



John 4:5-26 - <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. <sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." <sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." <sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

<sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup> Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." <sup>25</sup> The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." <sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

## *Living Water for Thirsty Hearts*



*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. (Revelation 1:5b-6).*

“Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there’s something greater out there for me? There’s gotta be more than this!” “What’s the answer?” “I wish I knew. I wish I knew.” At the time of that interview, Tom Brady had won three Super Bowls. Since then he’s added two more rings to his already ornamented hand. He’s a two time MVP and four time Super Bowl MVP. He’s signed several multi-million dollar contracts. He’s married to a Brazilian born German super-model. In the eyes of just about everyone, he’s got it all. But no one can ignore the gnawing feeling that there’s got to be something more. More substantial, more satisfying, more meaningful, more lucrative, more glamorous, simply...MORE!

John D. Rockefeller was the 19<sup>th</sup> century baron who established Standard Oil and grew it into the largest and most profitable company in the world. He was the world’s richest man. When I think of Rockefeller, I picture him as the real life version of Scrooge McDuck, diving into a swimming pool full of gold coins, having storehouses and boatloads of money just lying around. In the estimation of just about anyone in the world, he had it all. But when he was asked, “How much money is enough?” Do you know what his answer was? “A little bit more.” Just like success, beauty, and popularity, many people usually think that money is the short path to happiness and fulfillment. But as Mick Jagger famously said, “I can’t get no satisfaction!” Or perhaps more eloquently stated, 19<sup>th</sup> century British poet Lord Byron wrote this poem on his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday: *Through life’s dull road, so dim and dirty, I have dragged to three and thirty. What have these years left to me? Nothing – except thirty-three.* Unfulfilled. Unsatisfied. Unable to quench the incessant thirst for “more.”

In our gospel lesson for today, we meet a woman who was feeling unfulfilled and looking for something to satisfy her heart’s thirst. She was a Samaritan and, as the gospel writer John so succinctly stated, **Jews do not associate with Samaritans.** Bad blood existed between the related nations of Israel and Samaria. The Samaritans were people who shared some blood with their neighbor Israel, but wanted to define God for themselves and worship him in the way of their choosing. So, is it any wonder that this woman’s life demonstrated a thirst for more? She tried to find her peace and contentment by finding a husband. But she struck out five separate times and was well on her way to a sixth...but then Jesus showed up.

Their conversation started out simply enough. A parched traveler asks a local woman for a drink of water. But then what happened through the course of the conversation? National animosity reared its head. **You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?** Then Jesus took it to a spiritual level, **“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water...Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.”** Still thinking of natural H<sub>2</sub>O, the woman says, *“I’ll have some of that.”* Then things got personal. **“Go, call your husband and come back.”** With a simple statement, Jesus had zeroed in on what this woman tried and tried to use to quench her heart’s thirst – companionship. **I have no husband.** True enough. Five times she’d pinned her hopes to the promises of different men. Five times she’d been hurt. Now, with number six,



she didn't bother with the promises. They were just "together." But he'd let her down like all the others. Her thirsty heart was looking for something, but she wasn't finding anything that satisfied...but then Jesus showed up.

What about you? I'm not aware of any of your athletic accolades like Tom Brady or whether or not you have enough in your 401k to fill a swimming pool with gold coins like John Rockefeller. But I think I can safely assume this – if you're anything like me, if you're anything like the woman at the well, more often than you'd care to admit, you've looked for happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment in places that just left you wanting more and ultimately, you've ended up feeling emptier than when you started.

Think about it. It happens at every stage of life. When you're a kid, you wanted to be grown up and thought, "*Then, my life will have meaning.*" When you're grown up, you want to be young again saying, "*It was so simple back then!*" What are those things in life that we strive for and think will bring fulfillment? What are those things in life that we think, once we obtain, we'll be all set? Getting that promotion; getting that special someone to go out with me; having a baby; getting the kids raised and out on their own; getting the mortgage paid off – but inevitably once we reach any of those goals, there will always be something more to shoot for – an even better job, a bigger house, helping with grandkids, and so on. If we pin our hopes on finding true fulfillment in any of those things, we're setting ourselves up for a fall. If we think that any of those goals in life will quench the thirst of our hearts, we'll be sorely disappointed. Why can't those things truly satisfy? Why do we feel so unfulfilled? The answer is simple – we're seeking our heart's peace and contentment in the gifts of the Creator rather than in the Creator. And that leads to a continual quest for more, but leaves us unfulfilled, unsatisfied, and spiritually thirsty.

Being unfulfilled, unsatisfied, and spiritually thirsty can lead to some ugly places – like frustration, resentment, and despair. Maybe, feeling the severity of your heart's thirst, you'll lash out at those around you; thinking they're the reason you're not happy. Maybe, when you feel the thirst of your heart, you'll lament where you are in life; looking at how good someone who's not as talented as I am has it. Maybe, when you feel the thirst of your heart and the frustration that goes along with it, you'll try to lose yourself – in mindless droning through the day, in a hopeless attitude toward others, in the bottom of a bottle. Trying to satisfy your heart's thirst on your own is a surefire way to separate yourself from your God...but then Jesus showed up.

Consider what amazing love God shows – in coming to us when we couldn't and can't come on our own! Paul said it this way in our second lesson, **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** And, **We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** For the woman at the well, Jesus first had to point out how she had failed miserably to quench her heart's thirst. But he didn't leave her there. He offered her the only thing that truly and eternally satisfies: **living water**, himself! There, at Jacob's well, in flesh and blood is the Son of God, her Creator. To the woman who had tried and tried to find fulfillment in created things rather than the Creator, Jesus appears and shows her the only way to find lasting fulfillment; through faith in him. Before her stood the only One who could fill the void in her heart that none of those husbands or live-in boyfriends could fill: Messiah, called Christ; Jesus. He wouldn't leave her, hurt her, or reject her. He wanted to make her his own child. He wanted to give her **living water** to quench her thirsty heart.



Jesus does the same for you and me. Instead of letting us keep running the rat race of trying to get more, trying to satisfy our hearts with something other than Living Water, Jesus stands before us offering everything; his very self. Jesus loves you so much, he had to do something. He saw the natural state of our hearts and the countless ways we heap sin upon sin on top of it – trying to find satisfaction in goods rather than in God. And so he acted – he took upon himself every one of your sins and mine, and paid for them with his perfect life of obedience. He made himself nothing so that he could give you everything. And I'm not talking about temporary things of this world – like some of the goals we mentioned before. Jesus gives you so much more. And it's no mystery what Jesus wants for you: **Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.** Through the living waters of your baptism, Jesus has connected you to himself and made you his very own. Through faith in Jesus, you have the living water that satisfies all desires – the living water of his forgiveness for your every sin, the living water of your personal promise of eternal life in heaven.

So, is your heart thirsting for something satisfying today? Drink the Living Water – cherish the truth of the good news of your Savior. Is your sin-parched soul seeking relief in the desert of despair? Drink the Living Water. Have you tried and tried with no success to fill a void in your heart? Drink the Living Water. Bring him your emptiness and be filled. Bring him your sin and be forgiven. Bring him your thirsty heart and drink up the good news of his forgiveness and his never-failing love for you. Thank God for living water for thirsty hearts!

Amen

*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 4:7)*