

John 4: 1-26 Living Water: Pictures of the Gospel of Christ

I believe our passage is in a long list of the greatest stories ever told! In this story we find the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, who is ALSO the Savior of the World. And He teaches this Samaritan woman the good news of the Gospel HE brings to her AND to us. I love it! In vv. 25-26 the woman knows God will send his Messiah and she says, “**When he comes, he will tell us all things.**” To which Jesus replies, “**I who speak to you am he.**” And as we will see, this woman will come to believe in the Lord Jesus and find life, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life in this Messiah! And as with all the stories in John’s Gospel, we read in 20:31: “**These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** May it be so with us today! Today, our BIG picture is Living Water. I have 3 big truths about how living water displays the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 1) Fulfillment 2) Life 3) Abundance. And I will follow with some applications.

1. Living Water Is a Picture of Fulfillment. To me, this has become John’s specialty. He wants the Jews to know that Jesus is the fulfillment of all God’s promises in the OT. AND, this promise includes not just the Jews, but the entire world. So, before moving to living water itself as a picture of fulfillment, very briefly I want us to see the context and some other pictures in this passage that speak of fulfillment. Let’s begin with geography. Where does Jesus meet this woman? In Samaria; the woman is a Samaritan. Quick history: After Solomon, the kingdom of Israel had a revolution and divided; 10 tribes to the north and 2 tribes to the south in Jerusalem. There was always conflict between these two groups. And after many years Assyria conquers the northern kingdom and they start to replace the peoples of that region with their own citizens. And the southern kingdom around Jerusalem continues for another two hundred years. You can imagine why those down south viewed the Samaritans as idolaters and “half” Jews. To many “southern” Jews, the Samaritans were unclean. But, this area was still part of the land of Canaan given to Israel. And, it was in the town of Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

The particular place was Sychar, at “Jacob’s well.” This was very close to the place that Jacob (Israel) gave to Joseph, the place where Joseph takes his father’s bones and buries them. This pictures God’s promise to bring Israel out of Egypt back to the Land of Canaan. AND within view of Jacob’s well, there were two mountains, Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal. Mt. Gerizim was the place where Moses delivered the blessings and curses of God’s covenant with Israel (Deut. 11:29; 27:12). And, on Mt. Ebal, Moses commanded the people to build an altar (Deut. 27:4-6). This is holy Geography that screams “**God was here. God’s people were here. God’s promises came from here.**” For us it may be like going back to Plymouth Rock, or going to visit Mt. Vernon. Either way, you get the picture. All of these pictures look to Jesus as the FULFILLMENT of God’s promises. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Jesus appears at THIS place for such a conversation!

Now to our main picture: LIVING WATER. Look at vv. 13-14. Jesus tells this woman, **“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”** In the OT, ONLY God is referred to as “living water.” In Jer. 2:13 we read: **“for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”** And if we continue to read about references of living water in the OT we will find that in the “last days” God will pour out “living water” upon his people. In Is. 12:3-6 God says, **“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.”** Brothers and sisters, when Jesus meets this woman and says **“I will give you living water,”** he is also proclaiming the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel in the “*the last days*.” In v. 23 he says, **“the hour is coming and is now here . . .”** Brothers and sisters, Jesus is the greater Jacob, the TRUE “Joseph,” the voice of God from Mt. Gerizim; He is the TRUE “altar” built on Mt. Ebal. He is the TRUE “well” from whom ALL God’s promises come to the world. As “living water” Jesus IS the Fulfillment of all God’s promises.

2. Living Water is a Picture of Life. Look at v. 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.”** This woman is coming to Jacob’s well to get water. She cannot live without water. We cannot live without water. Water gives physical substance to our bodies that we may live. So, Jesus takes “physical” water to use as a picture to teach an essential spiritual truth. He says, *“Yes, drink this water and you will live . . . for now . . . but this water will only satisfy for a day or two . . . for it only will satisfy your physical body . . . and you will always need to keep drinking this water . . .”* So, in vv. 13-14 Jesus says, **“I will give you living water . . . And THIS water will truly give life . . . eternal life.”**

Brothers and sisters, *“Why does this woman . . . Why do WE need the water that Jesus must give?”* Because the “wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Brothers and sisters, the Bible says we are **“dead in our trespasses and sins”** (Eph. 2:1). Yes, we are alive today physically. But, in and of ourselves, we are just like this Samaritan woman, separated from God . . . our source of life. (Consider the dead branch I put in water.) This is one of the truths Jesus is teaching. In vv. 16-18 Jesus turns the conversation. He says, **“Go and call your husband.”** She says, **“I have no husband.”** And to her surprise Jesus says, **“You are right. You have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband.”** Here, Jesus is addressing the VERY reason this woman needs something more than physical water to give her LIFE, LIFE that ONLY the Messiah can give. In fact, as we keep on reading the passage we will see that the LIFE that Son of God gives will qualify her to TRULY WORSHIP GOD.

