

Sermon Title: **A Spiritual Thirst**

Written: **March 18, 2017**

Preached: **March 19, 2017 at Waterville FBC**

Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **John 4:5-26**

Thesis: **The Samaritan Woman comes to satisfy her thirst and encounters Jesus at the well;**

Purpose: **This life changing encounter offers to satisfy her greatest need; satisfying our spiritual thirst is also our greatest need.**

Key Word: **"Desiring God"**

Key Points: **#1 Jesus Provides Living Water**

**#2 Jesus Places Importance on Proper Worship**

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **John 4:5-26**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **During this season of Lent, we have been focusing on the role of the Holy Spirit in our relationship with God.**
  - (a) Our first message looked at how our walk with God is a Spiritual Journey.
  - (b) Last week's message focused on our need for a new Spiritual Birth guided by our faith provided by the Holy Spirit.
  - (c) And this week we learn about our Spiritual Thirst, creating a desire for God.
- 2) **We have all experienced being thirsty.**
  - (a) There may have been a time when you thought you would die of thirst.
  - (b) But this is a physical thirst; our physical bodies are mostly made up of water and we need a lot of water to stay alive.
  - (c) This craving to satisfy our physical thirst drives us to seek water.
  - (d) In fact, just talking about it makes us thirsty, so I have provided a small bottle of water for each of you this morning so that you will not feel tortured by the message.
- 3) **But the thirst we are going to learn about this morning is a longing to satisfy our Spiritual thirst.**
  - (a) In the same way that our physical thirst drives us to seek out a drink;
  - (b) Our Spiritual thirst drives us to a deeper relationship with God.
- 4) **Our study takes place at about the midpoint of Jesus' earthly ministry.**
  - (a) It is during the hot summer months in Israel & Jesus has been in the area of Judea.
  - (b) Jesus' popularity was growing and His disciples were baptizing more people now than John the baptizer who started the whole movement.
- 5) **The Pharisees not liking the popularity of these two young evangelists were trying to stir up conflict between their followers.**
  - (a) Herod had recently imprisoned John the Baptist essentially rejecting God's prophet and Jesus.
  - (b) For these reasons and as **Luke 4:14** tells us, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to return to Galilee.
- 6) **To get there Jesus chose to pass through the territory known as Samaria.**
  - (a) Wandering through this hilly territory between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal is a watering hole known as Jacob's well.
  - (b) Half a mile from a little village of Sychar (*SI-kar*).
- 7) **The Jews would have started such a journey in the morning and it is now noon time.**
  - (a) The sun is hot, and Jesus wearying from the journey decides to rest by the well.
  - (b) While his traveling companions go into town to find something to eat.
- 8) **I am sure that Jesus was thirsty; but he had no way to dip from the deep well.**
  - (a) And so, I imagine Jesus found a shady spot near the well to relax and wait.
  - (b) The scriptures demonstrate both the FULL humanity and the FULL deity of our Lord Jesus.
- 9) **What happens next is an encounter with a Samaritan woman; a story I am sure many of you have looked at probably multiple times.**
  - (a) And yet, as is true with the Word of God we hope that we can find something fresh for us this morning.
  - (b) Something that God is speaking to us about today that will encourage and challenge us to walk closer to Him.
  - (c) Therefore, with that introduction, let us read in our Bibles **John 4:5-26.**

