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Living Water

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Series: Let God Be God



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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Perhaps you can identify. You and some friends have been invited out to dinner at one of those all-you-can-stuff places where you pay one price and then the quantity you eat is left up to you. Each time you go, you are convinced that *this time will be different*. But somehow, when your eyes behold that overstuffed table, they send a signal to your stomach saying, “This is it. Go for it. After all, you haven’t eaten for nearly two hours.” So you “go for it”. Twelve helpings of mashed potatoes, three servings of roast beef, five dinner rolls, and a couple of slices of chocolate cake a-la-mode to top it off, and you feel rescued from starvation, at least for the moment. The people at your table have all turned green just watching you, and driving home you begin to turn green as well. And here is your momentous resolution — “I’m not going to eat again for a week.”

The interesting thing is, that come the next morning, you stagger down to the kitchen, stomach aching, head reeling, still asking the question of the ages, “What’s for breakfast?” You ate enough food at one sitting to feed half the starving people in the world, and eight hours later, your insatiable appetite is crying once again. Why you should *ever* have to eat again, after that embarrassing demonstration of gluttony, no one knows; yet here you are, bacon and eggs before you, ready to go at it again.

I’ll tell you why. Because the appetites of the flesh are *never* satisfied. The flesh cannot store up nourishment or pleasure and release it later in predetermined amounts. The flesh is satisfied momentarily, but always cries out for more. That is because nothing the flesh can do will last. Nothing.

The Spirit, on the other hand, is exactly the opposite. Everything the Spirit does is eternal. God’s brand on a man or woman is permanent. God’s Word in a man or woman’s heart is permanent. God’s love, implanted in a man or woman’s life, will never depart. In fact, in direct opposition to the flesh, *whatever the Spirit does in your life, if freed to do so, actually multiplies and continues to produce fruit.*

In other words, it is possible to eat and never be hungry again. It is possible to drink and never thirst again. It is possible.

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Again, the flesh cannot understand that, for the flesh thinks in *physical* terms; but it *is possible*. And the story we are about to read from the life of God on earth was designed to magnify for us that amazing contrast between that which is born of the flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit.

Our Scripture is found in Matthew, chapter 4; Luke, chapter 3; and John, chapter 4. We will be using the harmony of those three passages, as found in The Life of Christ in Stereo.

²Now Herod, the tetrarch, on being rebuked by John about Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and all the evil things Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison. ³When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was winning and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but rather his disciples), ¹and when he heard that John had been arrested, ³he left Judea and ¹withdrew ³again into Galilee.

And he needed to pass through Samaria. He came therefore to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the portion of land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being worn from the journey, sat in weariness by the well. It was about six in the evening.

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "*Give me some to drink.*" For his disciples had gone away into the city to purchase food. Then said the woman of Samaria to Him, "How is it that you, a *Jew*, are asking a drink of *me*, a woman of Samaria? (For the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, "*If you had known the gift of God, and Who he is who says to you, 'Give me some to drink,' you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water.*"

The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from where then do you have the *living water*? Are *you* greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said to her, "All who drink of this water will thirst again; but anyone who drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst again, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into *everlasting life*."

(¹Matthew 4:12, ²Luke 3:19-20, ³John 4:1-14)¹

¹ The Life of Christ in Stereo: The Four Gospels Speak in Harmony; by Johnston M. Cheney; © 1969 Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, Oregon

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There is, then, such a thing as a Living Fountain, a wellspring that flows unceasingly, a stream that pours into and through a life that so satisfies that a life need never thirst again. There is such a thing as Living Bread, that once taken, satisfies the need of man forever and causes him to be eternally filled. There is. Jesus said so. And if Jesus said so, then we can write that down in the archives of our hearts as an absolute. We may not understand it; but the fact that we cannot understand it without divine wisdom, all the more guarantees us that it is true. Living Water. Springs of life. What a promise! What a God!

That is the title of this lesson is “Living Water”.

The Outline:

I-The Way the Master Walked

II-The Question the Master Asked

III-The Offer the Master Made

I- THE WAY THE MASTER WALKED

You and I probably never would have had this encounter. In the first place, we never would have gone through Samaria. It was not the place for a Jew to go, for the enmity between the two peoples was so pronounced that this woman was obviously taken back simply because Jesus spoke to her. Secondly, had we, for some reason, passed that way, in all likelihood, we never would have spoken to the woman. First, she was a woman (and in Jesus' day that was stigma enough); secondly she was a Samaritan; and thirdly, she was obviously not the kind of person you and I would have wanted to be associated with. “After all”, we would have surmised, “we have our reputations to think about.”

