

If only you knew

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Let's begin our day in prayer.

Dear heavenly Father and most gracious and holy Lord, we thank thee, Lord, for the freedom to come here today. We thank thee, Lord, and in this nation that we live there may be things that we hear each day that are very troubling to our hearts and to our souls. But, Lord, thou art faithful. Thou art faithful to provide a place. Thou art faithful to bring thy people together. Thou art faithful to provide. Lord, we ask this hour now and the hour to come that thou would make provision for our souls, that, Lord, thou would, indeed, breathe on us thy life, breathe into us thy life. Awaken us, Lord, from slothfulness. Awaken us from the thoughts of ourselves. And, Lord, may you take our minds and may you prepare them to hear thy Word. Lord, I pray and I ask that thou would come with power to our souls this day to the praise and glory of thy name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

I would like to begin today, if you would with me, turn to John four, the gospel according to John chapter four. We will read the beginning of this chapter until we come to settle in the verse the Lord has laid on my hear this morning to speak from.

As we are going through the first part of John four, by way of introduction, my hope and prayer for you this morning is that you see God's providence, that you see how God is working throughout this whole part here. I will make a couple of comments as we come up to our main verse today, but beginning in John four we hear:

“When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John...”¹

An untrue statement, but a statement that the Pharisees believed to be a truth and their anger was kindled against the Lord again. And because of the anger of the Pharisees Jesus departed, as you will see.

(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

¹ John 4:1.

And he must needs go through Samaria.²

That was the journey. That is the place. He must go through Samaria to get back to Galilee. But the Lord had another reason in his perfect providence. He had his children there. I don't just say his child there, because we know that there were many there that day that the Lord revealed himself to.

“...he must needs to through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.”³

Three thousand years earlier we have this act in God's historical providence, that he preserved for this day. And on this parcel of land there would be dug a well. And we see that in verse six.

“Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.”⁴

From the Old Testament we learn that the time that the ladies went out to gather water was always in the evening hours, away from the heat. But this was in the middle of the day. The Lord came in the sixth hour. It was a time of extreme heat, a time that the heat would lend to his weariness. And there just happened to be a woman come to the well that day. That is how the Lord draws his children. He must needs go there to meet her in his appointed time. And that is what we have before us today. The Lord meets us in his appointed time.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.⁵

And then we come to our focal verse this morning, Jesus' answer to that question.

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”⁶

Before us this morning we have two parts to this verse. We have two things at the beginning of this verse. The Lord says:

² John 4:2-4.

³ John 4:4-5.

⁴ John 4:6.

⁵ John 4:7-9.

⁶ John 4:10.

“If thou knewest the gift of God...”⁷

What is it that this woman did not know? We are told in a few verses of what a religious woman she was, how she worshipped what she thought was the Lord, how she even says in 25:

“The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ.”⁸

She knew of him. She worshipped in a worship, worshipping and looking for the day of Christ and yet he came to her and he did not know her. She did not know him. She...

“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink...”⁹

Right before us we have two things that she did not know. She did not know the gift of God which we will look at and she did not know the person of Christ. But yet she professed to. Yet she professed a knowledge. She professed of knowing something of the Messiah. And this is preserved for us today by the Holy Ghost to show us something about every elect child of God. That song was very appropriate this morning, because without the breath of God, without the Holy Spirit giving life and renewing and reviving us again, we don't know him either. And we don't know the gift of God.

So first we look this morning at what is the gift of God. Paul defines it for us this way in Romans 6:23.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”¹⁰

Let that one sink in a moment.

“If thou knewest the gift of God...”¹¹

Do you know this morning that the gift of God is eternal life in his Son and through his Son? We have had so many things that has beset this little flock lately. Do you know how many times I have sat back after the situation or after being tried in my soul and that thought has come to me. Lord, if I only knew. Oh, I know it up here. She knew it up here, but she doesn't know it in her soul. We don't know it in our soul unless the Lord fills our soul. We can know it up here. We can know it and we know that it is in the Word of God and we can turn right to know the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ. But I put forth to you today. Unless the power of God is behind it to your soul, it will be head knowledge. That is what it is for her. If you do...

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John 4:25.

⁹ John 4:10.

¹⁰ Romans 6:23.

¹¹ John 4:10.

“If thou knewest the gift of God...”¹²

Jesus said in John 6:47:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”¹³

In John 10:28 he says:

“And I give unto them eternal life.”¹⁴

He is the life giver. You know, one of the things the pastor said last week in his sermon that really resonated with me and really some of you may have missed it. Some of you might have took issue with it. But when he said as humbly as it was he said, “You know, I don’t get caught up in differentiating between the three parts of God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.” You can get very... you know, the theologians do this all the time. What part does what? And they miss something. What do they miss? They miss the almighty God. Man is always trying to understand how things work. We take things apart to find out how they work, but without the enlightening of God and without the Holy Spirit coming to our soul, we can’t even know the gift of God.

Everyone to a person in this room would say, “Yes, I understand that eternal life is a gift of God. And it is given through his Son.”

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”¹⁵

And we know that, but then when we are tried on that and the situation gets tough and the scares and the fears come into our soul, all of a sudden we don’t know the eternal life. We don’t know the gift of God. Sin has come in and marred that thought and it always will. That is why the child of God is so dependent upon his Lord to breathe life into. And it is not just life one time. It is ongoing life. That is the life of Christ is an ongoing living life. It is the living sustenance of the child of God that as he is down here and he is going through all of the hardships in this world, only the Lord can take him above it all. Only the Lord can show him that eternal life is in his Son and it has been accomplished and it has been applied and it has been shown and it is being lived through the power of the Holy Ghost.

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.”¹⁶

But what about Jesus’ definition? What about what did Jesus say eternal life was?

¹² Ibid.

¹³ John 6:47.

¹⁴ John 10:28.

¹⁵ John 6:47.

¹⁶ Ibid.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”¹⁷

Well, wait a minute. She knew about the Messiah. Didn't she have eternal life? Didn't she know about eternal life? Well, no. Jesus just told her, “You don't know the gift of God. Yes, you are my elect child and yes I did come here today to reveal myself to you. And all this time you have worshipped what you know not what,” Jesus said later. “You worship what you know not what.”

Many times we come here lifeless and we worship what we know not what. And that is an easy thing. We can open our Bibles and read it and have no life giving principle in it at all. And we can try to ascent to some kind of head knowledge and study a little deeper to find out what this word mean and what the Greek said in this and what the Jewish person historian said in this. What does it matter? It matters to your head, but what about your soul?

“If thou knewest the gift of God...”¹⁸

But right before Jesus said that in John 17:3 he said something in John 17:2 equally important. He tells us how we get this gift of God.

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”¹⁹

Absolute sovereign election, absolute sovereign grace of God right there. You want to know how you know the gift of God? It must be given through the Son by his electing grace. And, see, that is what he teaches the child of God. He teaches them that it is not the will of the creature. He shows you that it is not by your will, but thy will, Lord. It is not by what you have done. It is not by anything that you have merited.

See, when we are left to ourselves in this head knowledge, do you know what comes up then? Arminianism. Arminianism seeps in to what we can do, what our will can do, what we can do for God. Pharisaism comes in and we start to point at everybody else and how far short they fall and we start to pump our own selves up. Duty comes in to what we have to do, what we must do, what we ought to do.

I want you understand. The thing that the Lord said to her out of great love, you show me where he says that she ought to have known this. Sometimes I catch myself. I think when my children or my wife comes and wants to talk to me about something on the spiritual realm and I think, wow, this is something you ought to know. We have preached about this. I have preached about this. We have talked about this. But Jesus doesn't say what you ought to know. He said, “If you knew, if only you knew.”

¹⁷ John 17:3.

¹⁸ John 4:10.

¹⁹ John 17:2.

Well, Lord, how is that we know? We are dependent upon thee.

The apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:5:

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.”²⁰

Has that been shown to you? Because all of this striving and all of this looking and all of this trying to find and attain to something must be put to death in every child of God. He is found where he is seeking. It is his work. He brings every child... and that is what you are going to see at the rest of this verse. There is no wavering in the Lord’s gifts. There is nothing, nothing lacking in our Lord, nothing supposing that our Lord will do it. No, it is what he has done.

I like what she says in verse 20.

“Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”²¹

But she is a religious person. This is... she knows that ever since that well was dug, there has been a people there that have sought after this Messiah and she is sitting here waiting for him.

“I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.”²²

And that day he told her all things. He told her all things pertaining to him, what he has done. And that is what he tells his people. That is what he teaches his people, what he has done. Without his power, without the power of the Holy Ghost, without the preserving grace of God the Father, we are left to our minds to wander. We are left to follow paths that are not pleasing to him until he weans us from those paths, until he puts an end to those paths, until he brings us to him.

Oh, dear ones, if we only knew the gift of God. If we only knew the power of his eternal life. Do you believe that? Do you understand what a remedy that is to life? Do you understand what a remedy that is to the trials we have in this life, the afflictions we have in this life? If we only knew. If only the Lord would come and show us. And he does in his time.

But, see, that is only the first part, knowing that the gift of God is eternal life in Christ. As Jesus said, “If you knew the gift of God,” but he didn’t leave it there. He said:

“...and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink.”²³

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:5.

²¹ John 4:20.

²² John 4:25.

See, that is the sad thing here, too, is she did not understand the person of Christ that stood in front of her. She did not know him as an intercessor. She did not know him as a mediator. She did not know him as her shepherd. She did not know him. She knew him by name and that is the thing that is in this world today so prevalent in this nation.

I listen and I read a lot of things. And the thing that is lacking the most is to me is an understanding of soul knowledge in Christ. There is a lot of head knowledge out there. There is a lot of preaching that says this is what Christ is and this is who he is. Now follow him. But that is deadness. It is absolutely deadness to tell somebody that they have power that they don't have. But our sufficiency is in the Lord. Our power is from the Lord. And, you know, we can't make any request of our Lord until he is known, until we know who it is that saith to me, "Give me to drink," who it is that saith to thee, "Be still, peace, be still," who it is that saith to thee that he is my shepherd, that I shall not be in want. It is a sad thing to not know the Lord in this way and to know him just in an ever endless, tiring never quenching thirst to keep knowing more about his life, what he was as a boy, what he did here on earth. It is what he has done, what he has done for your souls. And if that soul has not been awakened, that soul, if the life is not the life in the soul...

And that is what... the gift of God is. It is the life of God in the soul. That is what the child of God desires. From the moment he is quickened, quickened from death, he wants to know and he wants to feel and he wants to experience what life is. And that life is only in the one who has it.

In Luke 24:31 Jesus at the end of talking to the two on the road to Emmaus said:

"And their eyes were opened."²⁴

He didn't say this, but the Word of God preserved it.

"And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."²⁵

That I when they were all talking. They said, "Didn't it burn within us when he was talking to us?" But they didn't know it was Christ. And then when he opened their eyes and he opened and gave them understanding they knew that it was him. They understood it wasn't just him in their head. It was him in their soul. And that made the difference. But don't discount the rest of that verse either, because that shows you about our life, doesn't it? And then he vanished out of their sight.

There is a little microcosm of our life here, our struggle with the flesh and the spirit, our struggle with every day life. Seems to vanish. It vanishes because of unbelief. It

²³ John 4:10.

²⁴ Luke 24:31.

²⁵ Ibid.

vanishes because of sin. Vanishes to us means we don't see him. He is there, but we don't see him.

Matthew 11:27 says:

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”²⁶

This is the person of Christ revealing himself, but not revealing to the head. Do you use that? Do you see that she has had that revelation for a long time? Do you see that she knew that the Messiah was coming? But yet he stood in front of her and she had no idea it was him. The two on the road had no idea it was him. Mary had no idea it was him till she heard his voice.