## B) Sermon Prayer

## C) (The Hook)

- 1) **There is so much here that I want us to focus on this morning.**
  - (a) The first thing I want us to see is that Jesus overcomes all bias.
  - (b) The baggage we all bring from our cultural upbringing.
- 2) **Jesus' encounter with this woman is far from the norm for several reasons.**
  - (a) First, because a Jewish man, let alone a Rabbi, would not converse with a strange woman that he had never met.
  - (b) **Second, because of the cultural prejudices that existed between the Jews and Samaritans they would normally have avoided speaking to one another.**
  - (c) Third, a Jewish Rabbi would normally rather go thirsty than violate this prejudice.
- 3) **Why was there such animosity between the Samaritans and their Jewish brethren?<sup>1</sup>**
  - (a) Historically, Samaritans were Israelites who were part of the northern kingdom of Israel.
  - (b) **The Assyrians captured the city of Samaria in 721 B.C. and deported more than 27,000 Israel's most important population.**
    - (i) The Samaritans believed that Joshua had built a sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim, which was where their center of worship was for all early Israelites.
    - (ii) Jewish sources describe Samaritans as descendants of the colonists whom the Assyrians planted in the northern kingdom, who had intermarried with the Israelite population.
    - (iii) **This made them not pure descendants with a pure bloodline to Abraham.**
    - (iv) The irony here is that their theology showed no signs of the influence of the paganism among the colonists sent by the Assyrians.
    - (v) If there was intermarriage, the children had become true Israelites.
  - (c) **When Zerubbabel was building a new temple after the return of the exiles from Babylon the Samaritans asked to take part, claiming to be true Yahweh worshipers; however, they were refused. (Ezra 4:2)**
    - (i) The actual split between the descendants of the religious groups came when the Samaritans built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim.
    - (ii) At best however, Samaritans were looked down upon by the Jews as half-breeds who were somehow made impure by their separation from the captives when Israel fell to the Assyrians.
- 4) **Here, in our study, Jesus is going to teach us about our Spiritual Thirst which is our greatest need.**

TS: **Let's first take a look at how . . .**

## II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **Jesus Provides Living Water**

- 1) **Just the fact that Jesus spoke to her was frightening to this Samaritan woman.**
  - (a) She traveled a half mile from town to the well each day to get her water.
  - (b) The fact that she was here in the warmest part of the day says something about her.
  - (c) **Most people came for water during the cool part of the day like in the morning or evening.**
    - (i) The fact that this woman was living with a man not her husband and had been married 5 times probably meant that she came at a time to avoid others out of shame.
    - (ii) She wasn't looking for an encounter with people let alone with God.
- 2) **Jesus asking her for a drink would have been highly suspect.**
  - (a) She might have not even noticed that Jesus was sitting in the shade as she approached the well.
  - (b) Jesus probably startled her asking for a drink putting her immediately on the defensive.

- (c) No wonder she asked how a Jew would speak to a Samaritan woman.
- (d) This just was not customary and not done in this culture and it probably frightened her wondering about his intentions.
- 3) **When Jesus spoke of the Living water this woman thought He was talking about a physical need.**
  - (a) Jesus could read people and He could see the hole in her soul.
  - (b) A hole that she had been trying to meet with failed relationship after relationship.
- 4) **I believe that we are spiritual beings born with a void that desires to be filled.**
  - (a) Without God filling our soul there is a deep void where we can find no real peace.
  - (b) Only God can satisfy that need; nothing else will bring lasting satisfaction.
- 5) **Jesus uses the metaphor of Water to represent this thirst.**
  - (a) What He was telling this woman is that He could satisfy her spiritual thirst once and for all.
  - (b) Until God gets a hold of you; nothing else will seem enough.
  - (c) It may satisfy for a time; but soon you will be thirsty again.
  - (d) It is Jesus who provides the Living Water!
- 6) **The good news is that Jesus is there for everyone and not just the Jews.**
  - (a) By Jesus overcoming the prejudices of the day and talking with a woman he was acknowledging her value to God.
  - (b) By Jesus overcoming the prejudices to speak to someone who was not accepted culturally; Jesus proved what God promised Abraham in **Genesis 12:1-3**,
  - (c) God told Abraham that **"All nations will be blessed through you."**
  - (d) Not just the descendants of Israel; but ALL nations and peoples can receive acceptance and blessings from God.