Remember, however, that the primary reason for this study is to seek to discern how Jesus behaves in the marketplace of life. Therefore, we must cautiously observe *why Jesus went through Samaria*, and *why Jesus spoke to this woman*.

The thoughts of God are higher than our thoughts, and His heart beats with a decidedly different beat. The Scripture clearly tells us that. Jesus had to go through Samaria. Not because it was convenient. Not because it was easy. Not because it was acceptable to his team. It probably wasn't. No, Jesus had to go through Samaria because there was someone in Samaria who needed Him. There was someone in Samaria, whom no one else would ever dare to even talk to, and who was a prime candidate

for salvation. She was somebody nobody wanted, somebody whose reputation would have made her basically unacceptable in the local church. Jesus went through Samaria, even at perhaps great personal risk to Himself, because He had an appointment with destiny in Samaria. He had an appointment with a woman who was morally corrupt and theologically confused, but she knew she had a need. That was all Jesus was looking for.

Jesus had to go through Samaria because His Father had someone in Samaria for Him to talk to, and Jesus had to speak to this woman because she was that someone. You and I so often try to relate to those where we work, or those where we live who are the most acceptable to us, assuming wrongfully, that these would be the most acceptable to God. And yet, so often, the outcast, the downtrodden, the misunderstood, the socially ill-adjusted, the perennial failures who cross our paths each day in the marketplace are the ones Jesus would have been most likely to stop and engage in conversation, not because He was looking for friends, but because He was looking for souls. He was a fisher of men, and He had come to seek and to save those who were lost. Those are not always life's success stories. They are often life's castoffs. Jesus invested most of His life in the blind, the lame, the leper, the hungry, the lonely, the angry, the mourner, the scorner, the beggar, the thief. Life's losers were prime candidates for a Christ-led fishing expedition. Don't ever forget it. You and I need to reexamine the waters in which we search for souls. We all want to win the clean-cut, socially-acceptable success stories to Christ. So few want to walk where Jesus walked; so few want to talk to those to whom Jesus talked. Jesus *had* to go through Samaria. So do we.

II- THE QUESTION THE MASTER ASKED

Now listen carefully to the question Jesus asked this woman once He had engaged her in conversation. Just how He had succeeded in sending all of the disciples off together for food, we don't know. At any rate, Jesus was there alone. And a woman came to draw water from the well.

Jesus, as He so often did, opened the conversation with a question. He didn't hand her a tract and say, "God loves you, sister". He didn't begin to recite a pre-recorded transcription reserved for all potential converts. He looked around and tried to find something in the area, something physical, that both of

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them could relate to, and He asked her a question, so that she had no choice but to respond. In essence, He looked at her with those penetrating eyes of His and simply asked, “I wonder if you would be so kind as to fetch me a glass of water?”

Hardly what you would call a classic introduction to a lesson in evangelism. But you see, Jesus wanted to talk to her *about* water, about a kind of water this woman had never seen before. To do that, He had to begin by calling her attention to the props His Heavenly Father had created on earth to teach heavenly Truth. Yes, God created water for a myriad of physical reasons, not the least of which would be to sustain life. But mark it! Everything God ever made has a distinctly higher purpose than that which the mind of man sees as its reason for existence. Everything.

For instance, God did not look around one day, see the trees, and suddenly determine that they would make a good illustration of spiritual growth. Our creator God and creative God designed the tree, planted it on planet earth, with all of its thousands of types and kinds and purposes because He wanted a physical prop to teach a spiritual truth. Sure, He found lots of ways to use trees in this physical kingdom: to feed us, to shade us, to give us raw materials from which to build the houses we live in and the offices we work in; but *His primary reason for designing the tree was spiritual*. Paul said it best in Romans, chapter one:

since what may be known about God is plain to them, ...

