother to answer her question, however. Instead, He offers her a drink Himself!

[Slide 8]

John 4:10 NIV

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."

“If you knew...” This isn’t really a conversation about Jews and Samaritans; it’s a conversation about the River of the Water of Life that flows from the very Presence of the Father!

A New Time

Greater than Jacob?

Like Nicodemus, however, the Samaritan woman is thinking “horizontally,” not “vertically.” First, she objects that Jesus doesn’t have a rope and a bucket, so He can’t get water from the well. Then she asks if He thinks He is greater than Jacob, the patriarch of the Jewish (and Samaritan) people. He, after all, actually dug this ancient well. It is his gift of water. It’s the closest thing in her world to the River of Life.

Jesus promises her something infinitely more wonderful than Jacob’s well:

[Slide 9]

John 4:13-14 NIV

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman doesn’t get where He is going. Instead, she says:

[Slide 10]

John 4:15 NIV

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."

A Prophet?

You’ll never find the River of the Water of Life if you insist on thinking “horizontally”! And it’s just as hard for you and me to drink from that wonderful river as it was for the Samaritan woman.

To find the river, you have to *know who it is* that is offering it to you! To help her discover who He is, Jesus gives her a glimpse of His glory. He tells

her to get her husband and bring him back with her. When she says she isn't married, He tells her that she has been married 5 times and is presently living with her sixth partner out of wedlock!

Shocked, the woman exclaims: "I can see you are a prophet." (John 4:19 NIV) But she is still stuck in "horizontal" thinking. She retreats into the old, tired religious distinctions that divided Jews and Samaritans. Jesus, as a Jew, couldn't have anything to offer her – even if He were a prophet with supernatural knowledge.

A New Time:

Jesus refuses to get drawn into the religious debate. Instead He makes an astounding statement:

[Slide 11]

John 4:21-24 NIV

*"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, **a time is coming** when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet **a time is coming and has now come** when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."*

Living Water

God's Temple:

The Samaritans had their temple on Mt. Gerazim right above Jacob's well. The well was the closest they could come to water from what they took to be the Presence of God. The Jews had their temple in Jerusalem. It would be from there they believed that one day the River of the Water of Life would flow.

But now Jesus is saying that the River is already in full flood! And it isn't coming from *either* temple. It is available as His *personal* gift to not only Jews, but Samaritans (and ultimately the whole wide world!)

The experience of the Presence of God – true worship – will now happen *within us through the presence of the Holy Spirit. We become God’s Temple. The River of the Water of Life will now flow from within us!*

Messiah:

The Samaritan woman responds by stating her greatest hope:

[Slide 12]

John 4:25-26 NIV

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Your long wait is over! The Great I AM, the One True God, is present – offering you Living Water.

Living Water:

Oh to have a drink of that Living Water! The Good News is that Jesus’ offer is just as valid for you and me as it was at Jacob’s well. He is the one who said:

[Slide 13]

John 7:37-39 NIV

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Not only can we drink from the River of the Water of Life; when the Holy Spirit lives in us, we become fountains of that life-giving river! So, look away from the dry thirsty world you find yourself in. Look to Him. The River is flowing!