

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church
Shobnier, Illinois
Lent 3A
March 15, 2020
John 4:5-30, 39-42

Living Water for the Thirsty Soul

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." . . . "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:10, 14 ESV)

Dearly Beloved in Christ, the only Savior of the world:

You've probably heard that you should drink a lot of water each day to be healthy. I've even heard that by the time you **feel** thirsty, you're already dehydrated. You need to drink before you feel thirsty. And while water is necessary for our body's well-being, it's even more so for our soul's welfare.

The woman Jesus met at the well that day was thirsty, even if she didn't know it. When Jesus asked her for a drink He was awakening a spiritual thirst within her. He said, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." How could this be? Where was He going to get this living water from? The well was deep, and Jesus apparently had no way to draw from the well. She didn't understand what Jesus was talking about because she didn't know who He was. But this was going to change.

So Jesus answers, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." With this kind of water, she wouldn't have to come out to this well day after day. She wouldn't have to bear the heat of the day to draw the water and carry it home.

So naturally, she's interested. Who wouldn't be? Still thinking of earthly matters, she said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." It appears that she was only interested in the here and now. It seems that she had only heard the first part of what Jesus had said. She had only heard the part about not being thirsty again. And that sounded great.

Now Jesus was certainly creating a thirst within her, but she wasn't yet ready for the water He offered. So He tells her, "Go, call your husband and come here." When she said she didn't have a husband, Jesus replied, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." This

created a thirst in this woman that only He could quench. With His words He laid bare her soul. With pinpoint precision He cut to the heart of the matter, her sin.

When she seems to change the subject, Jesus leads her to faith in Him. Indeed, true worship of God is not limited to a certain location. Rather, true worship of God is to accept the Gift He offers. True worship of God is to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins. True worship of God is to drink the “living water” of forgiveness and eternal life. True worship of God is not a matter of where as much as it is a matter of how it takes place. True worship is done in spirit and in truth. And all this is God’s doing and not our own.

To this the woman confesses her faith in the coming Messiah. When He appears, He will explain everything. Her thirst had been increased to the point where she craved for relief. So Jesus quenches her thirst with the words, “I who speak to you am he.” He is the Messiah promised in the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, the scriptures of the Samaritans. He is the living water welling up to eternal life. With the forgiveness of her sins, her thirst was quenched. She now knew who had asked her for a drink. She knew her Savior. And she knew the living water which gave her life.

And Jesus gives us living water too. He wants this water to “become in [us] a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” So what sin does He need to expose in your life? What sin saps life from you? What sin do you keep hidden - from others and from yourself? A word or a deed from long ago spoken or done by you or to you? An insatiable need for gossip? Adulterous desires and actions? An unending lust for power or money or control? A lackadaisical attitude toward God and His Word? An overblown interest or involvement in sports or entertainment? An unquenchable desire to be loved by this world? A never-ending contempt for those God has put in authority over you? Hatred or desire for revenge toward someone? A lack of trust in God’s provision for your needs? Something else?

Beloved, in His mercy, He confronts us with our sin. Not to condemn us, but to make us thirsty for the living water He would give us. He does not want us remaining in our sin. He wants to give to each of us “living water welling up to eternal life.” He wants each of us worshipping upon His mountain where He pours out His gifts upon us. He wants us bathing in His water, eating from His nail-pierced hands, and drinking from His riven side.

For the One offering living water is the One Who gives Himself for you upon the cross. He is the One who suffers thirst beyond measure as He hangs on the cross bearing your sins and the sins of the world. He gives Himself so that you would know without a doubt that your sins are forgiven. He gives Himself so that your sins can’t hurt you anymore because you don’t have to keep them secret. You can do exactly what the woman did. You can confess them. And Jesus forgives them.

To be sure, we don’t like having our sins pointed out to us. It’s uncomfortable. It’s even painful at times. We’d rather deal with our sins in our own way, perhaps even ignoring them or sloughing them off as though they weren’t really so bad. But doing so only leaves us thirsty,

with no hope of having it quenched. So Jesus holds our sins before us to make us thirsty for the living water which will satisfy our deepest thirst and give us eternal life.

And when we have such thirst, when we hunger and thirst for righteousness, Jesus satisfies that thirst as only He can. He gives us Himself. So Isaiah 55 invites us: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters" (v. 1). Jesus says, "He who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). The One who is the Alpha and the Omega says, "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts," (Rev. 21:6) and "let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17). Thus, Jesus invites us to drink of Him, the life-giving water, that is, He invites us to believe and to trust in Him for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Without this water, called Jesus, we die! We die in our trespasses, our iniquity, our guilt, our thirst. But with this water, this living water, which Jesus pours out in abundance in a never-ending stream, we have life, and we have it abundantly. God grant that each of us thirsts for that living water and drink of it often so that the thirst of our souls would be quenched. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener