



“The Well Springing Up Within You”

John 4:5-26



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JOHN CHAPTER 4 brings us to a discussion about water, which has fabulous implications for how you should view your Christian life. Listen with the "ears of your heart," as Jesus calls them, as you get the picture.

"Jesus had arrived at a Samaritan city named Sychar, near the parcel of ground that centuries before Jacob had given to his son Joseph. And Jacob's well is still there.

Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

(It was about noon.)

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?' (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is Who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'

She said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us this well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?'

Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.

The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.'

He said to her, 'Go call your husband, and come here.'

The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.'

Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands; and the one whom you have is not your husband; this you have said truly.'

The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.'

Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (He Who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.'

Jesus said to her, 'I Who speak to you am He.'"

Alvin Tofler, author of the book *Future Shock*, has just published another called *The Eco-Spasm Report*. Today we are experiencing "an economic shakeup," he says, "in the midst of an ecological crisis, technological and political upsets, and revolutionary changes in family structure, values, sexual attitudes, military and geo-political power balances." Well, that's a lot of words, but what I think he's saying is that our society is experiencing social spasms which could go into a nervous breakdown.

Whether he's right or wrong, we are really being shaken up. Where do you plan to go for strength? In a day like this, how do you plan to get those resources that can help you be useful for God?

See how Jesus helped this Samaritan woman whose life was practically ruined. He talked to her about two sources of help available to her, two wells from which she could draw. One was a natural well; the other was supernatural. One was a well she had to go to; the other was a well He could bring to her.

THE NATURAL WELL

First, let's think about the natural well, the one she went to. Verses 5 and 6 say that Jesus came and sat by the well, and here came this woman. She had come so many times. Generations had come to Jacob's Well. Weary people were refreshed there; families were supplied with water, from Jacob and Joseph and on down the centuries to Jesus. What a historic place! In a desert climate this well meant survival.

Jews and Samaritans never associated, but a common thirst brought them together. Nevertheless she asked Jesus about this: "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink, since I am a Samaritan woman?"

Actually, we have here a triple wall between these two people. Barrier Number One was that they were a man and a woman. Ordinarily, they wouldn't talk in public. The second was that they were a Jew and a Samaritan; that certainly was a wall.

The third was that Jesus was considered a rabbi and teacher, and she was a woman who was a sinner; and that was a huge wall. In fact, the rabbi forbade their fellow rabbis to greet a woman in public, even if the woman were a wife, or a sister or a daughter. Imagine that!

There was a type of Pharisee that was known as a bleeding Pharisee, because he took this so literally that when he walked down the street he would close his eyes whenever he came to a woman. And so with his eyes closed he would invariably walk into a wall or a post and sometimes end up bloody! And he was known as a bleeding pharisee.

CONFRONTATION

This woman was obviously hostile. She had been walked on for so long by men and by Jews that she was hurting. She brings up the racial issue right away. And I think what she's saying is, "Look here, I've got you. You're thirsty; I've got the cup. You need me!" She says in verse 11, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with..." I think she liked that.

And Jesus is purposely vulnerable. Verse 4 says, "He had to pass through Samaria." Now, there were other routes that He could have taken. But Jesus arranged for this interview. He knew He was going to meet this woman. And He asked her a small favor, that He might give her great grace.

Here was a woman who was caught in life – a life that seemed to box her in: she was a woman, she was a sinner, she was angry about what had happened to her in life, and it seemed that there was no stopping; she would just be going on and on and on, and she was sick of it all – and then Christ met her. She doesn't know it yet; but this is the greatest thing that could ever happen to her.

Jacob's Well is a symbol of all the temporary helps that we try to go to for help in our lives. As verse 13 says, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again."

"Every day," He says to her, "you come to this well laboriously carrying your goatskin or water pots on your head. And you have your bucket and rope and you let down the bucket, some hundred feet, and you pull it up over and over until you finally fill your container, and off you go again, every dragging day." If you go to the Holy Land today, the Arab women, the Bedoin women are still doing the very same thing.

OTHER WELLS

But there were other wells Jesus wanted to talk to her about, -- wells that she was going to for emotional resources, for temporary supplies. They also were not satisfying her, and He was really trying to get to these.

Two are brought out in this passage. One was her relationship with men. In verses 15 through 19 Jesus uncovered this very carefully.

