

“Living Water for Thirsty Souls”

John 4:1-42

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January 29, 2023 • Sunday Evening Sermon

Our theme for this year is Project Andrew – bringing them to Him. In this study we will be looking at the whole chapter of John 4 going through it little portions at a time. As we look at this passage, I want you to ask God to give you an encouragement and challenge in your own personal evangelism as we share the gospel with those around us. God has given us that great privilege to share the Good News that impacted us in our lives and we are to share that Living Water for Thirsty Souls as I have titled this study. John 4 is about the woman at the well who came to get physical water, but Jesus knew her soul was much thirstier than that. She needed living water.

Have you ever been thirsty, like, really, thirsty? I have a few times in fact, to the point of dehydration. I shouldn't have been but I was. In one instance, I started realizing how important water was when I was only about 12 or 13 years old. Danny, a friend of mine and I, decided on this fall, Saturday afternoon, to go for exploring in the woods. This particular Saturday he came over to my house and we went right down the road to this farmer that we knew. I lived kind of out from town and behind his house there was a lot of woods that actually stretched out to a state park but it was a long way to that park. As Danny and I go were in the woods, we were having a blast watching the different wildlife. We saw a fox, squirrels and a lot of birds, but we're just playing, having a blast and running through the woods with no cares in the world.

After a long period of time, we all of a sudden looked at each other and one of us said, “it's really quiet.” We couldn't hear the cars and trucks that we could hear from the busy road that was near our house. We couldn't hear a thing. As we looked around, we realized the sun had started its way and we knew then we had better go home. We started realizing how hungry and thirsty we were getting and after a long while we also realized we had been going in circles. We definitely didn't know where we were. We were lost in the woods, and we kind of let each other a little bit panicky but at this moment, one of us had an idea and said, ‘Look, there's the sun, we can follow the sun.’ Now it's starting to go down but we knew we could follow the sun and know we're heading in one direction to get somewhere instead of going in circles here in the woods.

The sun started dropping fast so we started jogging out of the woods and then we're running and all of a sudden we break through the woods. We look at each other and we're so relieved, but we don't know where we're at. We see a house so we walk up to it, climb over the fence and then we see the road and it's that main highway to my house about two miles to our left. It is getting dark and we're we are so thirsty. We decide since it's dark that we're going to jog home. As we got to my house, we had one thing on our mind – water. We opened the door went immediately to the kitchen sink and began drinking as much water as we could as we thought “this is the best water I've ever had in my life, this is wonderful and thank You, Lord, for getting this out of the woods and that we could get home now.”

We were thirsty and this woman we're going to read about is thirsty as well and she is going to get the water so that she would not get thirsty, although I'm sure she wasn't as thirsty as we were. As I said previously, Jesus knew she was far thirstier than she even realized. Let's

look now at John 4 and it's setting as Jesus is starting that conversation with the woman at the well.

John 4:1-6 says [1] *Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John* [2] *(although Jesus Himself did not baptize, but only His disciples),* [3] *He left Judea and departed again for Galilee.* [4] *And He had to pass through Samaria.* [5] *So He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.* [6] *Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as He was from His journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.*

There are several ways Jesus could have gone to Galilee but Him having to go to Samaria was more according to His providential will. It was in His sovereign plan for there was some work He wanted to do there. As He comes to Samaria, He comes to this well and it's 12 noon. He's weary, hot, thirsty and sits beside this well outside of Sychar. The Disciples had gone on to buy some food for Him to eat. Let's continue in the passage.

John 4:7-12 says [7] *A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."* [8] *(For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)* [9] *The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)* [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."* [11] *The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"* [12] *Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."*

This woman is coming to this well in the heat of the day. She probably didn't expect to see anybody there and that's probably why she came at that time. She sees this man sitting beside the well and more than likely draws the water pot up to the top. Then Jesus initiates a conversation to her and shocks her for here is a Jewish man speaking to a Samaritan woman. The Scripture says here, that the Samaritans and the Jews had animosity toward one another and there were no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus was weary and there were social and cultural barriers for Him not to talk to her, but He did. He initiated the conversation with this woman with one thing in mind – He knew her greatest need. It was Him – the Living Water.

What about us? How are we when it comes to initiating conversation when we're weary, busy or tired and others come your way? I know for me it's not easy for me to initiate conversations during those times, but Jesus overcame all those barriers and He took the initiative to start that conversation. We see in the second section of this passage that He initiated this conversation with her spiritual condition in mind. He has the answer for her thirsty soul and that's the Gospel to reveal who He is, the Messiah. In this conversation He speaks of Himself as this living water and that He is the Giver of life. Basically He states to her that she doesn't know who she is talking with and she doesn't know the gift of God.

