

Last week we left Jesus declaring to the Samaritan woman at the well how He is able to give water to her, (and anyone who desires it), which will result in never having to thirst again. In fact, not only will we never have to thirst again but this water will result in us receiving eternal life.

JOH 4:13-14 "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."

Obviously, this water which Jesus speaks of is not physical water but a spiritual metaphor for God's ability to eternally refresh mankind with a new life which only He can give.

The woman who is discussing all of this with Jesus at the well is not taking Him seriously at this point because of her mistrust for the Jews. As if to show her disdain she makes a stinging comment which can only be viewed as skepticism at best and mocking at worst.

JOH 4:11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"

But this woman continues to show her ignorance and lack of spiritual understanding as she keys in, not on the eternal aspect of this water Jesus speaks of, but of her own temporal understanding and selfish gratification.

JOH 4:15 "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."

Now, we need to keep in mind that this woman is not completely in the dark as it relates to what Jesus is actually trying to convey. Our Lord has made it clear that He is not speaking of physical water, but of spiritual water.

JOH 4:13 "Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,..."

When Jesus says, "this water," He is speaking of the water which is at Jacob's well. This woman would have understood this. But then

Jesus makes the contrast between this water at the well and the water outside of this well which He offers.

JOH 4:14 "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."

Keep in mind that this woman has not yet recognized Jesus to be anything more than a very strange Jew who, for reasons unknown to her, is actually carrying on a conversation with a Samaritan which is simply unheard of in her time.

<And so, her response is one which is meant to humor this Jew who has made all of these grandiose claims of giving water which enables someone to never thirst again. And so, in keeping with her disdain she replies to Jesus as one whose elevator doesn't go to the top, as she perceives it.

"Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

In other words, 'Sir, I hate coming all the way to this well to draw water. If you're able to give such a wonderful water then by all means I'm ready and willing to take what you're offering. So, give me this water, if you think you can.'

Now, if she were actually serious about receiving what Jesus was offering she would not have associated a spring of water welling up to eternal life as mere H₂O, especially when Jesus made it clear that it was not H₂O. But, more than that, if she were serious, Jesus would not respond in the way He does in the next verse.

JOH 4:16 "He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

Now, this might seem like an odd response in light of the conversation which has transpired. We might have responded by saying, 'Okay, if you would like to taste this water we'll discuss it further and try and clear up any misconceptions you have of what this water really is.'

We might think that at least this person is willing to carry on the conversation and maybe somewhere in the conversation they'll "get it."

Well, Jesus, knowing the heart of this woman knows she is not going to get it and is not willing to take him seriously. And so, He cuts the conversation off by extending a challenge to her. He is basically saying that, 'if you want to play games with Me and you

say you want a water where you'll never have to come to this well again, then fine, go get your husband and come back to Me so he can share in it too.'

There is nothing in our Lord's response which promises her the kind of water she is looking for. He simply makes a statement that forces her to consider His credentials as someone who is more than a mere Jew who has taken an interest in her well-being.

JOH 4:16 "Go, call your husband and come back."

In this little statement Jesus has thrown down the gauntlet to her heart. Notice what He says here. The first thing Jesus says to her is go. In other words, leave this well and go all the way back to town and deliver a message to your husband about what you've heard, and then come all the way back here with him if you're serious about receiving My offer.

Why didn't Jesus simply walk back into town with her and give the message Himself? Because in this case Jesus is expecting a response of faith. It would take faith to take what she has heard to go all the way back to town, convince her husband of this strange water, and then decide to walk all the way back.

In other words, this would force her to come to grips with whether or not she wanted to get serious with His words of eternal life, or if she just wanted to continue to play games and not take the time and effort to come all the way back to the well.

So, go. But Jesus has much more in mind here than giving a mere command. This command is no longer limited to her alone. He now tells her to involve her husband which is only right. After all, if you're going to receive this special water why would you not include the one you have devoted your life to; your husband?

Well, if you truly had a husband whom you loved this would be natural. But in asking this question Jesus is addressing the heart of the matter, and that is sin. Unless you are willing to come to grips with your sin, which is a spiritual problem, you will never see the need for spiritual water.