You and I are the same way. We have no idea he is there. We have no idea he is there with the gift of faith until we hear his voice. We have no idea he is there. We may have a notional ideal, well, yeah, he is going to come. And then we go on about with the next sentences, but, boy, I tell you. I mean, what I am going through, he needs to come quick or he needs to hurry up or he needs to do this.

“... he must needs go through Samaria.”²⁷

That was the appointed hour. All of her life she worshipped in this mountain. All of her life she waited for this day, this day that actually came to her face to face. The child of God, it comes to you face to soul. The Lord reveals his face to your soul.

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink.”²⁸

What two piercing thoughts. We can't go on to the rest of the verse. We can't go on, the Lord says, until you know these things. You want to know how faith is given? You want to know how the living water comes? It comes this way. No other way. It doesn't come by books. It doesn't come by striving. It doesn't come by performing the law. It doesn't come by duty. It comes by the power of God.

“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink.”²⁹

This is the life of God in the soul.

But now we go on. These things are known if the Lord is pleased to reveal himself this way to you, when the Lord reveals this way to his children. Something comes out of that,

²⁶ Matthew 11:27.

²⁷ John 4:4.

²⁸ John 4:10.

²⁹ Ibid.

something called living faith, something called a living prayer, something called the life of God in the soul that comes out of the soul of the child of God. Do you see? Do you hear what Jesus is saying?

“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him.”³⁰

And you sit there and you say, “Oh, if I could just ask more.” You will ask when he reveals himself. Jesus says it right here. This is the power that is born from above. This is the eternal life that I give to the soul. This is the power to know the person of Christ. And when that power is given, the child of God cries out in prayer and cries out in the faith given from above and says, “Lord, help me. Lord, show me.”

Lord, all these petitions that we make for the child of God... have you ever stumbled over Matthew 7:7?

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”³¹

Of course, when I was little I was told, yeah, that is all you got to do. What a crock that was. I did it many times. I didn't get anything. I asked for many things as a child and I closed my eyes and I would open up and they didn't appear to me. So I knew right then something was definitely wrong. I mean, maybe I didn't know the depth of it now.

See, that is creature first. Oh, if you ask. Like the Lord is sitting up there going, “You know what? I don't know what you have need of. So I tell you what. Whatever you ask, I will give you. Whatever you seek, you do. Whatever you knock, it will be open to you.”

Have you ever knocked on doors that didn't open to you? I have. But I can't say that in the progression of the Lord's Word here, knowing the gift of God and knowing the eternal life in his Son and knowing the sufficiency in Christ and knowing the person of Christ, knowing him as my mediator who goes before the Father, knowing him as my intercessor who makes prayers and supplications for me, knowing him as my priest, knowing him as my prophet, knowing him as my king, I can't say that I have ever been denied. But was it me? Or was it my Lord lifting me? Was it my Lord making intercession for me as he does? Was it my Lord saying, “This is what you have need of”?

Yes. And the storehouses are open.

“...thou wouldest have asked of him.”³²

And these two things go together here.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Matthew 7:7.

³² John 4:10.

“...thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”³³

The living water takes us right back to the gift of God. The living water is God in Christ and the Holy Spirit in your soul. It is the life of God, the triune God in your soul. That is what the living water is.

And do you use what the child of God is brought to ask for? It is not a new car. It is not a new house. It is not a better dog. He is brought to ask from the storehouse of the Son all the graces of the Spirit, all of the faith, all of the peace, all of everything that is in Christ. The child of God is brought to ask. And when he is brought to ask he is not denied, never denied.

“...thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”³⁴

She is going to go from here to the physical realm. She is going to start saying, “Lord, give me this water that I don’t have to come to this well any more.”

Is the where you are today? Do you still understand this by the letter of the word? Oh, Lord, breathe on it. Breathe on our souls. If only we knew. If only we know this hour the power of God in our souls, then we would ask of him and he would give us living water. Oh, the living water.