Then He gives the solution which is 'All you have to do is ask Me.' Then He gives the promise, 'If you ask Me, I'll give you living water.' That promise sounded great to her yet she didn't understand about this living water. She was confused, because she started telling Him he didn't have a rope to draw the water or a jar, but she's also intrigued about this living water and she is spiritually curious. The Spirit is starting to work on her a little bit as she asks 'Are you greater than our father, Jacob?' Jesus answers her question and continues to unfold this great news of the Gospel to this woman.

John 4:13-15 says [13] *Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, [14] 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."* [15] *The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."*

Jacob did a great thing here, for he built this well and it's still producing water and it is still today. But when you drink this water as good as it is, you're going to be thirsty again. Jesus says 'the water I'm talking about, when you drink it, you'll never thirst again for the water I give leads to eternal life. Every soul is searching for this water, this living water. Psalm 42:1-2a says [1] *As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. [2a] My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.* Our soul thirsts for living water, for Christ and God.

Kent Hughes in his commentary on John writes about this living water saying, "This surging of water within us satisfies all our needs, and it assuredly flows up into eternity. Our empty, parched lives are suddenly filled with living water, a dancing fountain that springs up within us and continues right on into eternity." So Jesus revealed to her in this conversation that He is the answer for all who thirst. She is thrilled to hear about this living water but she's still confused. God has not opened her eyes but He is drawing her in. Jesus is drawing her in. The Holy Spirit is working in her life.

It's the same with everyone, because Jesus teaches us in John 6:44, [44] *No one can come to Me (Jesus) unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.* It takes a work of God to draw people into the Kingdom, to draw people to Jesus, to open our eyes, that we would see, to open our understanding that we would drink at that fountain, to open our understanding that we would receive Christ. That's what is going on in this passage and with us and those that we come in contact with in our lives. Let's continue in John 4 where Jesus reveals her need for this water, for her soul because she is still thinking this is temporal water and Jesus is going to make sure she understands that her soul is thirsty and she needs this living water.

John 4:16-20 says [16] *Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."* [17] *The woman answered him, "I have no husband."* *Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband' [18] for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."* [19] *The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. [20] Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."*

In order for her to get to the point of understanding her need for Him, for forgiveness and her spiritual need He tells her 'Go call your husband and come here.' Did Jesus not know that she didn't have a husband at that time, that she was living an adulterous life as she was currently living with a man that she was not even married to? Of course, He knew that and that's why He led with that. He's trying to get her to realize her need for Him. William Hendrickson, in his commentary on John, says "There is, however, a close connection between the woman's request and Christ's command. Does the woman desire living water? Then there must be a thirst for this water. This thirst will not be truly awakened unless there be a sense of guilt, a consciousness of sin. The mention of her husband is the best means of reminding this woman of her immoral life. The Lord is now addressing Himself to her and to her conscience."

The woman's brief reply to Jesus of 'I have no husband' is her response to the acknowledgment of her sin, of understanding that she has a need. She is saying, "You're right, I'm a sinner. I have a need." Then she says, 'Sir, I perceive you're a prophet.' God hasn't yet

opened her eyes that He is the Messiah but yet she knows He's from God. She knows that this man whom she's talking with is from the Lord. Then she questions Jesus with a spiritual question but not on the subject Jesus is addressing. She wants to know where the right place to worship is so was she asking this question to divert the conversation away from her sin or was she really interested in where she should go worship? I would say probably both but she was interested in where to go worship, also trying to get the heat off of her sin at that moment as well. Let's continue in the passage.

John 4:21-24 says [21] *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. [22] You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. [24] God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Jesus's reply is rich, powerful and insightful for us. His first three words are 'Woman Believe Me,' trust Me, have faith in Me, believe My words, 'the hour is coming' and now is. This hour is coming when the curtain in the temple will be torn in two – the last sacrifice for sin will be made. The LAMB of God will be sacrificed on the cross, and He will take away all the sins of His people and once for all, the payment will be made and you won't be worshipping in these places, you'll be worshipping Me. That curtain will be rent.

Jesus isn't answering her question 'Where should we go for worship,' in fact, He's answering the question who you should worship and how to worship. You worship the One true God, Jehovah God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and you worship in spirit and in truth. We worship in spirit with all our heart, all our soul, sincere worship, praising God. We worship in truth and the truth of who He is as He's revealed in His Word. We worship according to the Word – the way He has told us to worship. Our worship is to be with great ardor and with order. Jesus reveals Himself here as the Giver of the eternal life, as the omniscient God who knows all things, explaining the essence of God Himself and of the true worship of the Lord as He is impacting this woman greatly. God is working in her heart. He's starting to give her more and more understanding here. Let's continue in John 4.

