

“LIVING WATER FOR THE SOUL”

John 4:1-26

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been thirsty—I mean really thirsty? If you have you can understand and relate to our Lord here in John 4. However, I doubt if any of us have ever treated our occasion of extreme thirst as an occasion of witness to one who was spiritually thirsty. As far as we can see in the text, Jesus never did satisfy His physical thirst until after He had satisfied the woman’s spiritual thirst. Once she left her water pot (v. 28) He could take care of that matter.

There are **three** lines of approach you must take in this passage.

1) If you are a Christian you must learn to use ordinary occasions as opportunities for witness to those who are lost.

2) If you are spiritually thirsty because you are not saved, you must acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only One who can quench your thirst and give you eternal life.

We can see two primary lines of connection between chapters 3 and 4.

First, notice the contrast between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman:

A woman vs. a man

A religious leader versus a common person

A Jew vs. a Samaritan

A wealthy person vs. a poor person

A moral person vs. an immoral person

Second, note the connection between the baptism of John the Baptist and Jesus. Already in the last chapter the disciples of John had noted the large number of people who were going to Jesus vs. the dwindling number going to John (vv. 22-28). John addressed that problem by noting that Jesus, as the Messiah, must increase while he, John, must decrease (v. 30).

Now it wasn’t the disciples of John stirring questions, it was the Pharisees who were showing far too much interest in the baptizing ministry of Christ. In order to avoid a conflict that would bring Christ’s ministry to a culmination before the divinely appointed time, Christ moves away from the area adjacent to Judea and goes toward Galilee for the second time. [See chapter 2 for the first time.]

Third, there is the final powerful statement of chapter three concerning **faith** in Christ (v. 36) Nicodemus is not the only one who needs to believe; nor are all of Christ’s sheep to be found in or near Judea. Some of them may even be found outside of the “covenant community” of Judaism.

In this portion of John we see **The Sovereign Purpose**, and we also see **The Savior’s Witness**.

I. THE SOVEREIGN PURPOSE (1-6)

A. The Report concerning the Pharisees (1-2)

B. The Trip toward Galilee (3-6)

1. The necessity of passing through Samaria
2. The rest-stop at Jacob's well
3. The appearance of a Samaritan woman (7a)

Now, how will Jesus handle this awkward situation?

Will He disdain her? Will He ignore her? Will He berate her? Will he save her?

You know the answer. Let us examine His methods in saving her.

Christ appealed to significant needs in this woman's life in order to reach her with His saving gospel: *Sympathy, curiosity, rest and satisfaction, conscience, community, knowledge of the truth.*

II. THE SAVIOR'S WITNESS (7-26)

A. Sympathy (7-9)

Jesus is alone, tired, thirsty. The disciples are buying food for them. The Samaritan woman comes at 6:00 PM to draw water.

1. The Surprising request—Jesus requests a drink from her.
2. The Startled answer—YOU, A Jew; ME—A Samaritan Woman
Jews and Samaritans
3. Jews and Samaritans would not share common drinking implements—literally “make use of with.” Nor would they share friendly common dealings.

B. Curiosity (10-12)

1. She ought to be the one asking **Him** for water.
First, she needs to know **Who He is**.
2. He could give her “**living** water.”
First, she needs to know **the gift of God**=Eternal Life as in chapter 3 also. Compare OT concept of Yahweh—Jer. 2:13; 17:13 (Lord is the fountain of living waters.) Is. 55:1—Everyone who thirsts—come.
3. She, like Nicodemus, misunderstands (11-12)
 - a. Well is deep
 - b. No water bucket
 - c. Can He really be greater than Jacob—who dug the well, and drank from it?

C. Rest and Satisfaction (13-15)

1. Material water never permanently satisfies (13)
2. Living water is sufficient (14)
 - a. It brings real **satisfaction** –“never thirst again” [Lit. means: “not, not will he thirst into the age—forever.”]
 - b. It is a continuous supply—becomes a “spring of water leaping up.”
 - c. It has permanence—“into eternal life.” [Life enjoyed even now, and forever.]
3. She wants this water—yet totally misunderstands its nature (15).

Doesn't want any more thirst; doesn't want to come to the well to draw—an arduous trip, and an arduous task (heavy bucket, pulling up 100 feet!]

