

Quench Your Thirst in the Living Water John 4:5-26

⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the piece of land Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there. Then Jesus, being tired from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (His disciples had gone into town to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "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." ¹¹ "Sir," she said, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this living water?" ¹² You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his animals." ¹³ Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ 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." ¹⁵ "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." ¹⁶ Jesus told her, "Go, call your husband, and come back here." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," the woman answered. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say, 'I have no husband.' ¹⁸ In fact, you have had five husbands, and the man you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true." ¹⁹ "Sir," the woman replied, "I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews insist that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But a time is coming and now is here when the real worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for those are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (the one called Christ). "When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I, the one speaking to you, am he."

It's playoff time; area high school students are playing their hearts out. They're hustling. They race down the court for a fast break. They race to get back on defense. After several minutes of playing hard, their coaches may call time out. Besides necessary instruction their coaches will give them, besides encouragement from their teammates, there's one thing they need most before getting back into the game. They need water. Their mouths are dry. Their bodies are dehydrated. They need to replenish the fluids they've been losing while hustling up and down the court. So they grab a water bottle and take a big swig. Now they're ready to get back into the game.

Water is such a necessity in life. Whether you're playing basketball or doing anything in life, you need water to survive. Besides quenching our physical thirst, our Savior shows us another thirst that we have. It's the thirst that our souls have for the spiritual water that only Jesus can supply. In a conversation he had with a woman at a well, Jesus reminds us to quench our souls in his water of life. He shows us how thirsty our souls are for this water. He then shows us that only he has the water to quench our thirsty souls. So pull up to the well and quench your thirst in your Savior's living water.

Our Savior was thirsty when he came to a famous well in Samaria. Jesus was traveling through Samaria with his disciples to get to Galilee. Our Lord was alone at the well because he had sent his disciples to a nearby town to get some food. While Jesus sat in exhaustion at the well, a woman came by to draw some water. To her surprise, Jesus asked her for a drink. The woman explained her surprise. "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" Then the Gospel writer John tells us why this surprised her. *For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.* The Jewish resentment for Samaritans takes us back over 700 years. The Assyrian army had wiped out the northern tribes of Israel. They carried most of the people away from

the Promised Land. They replaced them with citizens from different parts of the Assyrian Empire. As the years went by, those foreigners began to intermingle and marry the remaining Israelites. This resulted in a mixed race of people known as Samaritans. Because they were not pure Jews, Jewish people wanted nothing to do with them. That would explain why the Samaritan woman at the well was surprised to receive a request for a drink of water from a Jewish man.

The woman would soon learn that the Jewish traveler had special water to share with her. He told her, *"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."* His appearance as a weary traveler hid the fact that standing before her was her Lord and Savior. And what was this living water he had? With no bucket in hand, this living water couldn't come from the same well she came for water. So she asks Jesus, *"So where do you get this living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his animals."* Yes, Jesus was greater than the patriarch Jacob. And the water he was offering the woman was better than any water that came from Jacob's well. He explains, *"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."* Imagine a drink of water that would quench your thirst forever. Obviously, Jesus wasn't talking about physical water. And the woman wasn't exactly sure what Jesus meant. And if it was as great as Jesus was promoting, then she definitely wanted some. *"Sir, give me this water, so I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."*

The living water Jesus was offering the woman was not meant to quench physical thirst. So Jesus decides to show the woman just how thirsty she was for his living water. Jesus tells the woman to go get her husband. The woman then reveals to this stranger that she didn't have a husband, at least, not at this time. Jesus surprised her even further. *"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."* Now how would this total stranger know all about her? She came to a logical conclusion. *"Sir," the woman replied, "I see that you are a prophet. Only a man from God could know she had five previous husbands and that she was now living in adultery. She then states, "Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews insist that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."* Some theologians have explained the woman's statement as an attempt to change the subject. This prophet had just revealed her sin. Who would be comfortable talking about their sin? So she went back to discussing differences between Samaritans and Jews. But another explanation is that the woman was looking for forgiveness for her sin. So where is she going to find it? Up on Mt. Gerizim, where Abraham and Jacob both set up altars to the Lord or in Jerusalem at the temple where the Jews say you must worship. The point is that Jesus had just shown the woman how thirsty she is for his living water.

Our Lord showed this woman her true thirst for Jesus' living water by revealing her life of sin. The only way for us to see how thirsty we are for Jesus' living water is to recognize how dry and parched sin has left us. God once pictured our sinfulness to one of his prophets with the vision of a valley that was covered with dead, dry bones. That describes how we were born into this world. Isn't it interesting how there are certain liquids like coffee, in which the more you

drink the more you become dehydrated? The more we live in this sin-filled world with our sinful flesh we find ourselves falling into temptation again and again and again. We can never offer our God the kind of life he expects from his children. There isn't a day we don't say something wrong, think wrong thoughts, and do something that is totally wrong—things that God forbids. Things that God punishes eternally. See how arid sin leaves us. Where can we turn to refresh our souls?

We turn to the one who was offering living water to a woman at a well in Samaria. She wanted the water that Jesus was offering her soul. But she didn't quite understand how to get it. Jesus knew why. He tells her, *"You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews."* Samaritans worshiped on Mt. Gerazim, because a couple of patriarchs built altars there. But they never received direct revelation from God telling them where to worship him. But the Jews did. At Jerusalem at the temple, God commanded them to bring their sacrifices to the Lord's altar there. The sprinkling of animal blood in their worship services provided a constant reminder of what it was going to take to save them from sin. But Jesus told the woman that he was going to change things soon. *"Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem."* That change would happen when this person standing before the woman would take on the role of a high priest. He'd make only one sacrifice. He'd make his one sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He wouldn't use any animals for his sacrifice. He'd sacrifice himself. He'd pour out his own blood. The countless sacrifices made at the temple in Jerusalem did one thing. They pointed to the one sacrifice that this priest would make on the altar of a cross. Before he even reached his cross, they savagely beat him and whipped him. His own heavenly Father forsook him as well. With his mouth as dry as a broken piece of pottery, he managed to speak to the soldiers below, *"I thirst."* His suffering was deadly. His pain beyond belief. His willingness to endure all that can only amaze us at the measure of love he has for us sinners. He loved sinners like you and me and this woman standing with him at Jacob's well.

The woman had asked Jesus about worship. Was it to be done at Gerizim like Samaritans believed? Or was it in Jerusalem like the Jews claim? Jesus showed her true worship. *"A time is coming and now is here when the real worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for those are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."* True worship is found in the hearts of believers. God is spirit. He wants spiritual worship, not lip service. He wants spiritual worship that is based on truth. It's worship based entirely on God's saving word. So this woman could walk away refreshed by Jesus' living water, he revealed who he was. *The woman said to him, "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."*

Can you see what kind of worship God wants from us? He wants true spiritual worship from hearts trusting entirely on his precious promises. He wants worshippers to follow his holy word to the very last letter. He reminds our thirsting souls to be quenched in the spiritual waters of Christ. Worshiping in spirit and in truth is the only way to truly worship God. By worshiping in spirit and truth, you will quench your thirsty souls in your Savior's living water.

A woman went to Jacob's well looking for water. Waiting for her there was her Savior from sin. She returned with water that quenched her thirsty soul forever. She now had saving faith in her living Savior. Keep worshiping your Savior in spirit and in truth. You'll never thirst again.