

April 24, 2005
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Thirsty?”

A kid runs into a diner and says, "Quick, give me 3 cokes." The person at the counter gives him 3 cokes and the kid drinks them as fast as he can. "Wow that's the fastest I've seen anyone drink," says the waiter. "Well you'd drink that fast if you had what I had," The kid says "Oh my goodness," the waiter says, "What do you have?" The kid replies "50 cents."

John 4:1-14 NLT

Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, "Jesus is baptizing and making more disciples than John" **2**(though Jesus himself didn't baptize them--his disciples did). **3** So he left Judea to return to Galilee. *(Since He did not want to deal with the Pharisees at this time.)*

4 He had to go through Samaria on the way. *[The most direct route north to Galilee was through the region of Samaria. Yet a good Jew of Jesus' day would often be inclined to avoid this region. The problem with Samaria was the people who lived there. They were not good Jews. They were not pure Jews by heredity; they were Jews who had been ethnically mixed over generations of mixed marriages with the Arab race. The people of Samaria were not even faithfully practicing the Hebrew religion, but were mixing Judaism with vestiges of their earlier roots in pagan religions. Such religious practices made them (ritually) impure in the eyes of a Jew of Jesus' day. When it came to religious and social matters it was better for a Jew to avoid them. (Mark Ellingsen, Preparation and Manifestation, C.S.S. Publishing.) Jews would take an alternate route that took them out of the way. Yet they would rather make a longer trip than go through Samaria. Jesus had no such prejudices and so He went through Samaria. As a matter of fact it says He had to go through Samaria. As noted He didn't have to, yet these words express obligation - He had to go through Samaria because He wanted to reach people there with His message also.]*

5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sy-char, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. **7** Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." **8** He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. *[You can go to Israel today and take a journey to Samaria to the town of Sychar. A place the passage of time seems to have forgotten. Not many people live there, about 300, and they still consider themselves Samaritans. The primary structure in town is a kind of cellar, which houses a well, the only source of water for miles. Archeologists estimate its date upwards of 4,000 years. Weary travelers have quenched their thirst there since the time of Jacob. But even more fascinating than its archeological significance is the fact that this place historically validates for us the precise location where the Samaritan woman had an encounter with the Christ. It's hard to believe but the authenticity of the well is undisputed. Samaritans, Muslims, Christians, Jews all agree that this is the place where the story took place.]*

9 The woman was surprised, for *(as I already mentioned)* Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift *[word used means a free gift with no strings attached]* God has for you and who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this is a very deep well. Where would you get this living water? **12** And besides, are you greater than our ancestor Jacob who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his cattle enjoyed?" *[Ironically she would ask this question, for the answer is that indeed Jesus is greater than her ancestor Jacob.]*

13 Jesus replied, "People soon become thirsty again after drinking this water. **14** But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life."

The Samaritan woman's first misunderstanding is that she thinks Jesus is talking about her physical thirst. He was not. He was talking about a thirst for something much deeper. He wanted to quench the thirst in her soul. She, like all people, was experiencing an emptiness, a thirst or hunger for more in life. I remember a time in my life when I thought, "something is missing, there has to be more to life than what I'm experiencing." I've heard others speak of a "deep, deep void" or a "chunk missing from my soul." Songs are sung about a hurting deep inside. People try to fill this longing within by living for the things of this world.

Living for the World

This Samaritan woman was a woman who was hurting deep inside. She was thirsty and although it wasn't a physical thirst, she tried to quench the thirst she had with physical and material things. We see later on that she had been divorced several times and at the time she met Jesus she was living with her latest boyfriend. [John 4:16-18 NLT: "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

"I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband- for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now."]

