



LIVING WATER

John 4:1-30; 39-42

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Big Idea: Never settle for anything less than living water.

Breaking the Rules:

Rule #1: Religious people don't travel through Samaria.

Rule #2: Deity doesn't get tired or hungry.

Rule #3: Godly women don't go to the well at noon.

Rule #4: Godly men don't talk to women publicly.

Jesus offers living water for your soul.

John 4:13-15 NIV

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,
14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him 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."

What is the living water? The Holy Spirit

John 7:37-39 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. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Without living water the soul is dead in sin.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Jesus won't tolerate religious trivia; he offers transformation.

John 4:25-26

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 who speak to you am he." (Literally, "I AM")

Read for next Sunday: John 4:31-38

LifeGroup Study Guide for John 4:1-30 and 39-45

Sermon Title: Living Water

1. Some pastors believe that Jesus' methodology (how He equipped His disciples) is as important as His message (what He told His disciples to do). As John states the reason for Jesus and His disciples leaving Judea (4:1-3), he also records in a parenthetical way in verse two that "Jesus Himself did not baptize but His disciples." What do you think this statement tells us about how Jesus equipped His disciples?

As you reflect on your spiritual journey, what have been some of the things that have helped you to experience spiritual growth?

2. First Century Jewish historian Joesphus stated that because of historic tensions between the Jews and Samaritans only when a Jew was pressed for time, would they take the shorter route from Judea to Galilee and go through Samaria. In verse four we are told, "He needed to go through Samaria." This statement stands in contrast to the fact that following Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, He and his disciples stayed two days before departing from Sychar (vs 43). What might be some of the reasons that Jesus was willing to adjust his schedule?

Describe a time when you were willing to make last minute changes and saw God work in an unexpected way?

3. Our first impression of the "Woman at the Well" is that she was a woman of questionable moral character. Based on her conversation with Jesus and the quick response of the people in Sychar to her testimony, how else might you describe her? (9, 11, 15, 17, 19-20, 25, and 29-30)

Often we see in scripture where God powerfully used people who had, from a worldly perspective, "little promise." Describe someone whose spiritual growth has surprised you. What were some of the qualities that you think made a difference in that person's life?

Often when we look at our own lives we can focus on the things that keep us from being everything that God would want us to be.

What are some of the things that you believe limit your ability to serve God more effectively?

4. In verses 10-14, Jesus uses figurative language with spiritual implications (“living water” in vs 10 and “fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” in vs 14) that flows naturally out of her reason for being at the well (to draw water) and from His request for a drink of water. From your knowledge of scripture, what are some other occasions when Jesus used the immediate physical context of an encounter as a transition to a spiritual conversation or as a spiritual illustration?

Describe a time when God used a statement or a situation to open the door for you to have a spiritual conversation with someone. If this has not happened to you, can you think of a scenario in your daily life that it could?

5. In verses 20-24, the conversation clearly shifts to spiritual things and the woman points out that the Samaritans and Jews differed on where they thought the proper place of worship was located. Jesus quickly dismissed the issue of location and shifted to the topic of a person’s attitude/heart: “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (vs 24). How would you describe what it means to worship in spirit and truth?

Like the Samaritans and Jews, Christians can struggle with the attitude that worship is done in a place (a church building) rather than with the proper spirit/heart. What are some things that have helped you to overcome this problem?

6. Later in John we will encounter seven “I Am” statements where Jesus uses a metaphor to illustrate a significant aspect of His existence. In verse 26, John records the first of seven “Absolute Statements” where Jesus simply says “I am.” All fourteen of these statements are parallel to God’s answer to Moses’ question in Exodus 3:13-14: When the people ask me who has sent me, what do I tell them? God simply responded, “I am who I am.” In John’s narrative of the encounter with the “Woman at the Well,” it ends with Jesus’ first “I am” statement in which He is asserting that He was the Messiah who would tell her all things (vs 25). Assuming the woman took Jesus’ statement at face value, after all He WAS

claiming to be God, how do you think that could have impacted her thinking as she walked back to Sychar?

All of us have had “special encounters with God.” Describe one such occasion and the impact it has had on your life.

7. In verse 39 we are told, “Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’” We can assume that John provides only a brief summary of the conversation between Jesus and the woman. However, at best, she walked away from a single conversation with limited knowledge and with no “special training” yet she was able to have a significant spiritual impact on an entire city. As you reflect on other NT stories of people who encountered Jesus (or the Gospel) for the first time, would you say that the woman’s immediate desire to tell others about Jesus was the exception or the norm?

What more do you believe you need to know, what training do you need to have, or what experiences do you need to have before you would feel comfortable sharing the gospel with someone you know?

If God could use a woman of questionable moral character who had a single encounter with Jesus to make a significant impact on a city, what do you think He might want to do through you in the days ahead?

Think about the people you already know. How might God use you to have an encounter with them through you?

What might happen if you left this life group session and told someone about what God has been doing in your life?

Some Possible Answers:

1. He didn’t just tell them what to believe and what to do (knowledge and theoretical insights), He gave them hands on experience doing it (habit changing and obedience based).
2. The responsiveness He encountered in Sychar. His priority on investing in people.

3. Very outgoing—she didn't just give Jesus a drink, but she engaged him in conversation.
 - *Aggressive and defensive*—she confronted head on the issues of a man talking to a woman and a Jew talking to a Samaritan. She was outspoken and unapologetic about what the Samaritan's believed.
 - *Teachable*—when confronted with the reality of her marital troubles, she didn't shut down or go hyper-defensive, but she immediately opened her mind to the possibility that Jesus was someone special. Unlike Nicodemus, she was able to switch to the spiritual.
 - *Perceptive*—unlike Nicodemus in the previous chapter, she was able to quickly make the switch from literal (physical water) to spiritual (living water).
 - *Religious*—she was aware of the Messianic prophecies.
 - *Surprisingly influential in the community*—they quickly responded and went with her back to the well.
4. Of note are some OT verses that use similar “fountain of life” figurative language are Psalm 36:8-9, Jeremiah 2:13, and Jeremiah 17:13. In the home of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus used the woman's anointing of his feet and how Simon had neglected the “traditional welcome to my home actions” as an illustration of the spiritual principle “those who are forgiven much love much” (Luke 7:36-50). In a reverse fashion, Jesus declared Himself to be the resurrection and the life as he approached the tomb of Lazarus, thus preparing Martha for the miracle of a physical resurrection which has become a foreshadowing of the future resurrection for all.
5. You might want to read up a little on the historical significance of Mt. Gerizim and the reality that Jerusalem was not established as “the place of worship” until the time of Solomon—so in Jewish history multiple locations had been “the place to worship.” An extension of that study might include that the synagogue became an established place of worship during the Babylonian captivity—between the time of the destruction of the temple in 586 BC and the rebuilding of the temple in 515 BC. Over time and because of the Jewish Diaspora, the synagogue grew in its significance vs the temple even before 70 AD when the second temple was destroyed leaving it as THE place of Jewish worship. The early church's

concept about place and way to worship was significantly influenced by the synagogue.

6. The seven absolute “I Am” statements are in 4:26, 6:20, 8:24, 8:28, 8:58, 13:19, and 18:5-8. An intimate encounter with God usually has one of two diametrically opposed reactions: a softening or a hardening of the heart. The woman’s heart seemed to have been softened.
7. Too many stories to list: those who experienced a healing touch from Jesus and were told not to say anything, Cornelius, Philippian jailer, etc. In most cases those whose hearts were softened, immediately told someone else. It doesn’t take special training to tell someone how God has and is changing your life.