

**Receiving the Water** John 4:10, 26; Isaiah 52:6 bible-sermons.org March 29, 2015

You are blessed to have Pastor Ken as Jesus' under-shepherd here at Crestview (1Timothy 5:17). He truly loves the Lord and has a gift of discernment and seeing the big picture. We have been talking about swapping pulpits for years. I am preaching through Isaiah and came to chapter 34 which sounds a lot like Ken's conjecture on the Psalm 83 war, so I thought he'd do a much better job than I explaining it to Wayside. That means you are stuck with me. I have good news and bad news. The bad news is I don't preach as long as Ken. The good news is I don't preach as long as Ken. I admire those who can preach without a manuscript and walk around to hold your attention. I stay fixed and use a manuscript, so I pray this sermon has the touch of the Holy Spirit that will keep your attention.

I know you are in 1<sup>st</sup> John and Ken offered to let me preach the next passage, but also gave me leeway to preach on whatever was on my heart. So I'm taking that liberty to share something I've only shared with a small Bible study group, and I hope to connect it with this day being Palm Sunday. It is an insight I gained only recently from Professor John Ronning.

The very first "I AM" declaration of Jesus in the Gospel of John is to the woman at the well. Jesus was travelling from Jerusalem after the first Passover of His ministry. John tells us that Jesus knew it was necessary for Him to go through Samaria. Normally, the Jews would go via the Jordan Valley to avoid the Samaritans. They were a people that intermarried with Gentiles who were brought into the land after Assyria took most of the Jews of the region and resettled them. They only believed in the Pentateuch, ignored the writings of the prophets, and believed Mount Gerizim was the only proper place to worship (John 4:20). They had built a temple on the mountain, which the Jews destroyed in the second century before Christ. Something led Jesus, and I think we are safe to guess that it was the Holy Spirit, to take this unusual route, a route the Word says He "had to" take (John 4:4). Religious leaders especially would have avoided this route for fear of being defiled.

Jesus was tired and sat down by a well while the disciples went on to try to find something to eat. We are presented with wonderful example of how to witness to the lost. A woman came to draw water around noon. That would mean she was avoiding other women who would come in the cool morning or evening. Jesus started up a conversation with her, which was an unusual thing for a Jewish man to do. Jesus did not have the same prejudices that His people held. Not only was He not bothered that she was Samaritan, but He was not bothered that she was a woman. On another occasion Jesus said He had come to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

**Commented [PW1]: 1 Timothy 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

**Commented [PW2]: John 4:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

**Commented [PW3]: John 4:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> And he had to pass through Samaria.

**Commented [PW4]: Luke 19:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Jesus asked for a drink. He had nothing to draw water from the deep well with and the woman does. This well is still used in the West Bank and is about 100 foot deep. She is amazed that a Jew would consider drinking from her pitcher. She knows Jews believed that evil could enter you through the saliva of an unclean person.<sup>1</sup>

**Commented [PW5]:** See footnote in NIV on verse 9

*<sup>10</sup> 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."* John 4:10 Throughout this account she mistakes spiritual expressions to be literal, physical things, so she asks what He will draw the water with. He tells her that He will give her living water that will be a spring within her welling up to eternal life (John 4:14).

**Commented [PW6]: John 4:14 (ESV)**  
<sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Now remember that this woman knows the Books of Moses. She knows a few "man meets woman at well" stories. Jacob left his father's home fleeing from Esau while also seeking out a wife. When he arrived at the well in Haran a woman was approaching.  
*<sup>10</sup> Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.* Genesis 29:10 Jacob drew the water for his future bride.

Then there is the story of Moses fleeing from Pharaoh and arriving in Midian: *<sup>16</sup> Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. <sup>17</sup> The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock.* Exodus 2:16-17 This time, Moses saves the daughters of Midian by driving away the mean shepherds and drawing water for the girls. He, too, ends up marrying one of them, Zipporah.

Would you believe there is one more account of a bridegroom at a miraculous well? Moses had been leading the people of Israel through the wilderness when they fell in need of water. The people were ready to stone Moses. *<sup>5</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink."* And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. Exodus 17:5-6 The Apostle Paul tells us the rock was Christ (1Corinthians 10:4). God is the bridegroom. The bride was Israel (Isaiah 54:5). In all three of these accounts the one that provides the water is the bridegroom at a well.

**Commented [PW7]: 1 Corinthians 10:4 (ESV)**  
<sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

**Commented [PW8]: Isaiah 54:5 (ESV)**  
<sup>5</sup> For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.

The Samaritan woman's multiple relationships tell us she is searching for the perfect husband but hasn't found him yet. Is there a perfect husband? Not one of us! That is because every man is fallen. But I have news for you, every woman is fallen too. What our souls long for is something that marriage can only remotely picture. The reason for high divorce rates is that God put a desire for His fullness in every heart. That can only

be met by Jesus. If we are not satisfied in Him we will demand too much from our spouse.

