

“Living Water”
John 4:4-15
(Preached at Trinity, March 7, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we saw last time, Jesus coming to this Samaritan woman was by Divine appointment. John uses a verb: “expressing compulsion, necessity, or inevitability”
There were several issues that made this meeting with the Samaritan an unlikely event.
 - A. First, she was a Samaritan. John reminds his readers: **John 4:9 NAU** - "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."
 - B. Second, she was a woman. It was not customary for a man to engage in conversation with a woman.
 - C. Third, she was an immoral woman and it would seem everyone knew it.
2. Jesus arrives and sits by the well. The stage is set. The moment ordained from all eternity is near. If it were a movie the tensions would be rising, the musical score increasing in intensity.
Soon the Samaritan woman approaches to draw water and Jesus speaks.
In the imperative Jesus says to her, “Give Me a drink.”
Surprised by His address she replies, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?"
3. The amazing thing about this scene is the Samaritan supposed that she was in the position as the supplier; that Jesus was the one in need since she had the vessel of water and He did not. In reality, Jesus possessed the water that she was in need of – He was the true Fountain. He alone could supply this water.
4. Like with His dialogue with Nicodemus in **Chapter 3**, Jesus answers with words that were beyond her comprehension, but that would change her life.
John 4:10 NAU - "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."
5. Like with Nicodemus, Jesus shares with her some important elements of the Gospel.
 - A. It's the greatest of all gifts – **John 3:16**
It is the gift of eternal life through God's own dear Son.
It was unconditional—The woman did not deserve it and could do nothing to earn it. The nature of a gift is it is something that is voluntarily given without any expectation of payment in return.
Jesus said, “If you knew the gift of God. . .” – Of course, she did not know this gift.
 - B. It is founded upon a particular person:
"and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,'"
 1. Jesus turns her attention upon Himself. “Give Me a drink.” “Look to Me.”

2. She didn't know Him. She could only see that He was a Jew—one who despised Samaritans.
"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)"
Verse 12 - "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You"
3. Later she admitted that He might be a prophet.
John 4:19 NAU - "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."
4. She was completely blind to Jesus as Savior.
5. Nicodemus, a Pharisee and teacher of the Jews also failed to comprehend who Jesus was. He saw Jesus as a great teacher and miracle worker but not the Savior.
John 3:2 NAU - "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."
6. Everyone has their opinion of who Jesus is. Jesus asked His disciples:
Matthew 16:13-14 NAU - "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."
7. The issue between life and death is do you know Him. Jesus asked His disciples:
Matthew 16:15 NAU - "But who do you say that I am?"
Peter answered:
Matthew 16:16 NAU - "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
8. Such knowledge does not come naturally to fallen man.
To Peter Jesus declared:
Matthew 16:17 NAU - "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."
To Nicodemus:
John 3:3 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
John 3:6-7 NAU - "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"
9. Jesus revealed Himself to Nicodemus as Savior upon whom we must look to deliver us from the terrible, deadly, venomous sting of sin.
10. Now Jesus is about to reveal Himself to this Samaritan woman. From Him flows springs of living water.
John 4:10 NAU - "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."
11. Like Nicodemus, she was oblivious to the spiritual realities of Christ. She could only see through her physical understanding.
This Samaritan woman had come to draw water and nothing else. This was her mission. It was the focus of her thoughts.

- A. Her answer was almost mocking. This well was over 100 feet deep. How was Jesus going to supply her with living water when He didn't have any means of bringing it up? He had just asked *her* for water.
John 4:11 NAU - "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?"
- B. Jesus' answer didn't help her comprehension:
 From her understanding living water referred to flowing water, water that flowed from an underground spring. How could Jesus reach the flowing water without the means of drawing it. Jesus tells her that this water He is referring to provides permanent relief to the thirsty and is the source of everlasting life. All that she could see was the temporal blessing of not having to travel from the city each day to draw water.
John 4:13-15 NAU - "Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."
12. Can we comprehend and marvel at the glory of these living waters?
- I. This water finds its source in Christ
 "but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him"
- A. Jesus alone is the source of life
John 14:6 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."
1. The Gospel always maintains a focus upon Christ
Romans 11:36 KJV - "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."
Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
 2. The Gospel always becomes perverted when it fails to keep the centrality of Christ. Every other focus must be set aside.
 3. This Samaritan woman had to see beyond her need for physical water and see the infinite value of Christ alone. At first, she sees nothing extraordinary about Jesus
John 4:12 - "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You"
 The question implies a negative answer – "No."
 4. The Samaritan failed to comprehend that as great as Jacob and Jacob's well might be, the water that it provided would only quench thirst for a moment. Her need was not for natural water but for the water of life.

- B. The Gospel demands that Jesus be received as the source of life
1. It demands acknowledgement of need
 - a. This was the teaching to Nicodemus. Only those in the wilderness smitten by the serpents looked to the serpent lifted up by Moses. As with the serpent in the wilderness we must turn our eyes to Him
John 3:14-15 NAU - "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."
 - b. The woman had to move from a desire for temporal relief to a desire for relief from her sin.
John 4:25-26 NAU - "The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."
John 4:29 NAU - "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done"
 3. Nicodemus was religious and upstanding while this woman was an immoral Samaritan – both were equally in need of Jesus. Both had to acknowledge their need
Isaiah 55:1 NAU - "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost."
Isaiah 55:6-7 NAU - "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."

II. To what does this water refer?

- A. The Bible describes it in various ways
1. It refers to the life-giving flow of the blood of Christ. Jesus satisfies our greatest need.
John 6:35 NAU - "Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
Ephesians 1:7 NAU - "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"
1 Peter 1:1-2 NAU - "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure."

2. It also refers to the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit as Living Water
John 7:38-39 NAU - "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified."
 3. It also refers to the sanctifying power of the Word of God
Ephesians 5:25-26 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,"
- B. This life-giving water is a never-ending stream
John Owen – “The idea is, that when once received into the soul, this water becomes a perennial fountain, whence issue living streams to gladden and refresh God’s children forever. Hence there is no occasion for a second supply, the soul being incapable of further thirst by the never-failing fountain of spiritual life within.” ¹
- III. Let’s consider the blessing of the life-giving water
- A. The blessing of eternal life
1. Christ provides the permanent solution to our true need
Verses 13-14 NAU - "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst"
 2. Jesus provides the life-giving blood of the cross
“but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."
- B. The blessing of a new life now
1. The woman returned to her city as a new creature in Christ. All of her focus was now on Jesus
John 4:28-29 NAU - "So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?"
 2. She became as the one described in Psalm 1
Psalms 1:3 NAU - "He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers."
 - a. The Christ-centered life continually draws fresh spiritual life and vitality from God’s Word, the inexhaustible river of water
 - c. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “living water” who continually brings refreshing life to the believer
John 7:38-39 NAU - "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive

¹ John J. Owen, *A Commentary, Critical, Expository, and Practical, on the Gospel of John*, (New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1861), 70.

Conclusion:

1. Coming to Christ demands that we are thirsty. The Samaritan woman began as one thirsty for her daily supply of physical water, but before Jesus was through she developed a thirst that only Christ could satisfy.
2. This isn't a statement of condition. It isn't placing spiritual thirst as a condition for coming to Christ, as if a person should seek to be thirsty. It is simply a statement that those who come to Christ desire Him. Without this thirst we would never seek relief.
3. This desire comes from God. By His Spirit He gives us an unquenchable thirst – in the Gospel we find Christ all-sufficient – "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."