And so, what Jesus is doing here is two-fold. He is allowing this woman to see her sin, but He is also extending grace. He says, go. And on your way home consider My words of bringing back your husband. But, once you've considered My words, and your marital status, then by all means come back to Me so that I can once again offer this water.

Imagine the embarrassment of this woman when a stranger, and a Jew at that, confronts her in such a way where she has to make a choice to either be honest or lie. And this is where the Lord wants all of us. Unless we are honest with our spiritual condition we will not seek the solution to our spiritual condition which is death.

What the Lord is doing here is slowly opening the eyes of this woman as He begins to pierce her heart as her conscience is being pricked with the truth. And unless people will be truthful with themselves they will continue to live in a fantasy world where they try and convince themselves that they're okay and they don't need a Savior.

This woman had a choice to make. Either be truthful and get serious with this Jew, or cover her sin and pretend she is interested, and thus pay lip service to Jesus.

And this is where most people are today. Many people will pay lip service to Christ as they try and play both sides of the fence. On the one hand they like the relative comfort in being identified with the name Christian, but they could never devote themselves to Christ and His word because it would mean giving up their sin.

And so, on the surface they involve themselves with things which are Christian, but in their hearts and in their private lives they continue to be who they really are; people who look with disdain on the Savior who offers them water which leads to eternal life.

But now, for the first time in this whole conversation between Jesus and this woman, we actually begin to see a change in her heart. We actually see how her eyes are beginning to be opened to the fact that this Jew can see things about her life which no mere man could see.

And of course the reason is obvious as we know that Jesus is no mere man, but the Son of God who took on flesh and became a man. He is God and therefore knows all things, even this woman's heart.

HEB 4:13 "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

She is now beginning to realize this as she must decide to get serious with Jesus about her sin. And by the way, this is why we should never back down from the "S" word when we speak with people who are willing to talk to us about Christ.

If sin were not the problem Christ would never have come into this world, and so sin must be central in our explanation of who Christ is and why He came into this world and why we have embraced Him as Lord and Savior.

Otherwise we set up a Savior who looks more like a Santa Claus than one who gave His sinless life for our sin. And unfortunately, many Christians approach the gospel in this very way.

Come to Jesus and He'll give you a new life. Come to Jesus and discover peace. Come to Jesus and be a part of our growing family at this or that church. None of these approaches even comes close to the real issue of why we come to Jesus.

If you come to Jesus because you want a changed life then what happens when you discover that life really hasn't changed that much for you? What happens when you discover that life can be just as cruel for a Christian as it can be for an unbeliever?

We can set up this "pie in the sky" approach to Jesus Christ which is not real. Now, I'm not suggesting that a life in Christ doesn't change us, but for a real believer who comes to Christ for forgiveness of sin he finds that the change is from the inside out.

When a person, like this woman at the well, only wants what can benefit them temporally then you and I can say anything to get them to sign the membership card. We can promise them the moon in Christ and how Jesus will make sure that there's a Cadillac in every garage and a million dollar home for everyone who comes to Him.

And so, someone says, 'sure I'll take that offer.' And when they don't get their Cadillac or when their life doesn't dramatically change they assume that Jesus doesn't "work", not unlike how some other get rich quick schemes don't work.

Jesus is not a scheme. Jesus is not Santa Claus. Jesus is the Son of God who offers to sinners like you and me the means to be forgiven of their sin and reconciled back to God in a peaceful relationship which will last forever with Him in paradise.

It doesn't mean that He won't change our lives for the better, or that He won't bless, or that He won't give us a sense of real peace, but it will be in the context of eternity, not some temporal hope in this world.

I was watching T.V. the other day and saw one of these "name it, claim it" preachers making the declaration that there is no reason that any Christian should be poor, or that any Christian should not be living in luxury. And that if any Christian is not living in such luxury they do so only because they don't trust God and have enough faith to enjoy such things.