The Apostle Paul sums up this truth in one verse. Rom. 6:23: **“For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.”** Jesus is saying to this woman (and us), *“I AM this living water.” “I will give you life . . . life eternal.”*

Do you remember John’s previous words in 1:3-4: *“All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* A little later in John 11 Jesus will tell Mary and Martha, **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live . . .”** (John 11:25). Brothers and sisters, in our story today we only get PART of the gospel as Jesus was YET to die and rise again. But, we look back. And we know that this same Lord Jesus laid down his life on the cross . . . as the “Lamb” of God, as a sacrifice for our sins, on the cross. Now, Jesus was fully God and fully man in his conversation with this woman. But, in order to bring ETERNAL LIFE to sinners, as the Son of Man he must lay down his life for the sins of this woman . . . and for our sins today. And then He MUST rise again to be victorious! . . . which is exactly what He did to bring LIFE, life ETERNAL down to us. Heb. 1:3: **“After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . .”** Phil. 2:8-9: **“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name . . .”** Oh how beautiful is the death and resurrection of the Son of God to bring us LIFE! Today, Jesus Christ is ALIVE. And He sits at the right of the Father making intercession for you and me! And this will never end. The LIFE of the Son of God takes us all the way to heaven.

Today, if you are not a Christian, I invite you to believe on the Lord Jesus. As Isaiah says: **“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”**

And today, if you are a Christian, let me ask, *“How do we know Jesus gives life?”* Well, we have the Word! But, who else do we have? He has given us the HOLY SPIRIT. As Paul says to the Romans: *“you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God . . .”* (Rom. 8:15-16). This is LIFE! And we have this “guarantee,” this “down-payment” of what is to come! This means NOW the kingdom of God has been inaugurated. And though we live in this sinful world, we have a “living” faith, a “living” hope. And the gifts of God we have in the church are “living” gifts.

3. Living Water is a Picture of Abundance. We see this particularly in v. 14: **“The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”** And in 13: **“He will never thirst again.”** I remember living in Tatarstan . . . there were so many natural springs in the countryside. I remember the clean lake we swam in with our families fed by a natural spring. Such was Jacob’s well to this woman (I read that there is still water coming from that well today). Brothers and sisters, the wells of this world will run out. But, the life and the

blessings of the Son of God will never cease; for they flow from God Himself, who is “living water.”

A good example of this truth is found in Ezekiel 47. In this chapter, Ezekiel sees a vision of the temple in Jerusalem. And as he enters, water begins to flow. And as he walks around the water rises; it rises until there is a river that cannot be “passed through” (47:5). This is an abundance of water flowing through the temple. Brothers and sisters, this isn’t a picture of the physical temple in Jerusalem. What does it picture? It pictures the Messiah. And who is He? He is the temple of God. And all the blessings of God flow from HIM to the world. This blessing isn’t merely for this woman, or for his disciples, or for the Jews, but for the entire world.

Today, ALL the blessings of God for life and godliness come down to us in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ! ALL the treasures of God come down to us in HIM! And they will never end! For Jesus is eternal. His person is eternal. His work is eternal. Only in Him can we find the abundance of God’s blessings.

Let me finish with some applications.

Application: Jesus does not find his church as beautiful. He makes it beautiful. This woman came to the well in the middle of the day by herself. I believe the entire town knew who she was (married 5 times and now living with a man, etc. Jesus does not find you and say, “What a godly person. I think I like him. No! When He comes to us, we are sinners, separated from God, wandering about in self-righteousness, even God’s enemies. Tit. 3:4-5 says: **“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit . . .”** Jesus came that we might have life, and have it in abundance!

Application: Eternal life is a gift. Look at v. 10: **“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.”** As Eph. 2:8-9 says, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”**

Application: We do not discriminate when it comes to the power of the gospel to save! Jesus was not afraid to break social barriers in the pursuit of his mission. In John’s story we move from Nicodemus the most learned, the most wealthy, the most prominent “Jewish” man . . . to a half-breed Jew and the lowest of cultural society as an adulterer. If there was ever a “state” of ritual uncleanness to the Jews, it was a Samaritan woman! (If there was ever a greater race it was the “Jews.” Why? Because salvation comes through the Jews (See Eph. 2). But, Paul’s point in Rom. 1-2 is that ALL are EQUAL as sinners from Adam, no matter what race. No one has a “corner” on the market of the Holy Spirit! Therefore, we must not, we cannot, discriminate.

Application: Geography has nothing to do with true worship (See 4:19-26). She was all about Samaritan vs. Jew and the proper place of worship. But, because of Jesus, where do we worship today? We worship in China Grove. Christians worship all over the world as they gather in churches. How can we do this? Why do we not need to for Jews to rebuild their temple and for us to go there. Because Jesus is the TRUE temple. Jesus is the true altar. As Moses delivered the blessings and curses of the Law on Mt. Gerizim and built the altar on Mt. Ebal, today those who worship God will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

Application: Jesus will build his church. How do we know? 1) He tells us (Matt. 16:18). 2) He gives his church Life, Power. This is the Holy Spirit. And now WE ARE THE TEMPLE! Think back to Ezekiel's water flowing from the temple.

Application: Another major theme in this passage which I only hinted at is the idea of "renewal" and "restoration." Because of the person and work of Christ the Kingdom of God has come. Christ is reigning from heaven. Yes, sin, the devil, and this evil world remain and the consummation of the kingdom still awaits. But, for us as Christians NOW, Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:17: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation . . ." This means that NOW, we have the Holy Spirit. And, we can and will endure to the end. And NOW, in the midst of suffering, persecutions, afflictions, etc., the Holy Spirit works powerfully in us.

Let me finish today with the words of Paul to the Corinthians. In 2 Cor. 4:7-18: **"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."**