John 4:25-26 says [25] *The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things."* [26] *Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."* The woman believes without a doubt that the Messiah is coming. Jesus, the apex of this conversation, basically says, 'The Messiah is here. I'm here right before you. I'm the One talking to you.' The Scripture didn't tell us when she drank from that living water, that great fountain, but I believe this is when it was from my study on this and we'll see the impact on her life really soon as we look further in the passage.

Before we do, let's not miss the lessons here on our own personal evangelism that we've studied so far and that we've seen so far. The first thing is God providentially is going to bring us in contact with people each and every day in order to bring them to Christ or at least to share the Gospel with them. Our God's sovereign and He has great plan. He's prepared a good work for you and me to do as He says in His Scripture.

Second, we need to start a conversation with them. There may be a culture barrier, or another issue or we may be tired and weary but we have to start that conversation with them. Then we have to turn that conversation to spiritual things, towards the Gospel. Expect that they're going to bring up some tangent question. It may be spiritual, it may not be. We need to be polite and answer the question briefly, but get the attention back on the Gospel, back to

Christ. The next lesson is we share the whole Gospel of Christ – what they do with it, how they need to respond to this, their need to believe in Jesus, trust in Jesus and surrender their life to Him, repent. We want to make sure they understand how they believe Him. Don't be discouraged when they don't get it the first time you say something to them, many don't. But stay in contact and continue that evangelistic opportunity. God has people for you to bring into the Kingdom and that's what He has called us to do.

Now, let's turn our attention to the third section here in John 4 where we see the supernatural results from Jesus sharing the Gospel and teaching. He's going to teach His Disciples to have spiritual eyes and a spiritual mindset.

John 4:27-30 says [27] *Just then His disciples came back. They marveled that He was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"* [28] *So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,* [29] *"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"* [30] *They went out of the town and were coming to Him.*

I like the first two words 'Just then' the disciples came right at the right time. It was God's timing. Jesus had orchestrated this. They didn't come too early to interrupt the conversation. They didn't come too late not to get the lesson or to see what was going on, or for Jesus to teach them. Perfect timing, just like where you are in your life – right timing where you are. God is always on time and has the right time.

We can see the woman was changed; her eyes were opened. Her heart had taken a long drink from that fountain that living water, and it had quenched her thirst. In fact, it was bubbling over inside of her. It was bubbling out so much she ran and told the people who she had talked to and what Jesus had said. Now, the people she was talking to were probably the same people who had ridiculed her. It wasn't a big town. They knew who she was. They knew her life. They knew that she wasn't very reputable. But you know what? She didn't care. She had to tell them about Jesus and what had happened in her life. She had to share her testimony with them. She had to tell them what He said; the very words of Christ that He's the Messiah.

Notice her message, 'Come and see.' It sounds familiar, doesn't it? Remember Philip coming to Nathanael; Come and see (John 1:43-46). Then she shared her testimony with them. What a great evangelistic tool to share how Jesus Christ has impacted our life in the story that He's given us to tell – what He's done in our life. Then she shares an intriguing question 'Can this be the Christ?' Don't you want to go hear Him? Don't you want to go see Him? Don't you want to go find out? Could this be Jesus? Could this be the Christ the Messiah? She is taking people to Jesus. Notice they're leaving and coming out there and she is part of Project Andrew, isn't she? She is bringing people to Him.

When the Gospel is fresh in our lives, and we meditate on the Great News, it is just how we were dead in sin, we were lost and there was no hope. Then Jesus Himself broke into our life. He opened our understanding and gave us the Good News. He changed our heart. He brought us into His Kingdom. He quenched our thirst with a living water that bubbles up inside of us and we'll just have to go tell people the same news – this news about Jesus. The narrative continues but this time it goes back to the disciples. Now Jesus is going to teach His disciples about having a spiritual mindset, having the right life purpose.

John 4:31-34 says [31] *Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."* [32] *But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."* [33] *So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?"* [34] *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."*

Jesus is weary and His disciples are trying to get Him to eat and they are baffled as to why He is not eating this food they brought Him. Jesus gives them a spiritual lesson when He says ‘You know what My food is, My life purpose is, what I live for? It’s to do the will of Him who sent Me – the will of God.’ We know Jesus did just that. Even in the garden Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17:4, *[4] I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do.* Then on the cross, Jesus says those great words, ‘it is finished’ (John 19:30). It is paid in full. It's done. Jesus did just that and it's a lesson now for His disciples and for you and for me. Our life purpose is to accomplish what He's called us to do – to do His will. Now He gives them a second lesson which is to have eternal, spiritual eyes – to see with the eyes of Christ as we continue on in the passage.