She says, "Sir, give me this water You are talking about, and I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw." Now, I wonder if she didn't pass other wells because her reputation made it tough for her to go to those nearer. Maybe the women all talked about her when she came. And He said to her, "Go call your husband, and come here." (He could have gone all day without saying that!)

The woman said to Him, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You are so right; you have had five husbands, and the man you are now living with is not your husband."

Well, there was probably some tension in the air about that point! She had tried to be satisfied in her deep need by marriage. She had really worked at marriage! She'd tried one type of man, and then another type, and she'd think, "Maybe I could be satisfied if I just had this husband, or that one--!" And she ran through five. Then she said, "Why even get married? Maybe I could get enough of what my heart longs for just by living with a man."

You know, the "swinger" magazines outside our restaurants are huge cries from people who need to be loved and understood. People will compromise anything if only they can get that deep longing in their hearts satisfied! Oh, so many are like this today!

My friend, don't try to get from any person – in marriage or outside of marriage – what only God can give you! These hungers, these longings, are God's voice to you that says, "Turn to Me!"

FALSE SOURCES OF SATISFACTION

Sinclair Lewis has in one of his books a picture of a respectable man who has kicked over the traces and gone out and had an affair. He's talking to his girlfriend and she really cuts through everything and says this:

"On the surface, we seem quite different; but deep down we are fundamentally the same. We are both desperately unhappy about something – and we don't know what it is."

Do you know what this world is craving for today, with all our crazy new arrangements in marriage and out of marriage? Everyone cries out for love that can never be found on a human plane, an acceptance and a fulfillment that only Jesus Christ can supply. Don't try to find it anywhere but in Him.

Marriage can be a well you keep going back to and back to, and you're always dissatisfied. Augustine said, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." This woman had tried marriages and arrangements, and all were found to be temporary wells. Five plus one – that's really contemporary! Friend, it's an empty well.

SUBSTITUTE RELIGIONS

Another well that she kept going to was her religion. She says in verse 20,

"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

"And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.'"

And then He goes on to say, "The hour is here when God Who is a Spirit calls you to worship Him in spirit and in truth." This Samaritan woman had gone to that mountain time and time again to get some "blessing," and then she would come

back again to get another blessing, and then again for another blessing. In fact, Mount Gerizim today is called the "Mount of Blessing." When the Samaritans were cut off from Jerusalem, it was chosen by them as the alternate place to worship. Even today in that small community of the Samaritans the priests in their beautiful robes celebrate the Passover by the actual ritual of killing the lamb.

And Jesus is saying to her, "It isn't the holy place that's going to satisfy you, woman; it's a holy God! You can go back and back and back again, and you won't be satisfied. God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

So, there were these two emotional wells: her marriage relationship and her religion, and she kept returning to them. True faith, real Christianity, Christ is saying here, isn't a place you go to, or a person, a church, a Bible study – none of these things can be to you the source of supply. People come many times to church saying, "Fill 'er up, preacher! I'm so dry! I'll be back again next week, and I'll get filled up again." And the church service becomes their spiritual source of supply. They'll never make it that way!

Or some people say that it's Bible teaching. They go to a church where they have a few of what they call "preliminaries," – they get people in and seated – and then they teach them for forty-five or fifty minutes, or an hour. That church isn't a worship center, it's a Christian information center! And people come to get filled up. They come for a big drink, and they go away, and then they've got to come back again. It becomes a well they go to.

A conference or a retreat can be the same thing. Or some very strong personality. "Oh, isn't he wonderful? I'll come back for a drink from him!" And so people go to a person, and they're always on the run to get filled.

Jesus says, "As long as the well is outside of you, you must go there for satisfaction." But, He says to this woman and to us, "What if this should happen, -- that there should come into your life a source of supply that keeps bubbling up to life eternal? What if there would be a source within you? What if you were to come to your church with the source of supply from within? What if you could come to your marriage with a bubbling source of supply from God for that marriage? What a difference that would make!"

WELL OF LIVING WATER

Now we want to come to the second point. John's Gospel shows specific miracles that prove Christ's deity. This is one of them here. We don't ordinarily think of this as one of the miracles of the Gospel of John, but it certainly is. There can come to

everyone who believes in Christ a well within, which is a bubbling, up-springing source of all you need! In verse 10 Jesus says to her,

“If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is Who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

Verse 14:

“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

You have felt a desperate need. You’ve come to church or somewhere to get help for a bad situation. Jesus says, “Throw your bucket away! Don’t go anywhere. Let Me be in you a well springing up with full supply. Here’s the great miracle I want to give you: an abundance of resources within, with which to cope with life.” Jesus says, “If you will believe, I will put in you that well, so you can continually draw upon it and enjoy it and drink deeply from it.”