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:19a,20 NIV)

Without excuse. Why? Because our God designed the universe and everything in it to teach spiritual truth. The textbook of eternity is carefully inscribed on the scrolls of every hillside, beautifully illustrated by every majestic mountain peak, carefully explained by every winding stream. It is forever bound in the cloth of the clouds, carefully covered by the web of the wind, wonderfully etched on the paper of nature. Life on planet earth is a picture book of the Eternal God...but only to those whose eyes have been opened by His Spirit to behold its beauty. You and I need to ask ourselves, “How creative are we in the way we approach those who are living in darkness? Do we use to the maximum the backdrop of this physical world we live in as the teaching tool it was intended to be? Are we creative in

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lovingly designing questions that invite a response that leads to a response? Or are we more creative in how we teach in the classrooms of life than we are in how we teach in the sacred halls of eternity? Jesus in us will be sensitive in His approach to those who are searching. We must free God to be God in us in our evangelism.

So water and wells and thirst were natural commodities custom designed by a sovereign Creator for just a moment such as this. For the purpose of water to be fulfilled in the plan of God, water had to be used to demonstrate spiritual truth. “*Woman, would you fetch me a glass of water?*” the Master asked. And the stage was set for the drama of eternity to be enacted on the stage of reality once again. Water was to be the divine catalyst at the center of it all.

The woman’s response indicated that she was in awe, not at what Jesus had said, but at this point, she was in awe that He had said anything to her. So she replied:

“How is it that You, being a *Jew*, ask a drink from *me*, a Samaritan woman?”
(John 4:9 NKJV)

“How is it that you, a high and mighty Jew, would even speak to me. Don’t you know, sir, that I am a Samaritan?” she replied. Jesus responds by telling her that if she only knew who it was she was speaking to, she would have asked Him for something of infinitely more value than the water He was asking of her. *Living Water* would have been hers for the asking, the Master quietly informed her. But once again, He spoke of things spiritual, and she thought only of things physical, because she had no Spirit within her to interpret spiritual truth.

Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.
Where then do you get that *living water*?

Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?
(John 4:11,12 NKJV)

“Thanks for the offer, kind sir,” she responded, “but don’t you understand HOW DEEP THIS WELL IS? What would you use to draw up the water?” Now Jacob’s well is best estimated to have a depth of no less than 65 and no more than 100 feet. In order to get water from a well of such depth, a rope would be fastened to a leather bucket or an earthen jar, and the rope would be lowered, either by means of a pulley, or sometimes by simply sliding the

rope a little at a time, down the edge of the well.

It was obvious that Jesus had nothing with Him that would allow Him to draw water from that incredibly deep well. The woman, therefore, was questioning the credibility of Jesus' claims of possessing *Living Water*, because she could only see that which was temporal, and there was no way this foreigner with the penetrating eyes was going to give her any water of any kind. Who did He think He was? Was He claiming to have something better than Jacob himself? The world, you see, simply cannot be quiet long enough to listen to the sounds of eternity. So quick they are to feed the Words of Life into their computers, which have been programmed in the language of this life, and come up with a message of scepticism and doubt. Oh, how patient Jesus was. Oh, how patient Jesus is. He just lets the conversation run its course until the world runs out of excuses. Then He quietly moves in with Truth.

III- THE OFFER THE MASTER MADE

Whoever (all) who drinks of this water will thirst again,

but whoever (anyone) who drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into *everlasting life*.
(John 4:13,14 NKJV)

Jesus did not make fun of the woman's ignorance of spiritual truth, nor did He try to impress her with his evangelical jargon. He understood the world she lived in. He too, walked those dusty roads. He, too, hungered. He, too, thirsted. He too, got weary. In fact, we read just a few moments ago:

Jesus therefore, being worn from the journey, sat in weariness by the well.
(John 4:6b TLOCIS¹)

Jesus understands our weariness and our worries. He understands. He has been tested in every way as we have. So He does not make light of our spiritual blindness. Remember, He has not come to condemn us; He has come to transform us, to save us, to make us whole. With a patient love so characteristic of the nature of God, Jesus goes on and explains to this slow-of-understanding woman that *there is another kind of water*. Something she has never seen before. It is of a different substance, because it has a different purpose. Like real water, it satisfies thirst. Like real water, it sustains life. Like real water, it cools the fevered brow. Like real water, it sweeps through the

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parched valleys of life and there springs up from the deserts of our existence, the rich, green testimonies of life borne out of death.