That is a powerful thing. Every day of my life I am in need to be revived. You know, I was challenged by that statement and I can’t even remember who made it. It might have been Bradbury. It might have been Philpot. But I remember the very first time I read it. And that statement was, “I am just as in need of the Holy Ghost today as I was at the day of regeneration.” That is a statement, because the day of regeneration... that is the day of new birth. That is the day of... that is when you were quickened. You were dead in trespasses and sin. But, see, I am with them. I don’t want to know of the Lord who makes me alive and then leaves me there to find my way. And that is popular religion today. Oh, he made you alive one time. Now you have got the power. Go live it. Go do it. That is the faith and everything was given to you that one day. Now go on out and live in Christ.

I don’t know about you, but I need power every day. I need this life in my soul every day. I need the Lord to breathe on me as living breath. And I need the Lord to show me what this living water is every moment, every hour. I have... about myself I know that when I am left to myself and I feel like I am full of the Lord, I am going to fall again because my eyes aren’t totally off of him and back to me again and my sufficiency.

Oh, Lord, you truly are my sufficiency. When I read a verse like this and it comes so powerfully to my soul there is a lot of conviction there. But there is a lot of, Lord, undertake for me. Lord, show me the gift of God. Show me who it is that says to me that you are my shepherd. Show me, Lord, who says that I am the vine. Show me, Lord, that I

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

am a branch. Shoe me, Lord, that I need thee every hour. That is what vital godliness is in the soul. You can have all what you have to do. You can have your oughts. You can have your duties. You want to talk about those things, go talk to somebody else. I am weary of them. I am weary of fighting those things. Give me this, Lord, who brings me to himself and says, "If you ask me, I will give thee living water."

And that living water is shown in verse 14 where he says:

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."³⁵

Oh, Lord, fill me. Fill my soul with you. Fill my soul, Lord, with that living water that I don't deserve this world and that I don't seek after the things of this world and that, Lord, I never thirst for them either. I desire to thirst for thee, Lord, but I know that that desire must come from above.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."³⁶

You know, I think about fountains. I have seem some fountains now. I have seen Old Faithful, which isn't very faithful all the time, either. It doesn't always come. But the Lord is faithful. But I think of that terminology springing up. And I think of it, if it is going up, it must have started down. And I think of it like a constant springing up. But as it is going up, it comes down, too. And I think of my life that way. I think of when the Lord is in his sustaining power and that communion is not broken by sin and it is not broken by the world and it is not broken by all the outside influences. That fountain is so strong and I can see it.

Boy, when all those enemies come lurking and all of those ones come in, all of those things that would rob me of that communion with my Lord, I don't see that fountain springing up.

You know, the need for vital godliness in your soul, how are you going to know? How are you going to know you are going to be in need if you never suffered and been in want? How do you know you want the blood of Christ if you don't know that you are a sinner? How do you know that you want the Lord's strength if you haven't been shown your weakness? How do you know that you want the wisdom of Christ if you haven't been shown that you are a fool? How do you know?

And I am going to tell you something. The world today is full of these people that don't know, that grope in the dark, that say and proclaim the name of Christ, but there is no godliness in the soul. My prayer for you today, my prayer for myself today, my prayer for all of God's people wherever they are in this world is that the Lord would impress upon us, he would reveal to us the gift of God, he would reveal to us who it is that saith to us, "Give me to drink," who it is that saith to us, "The Lord is my shepherd," who it is that

³⁵ John 4:14.

³⁶ Ibid.

saith to us, "Peace be still," and that he would indeed empower us to ask of him and that he would give us that living water that we are in such a dire need of.

Life is hard. Life is full of ups and downs. But the one thing constant and always has been constant is the power of God in the soul of his children. It is from him and him alone. May the Lord send that power to your soul today.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, may you come. May you come now that we may know thee in thy perfect trinity for the glory of thy name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.