

Living water!  
The Bad Samaritan!  
John 4:1-26

**Scripture reading:** John 4:1-26

**Prayer:** please join me in prayer

**Sermon introduction:**

Consider the words of the eighth-century monarch of Cordova. At the end of his life he said,

I have now reigned fifty years; beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honors, power, and pleasure, have waited on my call, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been lacking for me. In this situation I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot; they amount to Fourteen. (K. Hughes)

Happiness eluded the monarch...

Consider the words of the insanely wealthy king Solomon...

**Ecclesiastes 2:9–11 (ESV) — 9** So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. **10** And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. **11** Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

Consider the words of that great twentieth century philosopher Mick Jagger...

“I can’t get no satisfaction.  
Cause I try, and I try, and I try, and I try,  
But, I can’t get no satisfaction.”

None of these people found lasting satisfaction in wealth, power, sex, or fame.

But, for some reason we think we are different, don’t we? We think, “I know that those people could not find satisfaction in fame, money, health, sex, and power but I will.”

But if you live long enough, you will discover that nothing in this world can ultimately satisfy your souls deepest longings.

Our soul’s deepest thirst can only be quenched with living water!!!

To prove this, we will look at three aspects of living water from John 4.

*The need for living water*  
*The nature of living water*  
*The location of living water*

**First, the need for living water!**

## **Who needed living water? A very broken woman.**

The woman of John 4 had at least three strikes against her...

### ***Strike one- She was a Samaritan!***

In verses 4-7 we read that Jesus stopped at a well in Samaria. Who were the Samaritans? In 722 BC, the Assyrian king imported foreigners into the Northern tribes of Israel to intermarry with the Israelites. As a result, the Samaritans were half Jewish and half Assyrian. Since they were a mixed race, they were despised by the Jews. Furthermore, they only believed in the first five books of the OT, denying the other 34 revered by the Israelites.

The Pharisees urgently prayed that no Samaritans would be raised in the resurrection. (Wiersbe, 299)

They considered all Samaritan women ritually unclean from birth. (Gladd, 331)

They even refused to step foot on Samaritan soil. Instead, they chose to walk all the way around Samaria when traveling through that region, even though it was far more time consuming.

In light of this hatred, the fact that Jesus engaged this Samaritan woman in conversation *and* then had the temerity to ask her for a cup of water would have shocked the original audience.

### ***Strike two- She was a woman!***

Unfortunately, in the first century, women were 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens. Therefore, Jewish men never dreamed of talking with women, especially Samaritan women.

### ***Strike three- She was sexually and relationally broken!***

We read in verses 15-19 that this woman had been married five times. And the man she is living with now is not her husband. She went through husbands like people go through a box of Kleenex.

She looked to a string of men to satisfy her soul's longings. But this strategy was clearly not working. Yet she continues to drink from this broken well.

One scholar writes,

“Her life was a miserable chain of unfulfilling relationships.” (K. Hughes)

### **Illustration:**

Like so many in our culture she was dying of spiritual dehydration, and she did not even know it.

Even the non-Christian novelist Dave Foster Wallace understood this principle.

At a commencement speech at Kenyon college, he said,

“Everybody worships.... pretty much anything you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure, and you will always feel ugly. And

when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before [your loved ones] finally plant you. . . . Worship power, and you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.”

A short time after this speech Wallace took his own life.

Dave Foster Wallace, the Samaritan women, and many of us are like sailors a drift a sea without water. Six hours without water, then one day without water, then two days without water. After days of dehydration, all they can do is think about water. They finally decide to drink Saltwater hoping that it will slake their thirst. Little do they know that the saltwater will eventually kill them.

**Illustration:**

My own experience in high school—tennis, grades, and girls!!! These things all let me down.

**Application:**

What well are you drinking from this morning?

- The well of wealth?
- The well of health?
- The well of status?
- The well of successful kids?
- The well of friendships?
- The well of illicit pleasure?
- The well of alcohol and drugs?

Scholars often refer to the “when syndrome.”

We foolishly think,

- “When I move out of the house, I will be happy.”
- When I get married...
- When I have kids...
- When I retire...
- When I have grandkids...

Yet these accomplishments never really slake our thirst, do they???

We all know that the high we feel from that new car, new boat, new house, promotion, new relationship, or sexual experience only lasts for so long. This joy eventually fades!!!

More importantly, when we look to other things to ultimately satisfy us, we are worshipping God substitutes, violating the first commandment, and grieving God.

Why do we keep doing this????

Eventually, we will all feel our need for living water, but what is it exactly? This leads us to the next point...

*First, the need for living water.*

## **Second, the nature of living water**

**John 4:10 (ESV)** — **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.”

The phrase “living water” has profound OT significance. In the OT, the living water referred to God’s life-giving presence that nourishes humanity.

**Jeremiah 2:13 (ESV)** — **13** for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

**Psalms 36:9 (ESV)** — **9** For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.

**Psalms 42:1 (ESV)** — **1** As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.

The OT prophets looked forward to a time when “living waters shall flow from Jerusalem” (Ezek 47:9; Zech. 14:8).

(see also Isa. 35:6; 41:17–18; 44:3; Jer. 2:13; Ezek. 36:25–27; 47:1–12; Zech. 14:8).

We all need water!

Without water, you will die physically. Without living water, you will die spiritually.

*Clearly, living water is a very good thing! But...*

### **What does living water do? Living water satisfies completely!**

**John 4:11–14 (ESV)** — **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.” **13** Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,

In other words, earthly water from earthly wells will never ever slake your thirst, just like sin will never slake your thirst.