And yet, unlike real water, this *living water*, feeds the soul of man, rather than the body of man. And unlike real water, this living water has that one divine characteristic that sets apart that which is physical from that which is spiritual. It lasts forever. Jesus could have filled her cup with the cool, satisfying water from Jacob's well, and in a matter of minutes, with the scorching sun beating on her brow, she would have been thirsty again. "Ah, but this water that I shall give you." the Master responds, "drink of it...fill your cup to the brim with its life-giving power... and YOU WILL NEVER THIRST AGAIN!"

Never thirst again? That's what our Lord said. *Never* thirst again. Instead of temporarily meeting a physical need, this water that I will give you, Jesus adds, will become a FOUNTAIN, a living fountain, taking up its roots inside of your soul and welling up within you, constantly, continuously, eternally pouring forth into your life, life-giving transformation. Living Water. An eternal fountain. You need NEVER thirst again.

You say, "Boy, if only I had a commodity like that to sell, I'd rush into the highways and byways of this world and shout it from the mountaintops, "Living Water—get yours here!" Oh, Beloved, not only do you have it; you don't need to sell it; it's free! And like this confused Samaritan woman, there's a whole world out there dying of spiritual thirst, who are just waiting for someone to come along with the ladle of eternity and fill their cup with life.

The key word in this whole confrontation, I believe, is this word translated "*fountain*". In James 3:11, it is rendered "spring". It literally means "the source from which nourishment comes". It speaks, metaphorically, of the nature of God when He is indwelling the life of a man, filling him, flooding him, with life-giving power and strength. So we read in Revelation 7:

They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;

For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

(Revelation 7:16,17 NKJV)

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Living fountains. Living waters. An unceasing measure of the character of God pouring into us and through us for all eternity. That will be heaven. But there is a foretaste of heaven on earth that is ours for the taking. It is the process of setting the Spirit of God free to be Himself in us. When we do that, springs of living water, everlasting springs, implanted in our souls when Christ came in, begin to issue forth through our entire beings, cleansing us, filling us, satisfying our seemingly insatiable thirst for things eternal.

You have to go to a well and draw up water constantly. It tends to become stagnant, and tends to become depleted. Not so with a fountain. A fountain flows, unhindered. It brings constant refreshment, continual cleansing, and produces an array of beauty to a world who is watching in amazement. Sure, a fountain will slow down, if dirt or corrosion is allowed to hinder its flow. But as soon as you remove the impediment, once again it springs forth with life and ushers forth as though it had never missed a beat.

Living water. Jesus said, “Woman, I have something I would like to give you. It acts like water, because My Father had it in mind when He created water. It’s called the Spirit of God. I would like to plant it inside of your corroded life, if only you’ll let me. It will pour through those jaded corners of your heart and set you free at last. Not like the kind of water you draw from this well. You drink of it, and you thirst again. I want you to have Living Water. I want you to experience the reality of God living His life in you and through you. Taste of it. You will never again long for your Spirit to be satisfied. It will never stop being satisfied. For this *living water* will be like a spring, bubbling up inside of you giving you eternal, abundant, life.

In the next lesson, we will see just how this unusual prospect for eternity handled the Master’s unusual offer. It was to go down in Biblical history as one of the greatest conversations God ever had with a man or woman.

But for now, may I simply appeal to you, even as Jesus appealed to this woman, “You don’t need to leave this place hungering and thirsting for Truth; in fact you *never need thirst again*. You can taste eternity before you walk another inch, and in the process, give the God who made you the right to return to within you the wellspring of spiritual joy for which you were

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created.”

Living Water. Are you thirsty? Then drink of it, Beloved. It is free to whoever will but taste it. And once you taste it, unlike anything you have ever experienced before, *you will never thirst again.*

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Living water, oh, what bliss!
Can God give such joy as this?
Like a spring that flows and flows
Bringing life where e'er it goes.

Planted deep within the heart
Constant life there to impart
Cleansing all the dreadful sin
Never to be seen again.

Living water, oh, what joy!
God, His power to employ,
Taking us through lands so dry
Still the floodtide will not die.

All of God in each of us
As His Spirit, He entrusts
Let it flow, oh, let it pour
He is mine forever more!

This is living, can't you see?
Life as it was meant to be.
Jesus living deep within
We shall *never thirst again!*

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