John 4:35-38 says *[35] Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. [36] Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. [37] For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ [38] I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”*

Jesus takes this opportunity to teach these disciples and you and me, that we need to have spiritual eyes. I love those words ‘Lift up your eyes and see.’ Lift up your eyes and see what's really there. Look with spiritual eyes, not temporal, worldly eyes. Look with spiritual, eternal, Biblical eyes. See that these people all around us, have eternal souls and unless they receive Christ, their souls are going to perish forever in torment in a place called hell. Christ is sending us to go and tell them the Great News that can bring them living water to save their very soul.

There's nothing wrong with the harvest field for it's white for harvest. It is ready for reaping; we don't have to wait. Then also he says there's a value in team or partnership as far as the wide principle. He's saying there's Sowers and there's Reapers, others have sown and Jesus Himself had sown this seed. They did believe in the first five books of the Old Testament where Moses had sown some seeds, and now Jesus had sown these seeds in the disciples and they were about to reap. But the Sower and the Reaper are to rejoice when souls come into the Kingdom. Then lastly, there's power in the Gospel. They're going to get saved. Some people today are going to come to know Christ. Some people today are going to drink this living water, you can be assured of that. Go share the Gospel. It's going to happen. Jesus is going to bring every single person that He's going to call Himself today to Christ when we share the Gospel. Then we will see that the supernatural results are going to continue here in this passage.

John 4:39-42 says *[39] Many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” [40] So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. [41] And many more believed because of His Word. [42] They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”*

The harvest is why many Samaritans believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony. Our testimony is powerful. Jesus will use it when we share the Gospel through our testimony. We need to be doing that, but what changed their life? It wasn't how good the woman shared for she had just become a Christian. She had no clue. She just shared what Jesus shared and then shared what happened to her. It's because the Holy Spirit drew them, because Jesus Christ brought them in and the Samaritans asked Jesus to stay for two more days and He

did, bringing many more people into the Kingdom. They proclaimed the truth; this is the Savior of the world. Jesus had gone beyond, the Jews and gone to the Samaritans, but they saw for Jesus gave light. It wasn't just them because it's every tongue, tribe and nation that will be coming for the throne. He's the Savior of all, of the world and He has called us to share the Gospel – this Great News.

Evangelism really isn't hard although it's not easy for me. I'm not saying it's not hard for us to make sure that it's a part of our life. It's just not hard to evangelize. All it is, is sharing the Gospel with somebody and trusting in Jesus to do whatever He wants to do when we share it. I remember when somebody shared this with me when I was in college, and they shared with me an article called 'No Fill Evangelism,' and it had a definition of evangelism by Bill Bright that impacted me then, and I still rest in it today. He said, "Successful evangelism is sharing the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God. That's what evangelism is, just sharing the Good News of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. That's what we're to do and then we just leave the results to God because He does the work. It's not up to us to even cause the people we're sharing with to understand. So we don't have to have all the perfect words. We're just to share the Good News and He brings them in.

Here are the life takeaways from this study. There are really only two kinds of people reading this today – those who have drank from the well of Christ (received Christ as their Lord and Savior) and those who have not. I don't know where you are today. God may have drawn you to this study like the Samaritan woman, and you don't know Christ. Today, I ask you, I beg you, don't let this day go by without drinking from the well of Christ. Don't let today go by without receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. He loves you. He wants you to come in. All you have to do is surrender your life to Him and trust Him. Believe in Jesus.

What about those who know Christ? We are believers. We know Christ. We have the Living Water in us. We need it to be bubbling out of us to everybody around us. I would challenge you to do this – share the Gospel with one person this week. Ask God to bring them to you and to open your eyes to this opportunity. Initiate that conversation when they come and then share the Gospel with them. Move it to the Gospel and to Christ. Let's be men and women who live out the life that Christ has called us to live then let this Living Water bubble out of us and flow so that others could drink and that we would bring them to the Savior of the world and forever we'd be worshiping Him in spirit and truth before the throne. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for this time. Thank You, Father, that You brought each person reading this today to hear Your Word. Thank You for this passage where You teach us about personal evangelism. We ask now God that You would move us to be men and women of faith, to faithfully share the Good News of Jesus Christ, that Greatest News there ever was with those around us. We know You will bring us just to the people You want us to share with and now we ask You to do that in us, God. We pray now that You would just bless this time in Jesus' Name, Amen.