

Well or Spring?

Ջրհորի թե՛ Աղբիւր

John 4:1-26

I have good memories from Aleppo. When I was a child, my parents took me to my grandparents' home. They were living in the Old City where two or three houses shared a yard with a well in the middle. I remember the smell of the moisture that came from that well. Although the government brought water service to these houses, the well was still there. I used to look inside the deep well and made my mother very anxious!

In the following story, Jesus has an encounter with a Samaritan woman near a well. Let us read:

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ 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.) ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ 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."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ 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." ¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Let us analyze this story:

-Jesus is going with his disciples from **Judea to Galilee**. The Jews usually took the longer way, because the short way passed through Samaria. Please note that the Jews did not want to have any relationship with the Samaritans because they considered them **impure Jews**. Jesus took the short way that meant passing through Samaria. Why? We don't know but after reading the encounter with the Samaritan woman, we have enough reason.

-**Jesus was tired and thirsty**. He found a well and sat down. The disciples went to bring food. He was alone. "**It was about the sixth hour**" (6) which means it was noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well. **What is unusual?** Women **came together** around the well to draw water. They usually **came in the morning**. Why did this woman come at this time and alone? I think she was avoiding the gossip. Her lifestyle was not welcomed in the town. She came alone and at a time when no one would interact with her.

-The woman has an encounter with Jesus.

What is unusual here?

Those days, men did not speak with women in public. One would not speak with women who are not relatives;

another taboo, this woman had moral issues;

another taboo was that Jesus was a Jew and the woman was a Samaritan.

They did not speak to each other.

Jesus broke three important taboos. Why?

Because Jesus believed that **salvation was not for an elite group**. (last week sermon **You don't need to be from right kind of family to belong to the family of Jesus.**) **Jesus came for all nations and all cultures.**

Who is the Samaritan Woman?

She had a tough life; we don't know the details. She could be married and divorced or widowed for five times, and now lived with a man who was not her husband. So, there are questions about her morality?

Yet, Jesus had a way to minister to **all kinds of people**. He ministered to the cast out, and on the other hand, to a "righteous" Pharisee like Nicodemus.

He ministered to the people who were "in the boat", like the disciples who saw the miracles and could not understand, and to the Roman Centurion

who believed in Jesus. He ministered to two thieves who were crucified next to him; one believed in him and the other rejected him.

-Let's come back to the well.

A conversation started between Jesus and the woman.

Jesus was thirsty and asked for water.

The woman tried to find excuses not to give him water.

Jesus entered into a deeper conversation with her.

The woman asked whether Jesus was greater than Jacob.

Jesus started talking **about the Living Water**, water that satisfies our **inner person**.

The woman asked more questions that only turned around the bush.

*We do this in our lives. **We do not face our inner problems.** We talk about things that cannot change our lives. Jesus challenged her and gave real solutions about the real thirst in her life.*

-Maybe it is the first time this woman is talking with a man who respects her and give solutions to her problems.

The woman was creating a conversation trying to not face her real problems.

Jesus was answering her questions step by step in order to bring her to the fact that **her life was empty without Jesus.**

He wanted to tell her that her "bucket can draw water for now, **but that will give you temporary satisfaction.**"

The question is: a **Well** or a **Spring of Living Water?**

Jesus offers the woman a **Spring of Living Water** that brings life, everlasting life.

-**Thirst** is one of the most powerful spiritual symbols in all scripture.

David says:

-As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (Psalm 42;1,2)

-I spread out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. (Psalm 143:6)

Jesus said:

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6)

"On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, **streams of living water will flow from within him.**" (John 7:37-38)

Jesus is saying to this woman:

"Stop drinking from this 'worldly well'. You are always going to be dissatisfied. Five husbands did not satisfy you; nothing can satisfy you."

Isn't it true?

We do look for our satisfaction all over and we think we found it... but then we are thirsty again.

Let us Summarize (application)

First, the Living Water is available to us, but we MUST HAVE DESIRE AND THIRST for it.

When Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman about the water that gives eternal life, she misunderstood. She was thinking in worldly terms. Most likely, she said in her mind, “How nice it will be to have a spring at home. We will not have to come to the well to draw water; we are not going to be thirsty again.” Her mind was full of worldly things. She could not understand what Jesus was trying to tell her.

It happens with us. When we are occupied, extremely occupied, **we cannot see anything**. We need to have the **desire** for God’s water. Listen to what Jesus is saying, “**If anyone is thirsty...**” Before having a close relationship with God, one has to have the desire and thirst for that. That desire cannot stop. It should always be there.

Second, we need to recognize that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the only solution for our problems.

The Samaritan woman eventually got the message when Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah.

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything. Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” (John 4:25 NIV 11)

She left her jar and ran to her village, (to those who gossiped) (28).

She found out that the “jar” is not doing its role in her life. She finally understood that the issue is to find the **Spring of Living Water** and not the **water of the well**.

Finally, she realized yes, there is someone bigger than Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (remember the name of the well was Jacob’s Well)

Third, Worshiping God in Spirit and Truth

We sometimes argue how we should worship. Which style is the right one? Which musical instrument is the right one? The place, which church... and on and on.

Jesus is challenging the woman and us today. **“The true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth for they are the kind of worshipers that Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in Spirit and truth.”** (John 4:23-24 NIV 11)

Didn't we experience this during the pandemic? Worshiping God is not designated to one place, church building. Our homes became churches. We can worship God anywhere; the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. We missed coming together, but what if we cannot come together? That should not stop us from worshiping God.

Come to God in right attitude, empty, poor, thirsty, so you will be filled with His Living Water.

“Blessed are the poor in Spirit,” says Jesus. It means you have emptied yourself so that God will fill you with the LIVING WATER.

Fourth, the Samaritan Woman became the First Missionary.

I love the way the story ends; in fact, it begins. This woman whose name we do not know, goes and finds her people and tells them about Jesus. She is the first missionary for that Samaritan town.

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him. (28-30)

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. (39-41)

This is the message that Jesus is trying to give to the woman and to us today. Stop turning around and around your problems. **Jesus has the Spring of Living Water.**

-Who is the Samaritan woman today in your life?

Maybe you are one of those who gossip about the “Samaritan woman.” Can you examine your life? Can you tell them about the spring of Living Water that gives them real satisfaction?

-Are you the Samaritan woman looking for water? Do not leave this place without allowing Jesus to give you water from the Spring of Living Water.

Amen

Additional Notes:

-The first question I would like to ask you this morning is, **“Who is the Samaritan woman today?”**

Think about the people who you believe are not accepted.

Perhaps they are people who you are not comfortable relating to.

Perhaps they are people with a different set of values.

And maybe they are people who do not seem to live as you believe they should.

*Consider Solomon, his wealth and wisdom. What did he write in the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 2?

First, he tried a wild life- partying all the time ¹I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless.

¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor.² "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?" He tried all the pleasures of life and nothing made any sense. 700 wives and 300 concubines!

Then, alcohol could not solve his problems: ³ I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.

Then he tried wealth that might solve his problems: ⁴ I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. ⁵ I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. ⁸ I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. ⁹ I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

Then he arrived at wisdom. He asked for wisdom and wisdom in itself was not enough.

¹² Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done? ¹³ I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness.

Finally, he found meaning only in God, in relationship with God.