In John 1:16 the great John the Baptist says this about Christ and all He is when He comes into our lives: “Of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.” Fullness – that’s what Jesus comes to be to us in our lives.

I preached on this in my first church as a young pastor. One of the hazards of being in a minister’s home is that sometimes you get the sermon over again; and I was going through this at the dinner table, saying to my wife, “you know, Honey, isn’t that marvelous? ‘Grace upon grace!’” We were eating our dessert – cake – and one of our kids said, “Yeah, Dad, ‘cake upon cake!’” And that’s what it is! It’s sweetness upon sweetness, supply upon supply, grace upon grace. “I will be in you a well of water.”

John 7:37 is another statement of this:

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me...’”

(There’s the requirement. You need to believe in Jesus—to rely on and lean on and trust Him and receive Him into your life.)

"He who believes in Me," He says, "as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"

Rivers, friend; rivers of living water. Beautiful, glorious, supplies upon supplies! Jesus died to save you, that's true, but that's only the start. He wants to express His fullness through you: "rivers of living water;" "fullness of grace and truth."

We come back to our text again, and Jesus calls it here "a well springing up to everlasting life."

FROM THE STANCE OF FULLNESS

My dear friends, always begin your thinking and your planning and your deciding from the point of Jesus' fullness in your life. Always begin with the plenty of God! Face life from all you have in Christ. Never face life from all the problems and all the troubles and all the needs. You always must begin with your standing and the fullness of Jesus in your life. If you come into your marriage, or you go into a situation, or you go into the church, or you go into your work... friends, you come through that with rivers of living water splashing out upon everybody!

Every Christian has Christ inside: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Rivers in you – that's glory! A well springing up – that's glory! Fullness of grace and truth – that's glory! That's what Jesus gives you!

The non-Christian must say, "I need Christ." But the Christian should say, "I have Christ; I have Christ!" – and start from there.

Christian, don't go into ministry – into any service or commitment – in the name of needs or difficulties. Go instead in the name of Christ and His fullness.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "It is Christ Who fills all in all." You don't go "over there" to some meeting or person to get something. You simply turn to the Lord Jesus Christ Who is in you. And in the fourth chapter of Ephesians Paul says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." God wants you to be full, my friend! You've got a well inside!

A girl at a college where we were ministering recently said that soon after she came to campus she was off living in one of these "arrangements." She realized that her life was not satisfying, and she was sick in her heart. She said she got a copy of my book, *Lord, Make My Life a Miracle*, and she began to read about how to live in the presence of God and how to enjoy God, God was near, and God was enough, and God would supply for her, --and she said she was encouraged and she turned back to Him again. The final evening we were on campus the service

went from seven o'clock in the evening to after midnight with students pouring out their hearts and confessing and rejoicing. There was real revival. And this girl stood before the student body and said, "Young people, I've done it all, and I know that there's nothing out there. I've been going from one person to another. It wasn't just to fill that longing for love and acceptance, --it was to get counsel." And she said, "People tried to help me, but they couldn't. And then God said to me, 'Why don't you come to Me?'" Then she said, "I did, and I've seen His love, His full forgiveness, His concern for my wholeness. My memories have been healed, and I'm free!"

GOD WITHIN

Dear friend, your circumstances can be bad, but you have a well inside if you believe in Jesus! You can fail, and be sick in heart and body, but if you realize this and draw upon the well inside, Jesus is there. No need to wait. God is a Spirit, He says in verse 24, and "he that worships Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." God is within you. You don't need to go anywhere.

Don't say, "Lord, send me down a blessing." Say, "Express Yourself in me, Lord." And God will.

Of course, there are substitute wells. Some of you have been going to those wells, and you've been going and going and going, and you say, "Is this all there is?" No, it isn't. There's another well, and it's Jesus Himself, springing up to everlasting life. If you have that well within you, draw deeply. And go with that fullness within, wherever you go, whatever you are. Mother, go home to your family with the well inside. Dad, go home with a well inside; go to work with a well springing up inside. There's plenty, fullness, in Him. Praise God!