

Jesus Quenches Our Thirst!

(John 4:4–26) 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.”

In Christ Jesus, the Wellspring of life, dear fellow redeemed,

It was noon, the hottest, driest part of the day. Most of her neighbors drew water from the town well in the cool of morning or in the early evening. It was a daily chore — but it was also a community moment. It was a chance to catch up with friends, to share news, and to stay connected. You’d seldom think of going alone. Noon, however, was different. At noon the roads were quieter, and the walk much lonelier. So that’s when she came to the well, expecting to find what she usually found at that hour – solitude – a few moments without whispers or sideways glances. She expected to hear only the sound of the bucket hitting the water below.

Instead, she found someone already sitting there – a tired traveler – a Jewish rabbi. And before she could draw a single drop of water, he spoke to her: **“Will you give me a drink?” (John 4:7).** The request sounds ordinary enough. But it isn’t. Because beneath the surface of this conversation is a need much more urgent than that of dry throat. Here we find a thirsty soul longing for something more than this world can give. And she is not alone. Today the Bible shows us that Jesus Quenches Our Thirst 1) like nothing else can; 2) as only he can.

Our text begins: **“Now [Jesus] had to go through Samaria.” (John 4:4).** He had to, not because he had no other route. In fact, many Jews went around Samaria to avoid it altogether. There was

history there—centuries of hostility between Jews and Samaritans. So, this wasn't about geography. It was all about grace. There was someone there Jesus needed to help—a weary soul in desperate need of living water.

John tells us that Jesus arrives at Jacob's well, tired from the journey. And as we've heard, he asks for a drink. But instead of a sip of water, he gets a pointed reply: **“You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (John 4:9).** You can almost hear the tension in her voice. Who does this Jewish rabbi think he is—talking to a Samaritan woman in public no less? But Jesus isn't your typical Jewish rabbi. He moves quickly to the heart of the matter. **“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.” (John 4:10).**

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? (John 4:11). She's thinking about ropes and buckets as she peers down the deep well in front of her. Jesus, of course, is talking about something much deeper. **“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst...”** That's quite a promise! But he's not finished. **“...Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14).** How amazing! Water that quenches all thirst forever. And you don't even need a bucket—because this water is not drawn from outside of you. It becomes a spring of water within you.

Think about it! Jacob's well could satisfy thirst for a few hours. But before long, the thirst would return. And that's true, not only of ordinary water, but of all the ordinary things we turn to as we try to quench our thirsty souls on our own. This is not obvious to the Samaritan woman. **“Sir,” the woman said, “give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” (John 4:15).** She is thinking about convenience, about avoiding the walk, and more to the point, avoiding her neighbors' looks and ridicule. If she never had to come back to this well again, that would be, in her mind, relief enough. What she does not see, however, is how deep her thirst really runs. So, Jesus shows her: **“Go, call your husband, and come back.” “I have no husband,” (John 4:16-17)** she replies. And now Jesus, out of concern for her soul, does what must be done. He lays her life open before 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.” (John 4:17-18).** Do you see how spiritually parched she was? Again and again, she had gone looking for relief, hoping that the next relationship would finally give her the security and wholeness her heart was craving. But it didn't. Five times her marriages had ended in heartache. In fact, she had gone back to that same well so often that now she wasn't even trying to rebuild anymore. She was simply settling.

How sad! But before we are too quick to shake our heads at her poor choices, it might be worth asking a question. If we were the ones sitting at that well talking to Jesus, what would Jesus send us off to fetch? What part of our life would he lay open? Would he say, “Go, bring your calendar,” to demonstrate that you have been trying to quench your thirst with the busyness of life and list of accomplishments? Would he say, “Go bring your bank statement,” to show you that you've been looking for security in what you earn and save? Would he say, “Go, bring that relationship you depend on,” because you have been hoping another person could give you the satisfaction and value you crave? What would Jesus have you fetch? The wells we visit may be different, but the thirst is the same.

With the Savior's help, we can now see that our problem isn't simply that from time to time we choose the wrong well. The problem is that we allow our sinful nature to keep taking us back to that well. We keep looking for security, for worth, for life itself in all the wrong places. How foolish we are. How sinful we are. Instead of turning to the God who made us, we try to fill our thirsty souls with things that were never meant to save us. Again and again, we return to those wells—hoping this time they will finally bring us satisfaction. But they can't. Because what our souls truly

need is something that only Jesus can give—something that quenches our thirst like nothing else can.

And so in his great love, that's exactly what Jesus does. He quenches that thirst as only he can. Watch how he does this in our text. After Jesus reveals the woman's great thirst, she quickly tries to redirect the discussion. She starts talking about religion. **"Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain," she says, "but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." (John 4:20).** Don't we try to do the same thing when God's law touches something uncomfortable in our lives? We try to change the subject. We pose religious questions. We debate traditions and practices—anything to keep from dealing with the deeper issue. But Jesus cares too much to let such important moments slip away. You see that here with the Samaritan woman. Jesus doesn't get bogged down in the argument. Instead, he directs her attention to something far more important than talk of mountains and temples.

"A time is coming," Jesus says, "when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth." (John 4:21,23). In other words, the real issue is not location. The real issue is the heart. True worship isn't merely a matter of standing in the right place or saying the right words. It comes from hearts renewed by God's Spirit through God's saving truth. And that is exactly what Jesus came to do.

The woman seems to sense that this moment is pointing to something far bigger than she expected. She says, **"I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." (John 4:25).** And then it happens. Jesus says something that changes everything—for the woman and for us: **"I, the one speaking to you—I am he." (John 4:26).** The one she had been waiting for was sitting right in front of her—the Messiah, the Savior, the only One who could give her living water as promised—a sweeping flood of forgiveness that would come at such a great price to him. In just a few short years, this same Jesus would offer himself as the world's substitute on the altar of the cross. There, he bore the curse for every one of our sins—including our every empty attempt to satisfy our own sin-parched souls. The one who promised living water traded places with us, crying out from the cross, **"I thirst." (John 19:28).**

And because he bore our sin and conquered our curse, the words Jesus spoke at Jacob's well still echo with comfort and power: "I am he." I am he who forgives your sins. I am he who gives rest to your weary conscience. I am he who knows the broken places in your life and does not turn away.

I am he who gives you living water that wells up to eternal life. The Savior who met that woman at the well so long ago, still seeks out thirsty souls today. Just as he had to go through Samaria, so he still goes out of his way to meet us where we are. He sits with us in his Word. He washes us in the water of Baptism. He places on our lips the body and blood given and shed for us. Again and again, our Risen Savior comes to quench our thirst with the living water of his grace.

So, when your soul feels thirsty—when sin's guilt weighs on your heart and you wonder if God could still love you, listen to Jesus who says: "I am he—the proof of God's love for you." When the wells of this world run dry—as they always do—when success, relationships, and achievements all fail to give the peace they promise—Jesus says: "I am your peace with God." When your heart longs for security, for worth, and for a place where you finally belong—Jesus says: "I am yours and you are mine forever." What a comfort to know that the Savior who met that woman at the well still meets thirsty souls today to offer this same life-giving promise: **"Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst." (John 4:14).** So, drink deeply, dear friends, every chance you get. Let Jesus quench your thirst, as only he can. Amen.