TS: **This brings us to our second point . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **Jesus Places Importance on Proper Worship**

- 1) **Once Jesus confronted her about her lifestyle which she acknowledged as true; but quickly tries to change the subject.**
- 2) **The woman essentially says, since you know so much about me and we have never met; you must be a prophet.**
  - (a) And so, she asks him about the right place to worship.
  - (b) She is referring to the temple they have on Mt. Gerizim verses the Temple in Jerusalem.
- 3) **Jesus lets her know that the place of worship is not what is important.**
  - (a) **Jesus told her the "time was coming" referring to His coming death which would bring about a new kind of worship.**
    - (i) I believe that this referred to the coming church age once the Holy Spirit was released to live with God's people.
    - (ii) God would no longer need a building to meet with His people.
    - (iii) God would no longer need to be separated from His people.
  - (b) **When Jesus paid the penalty for our sins by dying in our place on the Cross the opportunity for God to once again dwell with His people had been restored.**
    - (i) For our bodies, would now become the temple in which God's Spirit could reside.
    - (ii) We meet in buildings for convenience, not because this is God's house.
  - (c) Jesus is teaching that God is not physical and therefore not restricted to being in one place at a time.
  - (d) God is spiritual and is everywhere all the times.
- 4) **We worship the true God in our spirit which will join with His Holy Spirit thus filling our spiritual need.**
  - (a) The location of worship is not nearly as important as the ATTITUDE of worship.
  - (b) It is not where we worship that counts, but how we worship.
  - (c) How genuine and true is our worship?
  - (d) Do you feel the Holy Spirit helping you to worship?

- 5) **But you might say, but how does the Holy Spirit help us?**
  - (a) **Romans 8:26** says that the Holy Spirit prays for us.
  - (b) **John 14:26** teaches us the Holy Spirit teaches us Words of Christ.
  - (c) And in **Romans 5:5** we learn that the Holy Spirit pours out God's love for us.
- 6) **This makes the woman ask about the coming of the Messiah who will explain these difficult things.**
  - (a) She knows what the scriptures teaches; that God will send a Savior for His people.
  - (b) At this point, Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah to her stating "**I am HE!**"
- 7) **Interestingly enough it does not appear that Jesus ever got that drink of water He requested.**
  - (a) It seems that He chooses to give up His physical need to satisfy a spiritual need.
  - (b) Jesus speaks to this when His disciples return and offered Him food.
  - (c) Jesus tells them that His food is to do the will of the Father.
  - (d) There is just something so satisfying about being in the Will of God that it makes our physical desires pale in comparison.

TS: **So, what have we learn from Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman?**

### III) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **The first thing I want to point out is that Jesus helps us to overcome our cultural prejudices.**
  - 1) Jesus' desire is that ALL come to be a part of His kingdom.
  - 2) Not just Jews or Greeks, or slaves or men or women, rich or poor.
  - 3) God has a desire that ALL will be saved.
  - 4) But they have to come to understand that and ask Jesus to be their Lord.
- B) **Second, our physical needs can be strong, especially when we are trying to survive.**
  - 1) Our physical needs are so we can survive in this world.
  - 2) But our existence in this world is only temporary.
  - 3) **However, Jesus can help us see that we have an even greater need and that is to survive spiritually for the next life.**
    - (a) That life is eternal, forever with Jesus as our Lord, Savior and friend.
    - (b) That is a life that we should also long to have unless we are Spiritually dead.
  - 4) **The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 42** (NIV)
 

***"As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.  
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I go and meet with God?"***

    - (a) The Psalmist understood that there is more to this life than this world has to offer.
    - (b) Our desire to be with God Spiritually should be as least as strong as our desire to live and survive in this life.
- 5) **Do you have a Spiritual Thirst?**
  - (a) **That deep desire within you to live for and be in the presence of God?**
  - (b) This is our greatest need and one I hope you have recognized and have asked God to help you find.
  - (c) In the end, it is more fulfilling than any temporary physical need in this life.
  - (d) It is the Living Water that will last forever!

### IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**

### V) **Bibliography**

<sup>1</sup>The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, J. Dwight Pentecost, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981, pg.526