As I've said before, and continue to say, that is a message from the pit of hell, and it is a message which mocks Christians world-wide who are living under persecution, giving their lives for the true message of the gospel which speaks to hope and forgiveness of sin.

If the prosperity gospel is true then it must be true not only in a free country, but in countries where Christians are oppressed, and where freedom is non-existent. But this is not the case. How many African Christians living in depressed areas are driving big cars and living in mansions? How many Chinese Christians living in Communist China enjoy material blessings which we enjoy in this country?

They consider themselves blessed if they can worship God in some field without the authorities coming out and killing them. A gospel which appeals to the sensual side of man and which promotes a false message of hope in this world, as the true gospel, is nothing short of spiritual rape of unsuspecting people.

Jesus was not going to offer such a gospel to this woman. It may have sounded unbelievably wonderful to her as our Lord spoke of a water which satisfies our thirst forever, but she would soon learn that this water meant coming to grips with her sin.

And when Jesus told her to go and get her husband He didn't mean for her to go and get her bed pal so they could share in some sort of spiritual Disney World. He was basically telling her to come to grips with the fact that she was living in a situation which God deemed sinful.

How would she respond?

JOH 4:17-18 "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."

What has just happened in our text, and of course what happened in that moment in history, is a sinful human being coming to grips with her sin and now preparing herself for the consequences of that

sin, but leaving herself open to the solution to her sin problem which Jesus will give her.

"I have no husband." By this she was not saying that I don't have a man I'm living with. She was not saying, Jesus you have made a mistake I don't need to go back to town to get my husband because I'm a single girl.

She was saying that I'm not married, but I do have a man. And we know this because of Christ's response.

JOH 4:17-18 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."

In an odd sort of way Jesus is actually commending this woman for being truthful with Him. He is commending her, not because she is living in sin, but because she has come to grips with her sin and is not willing to hide it from Him.

I know that people can be ashamed to deal with a sinful area of their lives thinking that God could never forgive them. But the fact of the matter is that God smiles on a sinner who acknowledges his or her sin and is willing not to hide it from God, but to allow it to be brought into the light so that God can deal with it in His grace and mercy.

Jesus, in His grace, has brought her sin into the light. And by the way, it's not just her sin of adultery which is the issue here, but her sin of rebellion against God which happens to be expressed in her present situation of living with this man who is not her husband.

She could have been a woman who was married but who simply chose not to put her trust in the God of the Jews. Christ would still have gone after her and exposed her sin in whatever other form it would have taken.

It just so happens He exposes one particular sin to get her attention. He could have gone down a list. But His intent here was to put her present life into perspective. And He does so by explaining something about her life which no mere man could know who didn't already know her.

JOH 4:18 "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."

We're not told anything about her former husbands, but Liz Taylor evidently had nothing on her. Whether they died or divorced her because she had a proclivity towards entertaining other men outside of her marriage, we don't know. But the intent here in Jesus' response is that these former relationships may have ended because of her sinful tendencies.

This man is number six, who is not her husband. And yet, once again Jesus commends her for being honest. "What you have just said is quite true."

The next issue for this woman then is what are you going to do with this information? What are you going to do with what you have just learned about Jesus who has exposed your heart and your sinful life?

And by the way, she could go one of two directions. She can either say that whatever Jesus knows is none of His business, or she can confront her sin and seek Him for forgiveness as found in the living water of this gift of life He offers.

Today in the world how many times have we heard the first response when sin is exposed? A President is caught in sin and the world discovers it. And their answer is, it's a personal matter between the President and his intern. It's none of our business what two consenting adults do behind closed doors in the privacy of the White House office.

Excuse me. The White House office was not his residence. It's the place where we, the citizens of this country, send him to go to work, not to work on his sinful ambitions with a young intern half his age.

This week our country has experienced the suicide bombing of the Pentagon and the World Trade Center and we mourn for those who have lost family. But I believe God has used this tragedy in one way to bring our own sin to light.