Jesus was not trying to hurt her, but to help her face reality and admit her need. She was looking for love in all the wrong places. She wanted love and security, but hadn't found the meaning and purpose in life that would bring her security. She was looking for the perfect relationship, but even the closest human relationships, as wonderful as they are, will not satisfy this deep emptiness inside. People try to fill this emptiness in various ways, not just by human relationships. Some think having money is the answer. But even the richest in the world have admitted to not finding all they need in life. I remember a young lady saying to me one time, "I'm so depressed today, I have to go shopping." Going shopping for something new made her feel good...for a while, but buying something new only feels good for a time, soon you want the next newer and

better thing, why? Because the feeling doesn't last, it is not permanently satisfying. Others try hard work, music, sports, or strive to be successful or famous. Others try drugs or alcohol or sexual promiscuity. These things provide an instant gratification but afterward leave people hollow. Living for the material things of this world continues to leave us empty. So some try religion...

Living for Religion

This Samaritan woman was religious. She even brings up a theological question in verses 19-20 "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim [geh RUH zim], where our ancestors worshiped?" The Jewish religion said people must worship in Jerusalem, that's where the temple was. The Samaritan's religion said worship had to be where their ancestors worshiped. We also know that the Samaritans only accepted the first five books of the Bible to be authentic Scripture. The first five books emphasize the law. Even this well, Jacob's well, where this conversation is taking place was a symbol of the old way of the law. And so we see that the old way of keeping laws and fulfilling religious responsibilities and rituals was not good enough to satisfy her or any person's deepest need. In v13 Jesus told the women, "People soon become thirsty again after drinking this water (from Jacob's well)." The Samaritan women knew that Jesus spoke the truth about her. It was not only that she had to come daily for years to Jacob's well for water; the real problem was that all her life her religion had not satisfied the thirst of her soul. Many people perform all that their religion requires, but their lives are unchanged, dry and fruitless. There is more than what most religious people are experiencing. God wants to give more. Jesus says (v14), "But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life."

Living Water

Jesus started the conversation asking for a drink. His purpose was to speak to the Samaritan woman's need. She's thinking of her physical need, but Jesus wants to meet a deeper need. So Jesus asks her a question about her life. She doesn't want to go there, so she changes the subject. When you speak to people of spiritual needs they think "religion" and want to debate religion. They don't want to believe so they bring up problems with religions. That's what this woman does. She brings up what her religion says about where worship in contrast to what the Jewish religion has to say about where to worship. Jesus wants her to know it is not about where one worships; it's about having a relationship with the One worshiped.

[v23-24] "But the time is coming and is already here when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for anyone who will worship Him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

What is this Living Water that takes away thirst altogether? It's having a personal relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. (John 7:37-39 NLT) On the last day, the climax of the festival [*This was the Jewish feast of Tabernacles and perhaps at the time*

during this festival that water was poured out as what was called a drink offering], Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "If you are thirsty, come to me! If you believe in me, come and drink! For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water will flow out from within." [Then John explains] (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him...).

Some do all that their religion requires, but have never drunk deeply of God who is the Living Water. Nothing can fill the emptiness in us except a relationship with God for which we were made (we were made to know God and be in a relationship with Him. That is what is missing, that is the hunger of the human soul). And Jesus is the only one who can satisfy this, our deepest hunger because He is the one who makes possible for us to be restored to a relationship with God. And not only does Jesus restore our relationship with God but He says, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." What is this gift? The gift is God's Holy Spirit living in us. How do we receive the gift? by believing in Jesus and asking Him for the gift. The Living Water is a relationship with God that is so intimate that the Holy Spirit of God Himself lives in us. Have you received the Holy Spirit? This is what is missing, a personal and intimate relationship with God. This is what is missing, being filled and influenced by God Holy Spirit flowing through us. This is the meaning and purpose of life to know God forever. This is life...Eternal life... to know God. God is calling you to this relationship with Him. Someone once described it like this, "Deep calls to Deep." There is more to life than you are experiencing. Do you want more? Are you thirsty for more? Then Jesus is saying to you this morning, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water...People soon become thirsty again after (trying to fill there emptiness with worldly things or even with religion - it is not religion but a relationship, and so)... the water (the Holy Spirit) I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life."