This last statement makes a connection with the fact that she draws not only for herself, but also for others. Yet, Jesus' next statement, while acknowledging the fact of drawing for others, is primarily intended to make her aware of her spiritual need.

D. Conscience (16-18)

1. Jesus touches upon her chief sin—"Call your husband."
2. She attempts to briefly dispatch the request—"I have no husband."
3. Jesus pries into her heart
 - a. Indeed, you speak well (v. 17) and truly (v. 18): "**A husband** (emphatic) I do not have."
 - b. You have had **five** husbands (easy divorce even in Samaria; women had ways of getting divorces even though they could not initiate—such as asking the court, paying him, rendering services to him to cause him to feel compelled to grant her wish).
 - c. The man she currently lives with is not her husband.

E. Community (19-24)

1. Her observation and distraction (19-20)
 - a. He is a prophet—who could see into a person's heart and private affairs. In the Samaritan viewpoint (who did not believe in the OT prophets, and who believed that the next prophet to come would really be the Messiah), this statement approaches Messianic proportions.
 - b. Yet, she seeks to avoid the discomfort of the situation by turning to a subject, in which indeed she had considerable interest, that could distract the prophet from her personal life and needs:
"Which place is the appropriate one for worship—Gerazim or Jerusalem's temple?"
2. The true Place and Means of Worship (21-24)
 - a. It is not a choice between Gerazim and Jerusalem (21)
Troubled times will change all of that, and the type of worship there will "not hold muster" in the evaluation of the Lord.
 - b. Salvation is "from" the Jews—the Messiah comes out of Judaism as predicted in OT Scripture. (22)
 - c. Samaritan worship is "ignorant"—due to their rejection of most of the Old Testament. How then can they truly know "whom" they worship? (22)

Good intentions are not sufficient; God does not accept any religious system. A religious system must be Scripturally based in order to be accepted by the Lord.

d. Jesus introduces a permanent and sufficient new system of worship (23-24)

1) The Time

“Coming and now is”—already introduced by Christ, yet ultimately based upon His atoning work, and fulfilled primarily in the present dispensation.

2) The Worshipers—**true**, what they ought to be—“ideal”

3) The Worship—“In spirit and truth” [Note that “in” only occurs once in the Greek. This is one unified concept.]

“*in spirit*”—genuine and from the innermost being that enables one to communicate with God. Not based simply upon externals.

“*truth*”—reality, because based upon Scriptural fact and accuracy. Directed to the True God of Scripture as displayed in the work of redemption.

4) The Object of Worship—the Father (23b, 24)

a) He is the One who **seeks** such people to be His worshipers—He pursues them; they don’t pursue Him.

b) His essence is “spirit”—not matter [Not “a spirit”]

c) His essence dictates and demands worshipers “in spirit” and “truth.” Compare the woman’s “must” in v. 20 with God’s **must** here. *God must be worshiped in the place where He is present.*

Jesus is pointing out the “broadness in God’s mercy.” Not only is God interested in Jews, He is also interested in Samaritans, and in fact in all whom the Father seeks who then worship Him in “spirit and in truth.” This woman can find true **community** in this “prophet” who offers her **living water.**”

F. Knowledge of the Truth (25-26)

The light is beginning to dawn in this woman; this “prophet’s” words calls to her attention the Samaritan belief that Messiah, when He comes, will “openly declare **all things** to them.

1. Messiah (Hebrew word=“Anointed One”) is coming—i.e. “Christ” in the Greek (25)

2. He will clarify divine truth—He will teach the faithful all things.

3. Jesus is Messiah (26)—This is Jesus’ clearest declaration of being Messiah—and He makes it to a Samaritan woman!

Note the literal statement Jesus makes here:

“I, the One that speaks to you, I AM.”

What a powerful statement and declaration!

CONCLUSION

The woman has no need to look any further—this Man is HE—the Messiah and the God of the Old Testament and the Savior of the world. He has living water that alone can satisfy, giving true life, now and forever.

He had aroused her sympathy, her curiosity, her longing for rest and satisfaction, her conscience, her longing for true community with God's people, and her need for the Truth.

What more did she need? Simply to **believe on Him and have everlasting life (3:36)**.

*What more do you need? **Believe on Him and have your soul quenched now and forever with living water that brings everlasting life.**

***If you have this living water, how are you sharing it with those who are lost and need their spiritual thirst quenched?**

[Salvation; baptism—and meet with me after the service--; membership]