I find it ironic and in some ways hypocritical when certain leaders of this country all of a sudden find religion in a crisis of this magnitude where they are willing to encourage the entire country to go to God in prayer. They bring in Billy Graham to speak at the memorial ceremony in Washington, DC to put this mess into perspective.

And praise God he was able to share the gospel in the process. But these same political people who, in relative peace, are willing to

strip God out of American public life, all of a sudden turn to the same God they publicly shunned, is sickening to me.

And yet, I see God's hand in all of this as His grace is once more being extended as He is inviting the people of this country and this world to once more seek Him, not just for a solution to the terrorist problem, but for the sin problem every person has.

This is a tremendous opportunity for Christians around the country to hold out to others the hope and life we have in Christ. When our world seems to be crashing down around us, literally and figuratively, there is one who offers us springs of living water welling up within us to eternal life.

In a literal sense what we have seen in these last few days is life and death in its most profound sense. But what is more important is the life and death which has no end. That life we have in Christ which leads to eternity with Him, or the death outside of Christ which leads to an eternity separated from Him.

We need to put this into the bigger picture. I don't mean we neglect the justice which must be meted out to the perpetrators and their supporters, but at best that will be temporal in nature.

Even if we totally destroy the terrorists and their organizations, it's only a matter of time before sinful men, bent on someone else's destruction, come again to the forefront. That's not meant to dwell on the negative side of life, it's only meant to put into perspective the reality that people are still sinners, but we have the solution to their sin problem. And that's something to get excited about.

In fact, there is nothing more exciting, in my estimation, than to see a sinner beginning to realize his need and to have his eyes begin to open to the fact that this Jesus may truly be who He says He is; God and Savior.

JOH 4:19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.

Something is now happening to this woman who moments ago was content to simply entertain this Jew as she humored Him. And what has happened is her life has been laid bare before the God with whom she must give an account.

Notice what she says. "I can see."

God is the One opening her eyes and she can do nothing less than see. This is what God does. It's not a coincidence that many of the miracles of Jesus involved opening the physical eyes of people

who were blind. This was a clear indication of what God does in a spiritual sense.

Remember it was Peter who came to the grand conclusion, after Jesus asked who the people thought He was as His disciples said, some say you are Elijah, while others say you are John the Baptist come back from the dead.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, but who do you say I am? And Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (MAT 16:16)

But what is more profound is our Lord's response to Peter.

MAT 16:17 "Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

In other words, 'Peter you didn't figure this out on your own. You didn't have such keen spiritual insight that you came to this conclusion without My Father revealing this to your heart and spirit.'

It's true that God uses His servants as part of this process. In fact, we see this very language used when God commissions Paul as he recounts his conversion for King Agrippa.

ACT 26:17-18 [Jesus says to Paul] "I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

Paul couldn't open anyone's spiritual eyes, but God can and He will use people like Paul and us to bring people the truth. And notice the clear cut mission of Paul given him by God. It was not to tickle people's ears with a salvation which promises wealth and health and "flowers in your hair, flowers everywhere."

Rather, Jesus was sending Paul, as well as us, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in [Jesus Christ].'

This woman has realized that this Jew is someone sent from God. That's what a prophet is; a spokesman for God. And as such, "she has now recognized the voice of God." (A.W. Pink)

This is our prayer for people; that they would recognize the voice of God. But our job is to voice the will of God in the process. And the will of God is found in the word of God. And His will for mankind is to repent of their sin and embrace the Savior who saves us from our sin.

This Samaritan woman has been touched by the Lord as each of us who have placed our faith in the Messiah have been touched by the Lord.

Like prophets, you and I in Christ have been commissioned by God to declare His will. Like prophets, you and I have been given a commission by God Himself to go into all the world and declare that Jesus Christ is Messiah.

And like prophets who have been given information from God Himself we can give comfort and hope to the world that Jesus is coming back to reunite all of His people with Himself in resurrection bodies to dwell with Him in the new heavens and new earth.

Revelation 21:1-6 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. ***I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.***

As God says, "... now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."

Don't put it off if you haven't embraced Christ, and encourage all we meet not to put it off.

Now is the day of salvation.