

John 4:5-26 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹ 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.) ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ 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." ¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." ¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ 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. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." ²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Find living water for your thirsty soul

1. our need for the water of life
2. Only the water of life can quench our thirst permanently
3. Jesus is the Messiah

Water. Do you ever think about how important it is to us? Think of your bathroom. We wash our hands with water, take a shower with water, brush our teeth with water and flush the toilets with water.

Think of your kitchen. We cook our meals with water. We wash our dishes after the meal with water. We wash the counter and tables with water. We scrub the floors (Well, I don't but Connie does) with water. The dishwasher uses water and the ice-maker in the fridge uses water.

Not only do we use water, we are water. I remember an old Star Trek show where the alien they encountered called the people, "Ugly bags of mostly water." That is a good description of us. We are big bags of water, so we need water to survive. In fact, a person could go weeks without food but only a few days without water. Not only is that true physically; it's true spiritually. We need to find living water for our thirsty souls.

Ah, love! What a thrill to fall in love. It makes us feel like we are really somebody because that special person loves us. But for some people such emotional highs can become a crutch. They go from relationship to relationship because they are using that emotional feeling to quench their spiritual thirst. But it doesn't quench their thirst and the sin leaves them even more thirsty.

Relationship hopping isn't the only lifestyle people use to keep spiritual thirst at bay. The busyness of people in our society today is another lifestyle that many use to quench their spiritual thirst. Again, nothing wrong with being active. But many people can't be comfortable with doing nothing. It's that quiet time alone with themselves that they can't stomach. They need busyness to feel fulfilled. Without busyness, they begin to feel their spiritual thirst. And they don't want to feel that.

The woman in our text apparently was using that relationship hopping to deaden her spiritual taste buds. She was filling the emptiness inside with the emotional highs of new relationships.

What sin would Jesus expose if he was having a candid conversation with you? Do you, like the woman, play fast and loose with relationships? Is the person you spend overnights and weekend getaways with not your spouse? Would Jesus talk to you about what you watch on your laptop or phone? Would he ask about how you treat your classmate?

Would he bring up the way you gossip about others? Or are you perhaps like the disciples who must have walked right past that woman on their way into town to buy dinner, but instead of engaging her as Jesus did, ignored her. Can there be any doubt that we are spiritually dehydrated? We need of the water of life.

But our sins have poked holes in our soul. No matter what we pour into our souls, our thirst doesn't go away. We never completely feel that sense of peace and fulfillment. We never really get rid of that guilt. We try to pretend that everything is all right. We are like that athlete who, after losing, said he didn't care if he won; he was just happy to compete. Of course, he cared; he's lying to himself and others. So, we, too, lie to ourselves as we sit on our comfortable couches and say that everything is fine with my life, but we are thirsty. Down deep we know that we need something. We need life, real life.

Thirst is a powerful human drive. It drove this woman to Jacob's well each day to do the hard work of lowering her jar down and pulling it back up again and carrying it back home. She would do that day after day after day. And apparently, she did it alone. Because of her lifestyle, she was an outcast. She went to the well alone because the other women of the village wouldn't be seen with her. She needed the water of life.

Of course, the woman thought Jesus was talking about some sort of magical water that would quench her physical thirst forever. Aren't we like that woman? When we turn to Jesus, we want him to take away our physical ailments and shortcomings. We want him to fill our bank account and guarantee a pain free life. That's why Jesus told the woman to come back with her husband. He wanted to prick her conscience to realize that sin was the biggest problem in her life. He wanted her to see how much she needed living water. He wants us to realize that, too. He wants us to thirst for life.

Maybe we think that because we are "church people," we don't really have that need. But if we rely on the trappings of worship, we are deflecting Jesus just like this woman tried to do. She deflected Jesus' probing questions by asking about the place of worship. *"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."* People have worshiped God in many ways. Some worship in complete silence. Others worship with a great deal of sound. Some use a liturgy, others don't. Is there a right or wrong way to worship?

Sure, there is, just as worship on Mt. Gerizim was not the proper place of worship. But such questions are just as misplaced as the Samaritan woman's question. More important than the outward form of worship is the inward attitude of the heart. Without personal worship in the heart, what takes place at the church altar is not worship.

We must thirst for the water of life. A thirsty soul is a soul that wants to learn the truth about God, that wants to worship the true God. A thirsty soul is a soul that wants to have a real relationship with God. A thirsty soul craves the forgiveness of sins. We can won't find the water of life in how we live or by how we worship. Only Jesus can give that to us.

That's what Jesus was giving to this woman at the well. After he helped her see how truly thirsty for life she is, he gave her the water of life. *The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."* Jesus gave her the water of life. He gave her himself. He gives us himself. He fills us abundantly with the full cup of righteousness earned by his life and death. He fills us so completely with life that it overflows into eternity. *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.*

In the verse before our text, John recorded, "Now he had to go through Samaria." (John 4:4) No, he didn't. In fact, when traveling from Judea to Galilee, Jews typically went around Samaria. He didn't have to go through Samaria because it was the only way to get where he was going. He had to go through Samaria, because he knew this woman and others were there who were dying of thirst. He had to go there to give them the water of life.

He wants us to have the water of life, too. So, he pours that out to us in so many ways: Word, water, bread and wine. Drink it in. Drink the water of life offered free to all and believe Jesus' promise, *"Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* I never thought "welling up" communicated very well what Jesus really said here. It is the same word used of the healed cripple jumping to his feet. I think the better translation, therefore, would be "bubbling up."

Therefore, my prayer today is that you are a bunch of Bubblers, that is, people who have realized their spiritual need, drank from the water of life and are bubbling with that life. May that life bubble up to eternity.

Water – we need it. We can't live without it. Living water – we need it. We can't live without it. May we thirst for the water of life and may we find in Jesus living water for your thirsty soul.