**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.”

In verse 14, Jesus makes an amazing promise. Whoever drinks the living water, will never, ever, ever be thirsty again. Wow!!!

In other words,

Our souls will never be thirsty again.

Our deepest longings and desires can be met.

We can find true rest for our souls.

We can experience deep satisfaction and delight.

Furthermore, he says, that this water will “become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

In other words, this water is like a spring that never stops running. It will constantly bubble up and bubble over. Which means that we will have a never-ending supply of living water that will last for all eternity.

### **Illustration:**

The land that would become Yellowstone national park was discovered around 1870. It was so spectacular that Congress moved to name it the first national park in the country (and many think it was the first national park in the world).

One of the first things the U.S. army scouts noticed were the beautiful geysers and springs.

Nearly 150 years later, about 4 million people visit the park annually to see its most famous geyser—Old Faithful. It was named Old Faithful because it shot tens of thousands of gallons of boiling water hundreds of feet into the air 17 times a day like clockwork.

It never missed a bit, for decades. You could set your watch by it.

But “Old Faithful” is not as faithful as she used to be. Due to a variety of factors some think that “Old Faithful” will be dried up by the end of the century.

In other words, what once seemed like an endless supply of water, is now drying up!!!

Every worldly fountain or spring will dry up...

But the living water that God gives, will never run out. It will well up inside of us for all eternity.

This living water satisfies completely and forever.

But where is it located??? How do we find out?

*This brings us to the last point.*

*First, the need for living water.*

*Second, the nature of living water.*

### **Third, the location of living water**

#### **Living water is not located in a place!**

**John 4:16–20 (ESV)** — 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.”

Jesus graciously says to the Samaritan woman, “I know that you have been married five times. And the guy you are currently sharing your bed with is not your husband.”

At this point, it is safe to assume that the Samaritan woman is very uncomfortable with this conversation. A complete stranger seems to know her deepest darkest secrets. As a result, many people assume that she quickly changes the subject to avoid the uncomfortableness of conviction. Maybe???

But, I don't think she is doing that. The words of this prophet make her very aware of her desperate need for grace, so she brings up her need to go to the place of Samaritan worship, so that she can get right with God.

**John 4:20 (ESV) — 20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”

The Samaritans worshipped on Mt. Gerizim. This was their sacred place! It was destroyed 150 years before this conversation.

**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.

Jesus makes the point that the location of worship is soon to be irrelevant.

**22** You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

Jesus makes the point that the Samaritans are ignorant of true worship. Why? They reject most of the OT.

**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 says that God is Spirit, which means that he is not made of physical matter. Since he is spirit, he is not bound by space, therefore he can be everywhere present. Since he is everywhere present, he can be worshipped everywhere.

When it comes to true worship, location is not the issue. What God really cares about is people who worship him “in spirit and in truth.”

The Greek rendering of 24b does not say “worship in the Spirit” but “in spirit.” In other words, Jesus is not talking about worshipping in the Holy Spirit. He is talking about the human spirit worshipping God.

In other words, what God really, really, really wants from us is not perfunctory worship, or formal worship, or lifeless worship. What he really wants from us is worship from the heart. He wants us to worship him with our spirits, that is with the core of our beings. And this heartfelt worship must be informed by the truths of Scripture.

### **Application:**

In one sense, the location of worship does not matter. You don't have to be in a church building to worship God. Although being with God's people is crucial.

What matters is heartfelt worship. God wants us to worship him with every fiber of our being. If your heart is not engaged, pray like crazy that your heart would be engaged. Pray that God would open your eyes to the splendor of his majesty.

Furthermore, our worship must be informed by the sacred Scriptures. Which is why we have a call to worship from the Scriptures, we sing songs informed by the Scriptures, we confess our sins with the Scriptures, we pray informed by the Scriptures, we hear sermons from the Scriptures, and we hear a benediction from the Scriptures.

*Living water is not located in a particular place...*

*So where is it located???*

**Living water is located in a person!**

**John 4:25–26 (ESV) — 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.”

Verse 26 is the climax of chapter 4 so far.

Jesus boldly claims that he is the Messiah. In other words, he is the savior. He offers to save this woman from the guilt and condemnation of sin. He offers to save us from the guilt and condemnation of sin. He does this by dying on the cross and rising from the grave.

Another way he saves us is by offering to give us living water.

**John 4:13–14 (ESV) — 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.”

Jesus gives us the living water. But what is it?

The living water he fills us with is the Holy Spirit....

Later on in John’s gospel Jesus says...

**John 7:38–39 (ESV) — 38** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ” **39** Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

It is the Holy Spirit who manifests the presence of God to us. He assures us of salvation, he comforts believers, he whispers to us with a still small voice.

**Application:**

This raises some obvious questions.

Do you know the messiah’s saving power?  
Have you experienced his living water?

How do we continue to enjoy this living water? In other words, how do we keep drinking it?

Maybe you think you are too broken. Are you as broken as the Samaritan women? He offered her, what he offers you.... no one is being the grasp of his grace.

He loves the outcasts.

He loves the broken.  
He loves the disenfranchised.  
He loves the lonely.  
He loves you.

Because he loves you, he offers you living water!!!

Sadly, Christians often drink from the wrong fountains. When we do, God is grieved. But he offers hope. All who repent can drink again from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We looked at...

The need for living water.  
The nature of living water.  
The location of living water.

Let me close by reading from the OT and NT ....

**Matthew 11:28–30 (ESV)** — **28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The living water brings rest for weary souls...

**Isaiah 55:1–2 (ESV)** — **1** “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. **2** Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

The living water is free of charge...

Lets pray....