This woman was wondering if this man at the well might be the perfect man. And that is the very subject this woman brings up. After the discussion about where to worship and Jesus' prophecy about the Father seeking those who would worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:21-24), she asked about the Messiah. <sup>25</sup> *The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."* John 4:25

The Samaritans, like the Jews, believed that a Messiah was coming. They called him the Taheb. So the woman tried to settle the issue about where to worship by suggesting that when Messiah comes He will straighten it all out. How ironic that she is talking about the person sitting in front of her not realizing He is that person.

Jesus answered with a quotation from the Old Testament. If your Bible does not have Isaiah 52:6 beside this next verse, and most likely it does not, I'd suggest you jot it in the margin. <sup>26</sup> *Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."* John 4:26 Young's Literal Translation puts it this way: <sup>26</sup> *Jesus saith to her, 'I am he, who am speaking to thee.'* John 4:26 (YLT) Jesus is plainly telling her that He is the Taheb, the Messiah, the One who will explain all things. But His response tells us more.

I have found that most of the things Jesus said came from the Old Testament or the Aramaic comments on it (Targums). In this case, I don't think Jesus is referring to the declaration of God at the burning bush, "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14) but to a passage she would not have understood, though His disciples would have. <sup>6</sup> *Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am.* Isaiah 52:6 The Jews know His name is YHWH, so just what is this prophecy saying? Knowing His name is to know the very nature of God, His love and justice, and His mercy and holiness. It is a relationship of getting to know His heart. This is what was being revealed to the woman at the well. She was seeing the heart of God that was offering to forgive her wayward past and be all that she was seeking. Jesus wants to reveal His name to each of us. He wants us to know Him. Jesus said, <sup>3</sup> *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* John 17:3

The Aramaic version of this verse of Isaiah 52:6 has an interesting change. Instead of "my people" it reads "the peoples" which was an expression usually referring to Gentiles. That fits with so many prophecies in Isaiah that predict that the Messiah will be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). So we have Hebrew that sounds like it is for the Jews and Aramaic that sounds like it is for the Gentiles, and Jesus quotes the last half of the verse to a half Jew - half Gentile woman. She became the first Gentile missionary. The villagers she brings to Jesus are the first to call Jesus "the Savior of the world" (John 4:42). The bridegroom has given them living water and is making them

**Commented [PW9]: John 4:21-24 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

<sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

<sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

<sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

**Commented [PW10]: Exodus 3:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

**Commented [PW11]: Isaiah 42:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,

**Commented [PW12]: Isaiah 49:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

**Commented [PW13]: John 4:42 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

His bride in the process. Those who drink of the Living Water become the bride of Christ. Those who have the spring of water welling up in them are the bride.

Just a side note that amazed me: This quotation from Isaiah is the last "I Am" in Isaiah and the first one in John. It's as if Jesus just picked up where He left off 700 years earlier. You might be wondering if I am referring to Jesus as YHWH since it is YHWH in Isaiah that said "I AM", the One who is speaking to you." Absolutely! Jesus said He had been given that name. <sup>11</sup> *And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.* <sup>12a</sup> *While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me.* John 17:11-12a Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30). It was ironic that the woman was speaking of the Messiah to the Messiah, but it is also ironic that when Christians read the passage today they don't realize Jesus' words declare He is YHWH, the eternal God of Israel.

The man at the well was foreshadowed in three different Old Testament historical accounts. That is because God is the author of history. It is His story. He tells us to, <sup>9</sup> *remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,* <sup>10</sup> *declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'* Isaiah 46:9-10 God has always had in mind the revelation of His Son for the Son reveals to us the Father (John 14:9).

God's grace is the source of the thirst in our souls. Then He offers to quench that thirst with Himself. That is seen in the words of Jesus and another passage in Isaiah. In Isaiah 55:1,3 God says, <sup>1</sup> *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* <sup>3a</sup> *Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;* Jesus' beatitude takes up this call. <sup>6</sup> *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.* Matthew 5:6

At the Feast of Booths when the priests were conducting a ceremony at the altar that looked forward to the LORD sending rain for the crops and to the Spirit being poured out Jesus spoke up. <sup>37</sup> *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.* <sup>38</sup> *Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* John 7:37-38

Astronomers who are hoping to find life somewhere in the universe look for one thing, water. That is because water is essential for life. Do you see how it all comes together? Jesus is our satisfaction, our very life (John 14:6). Just as the thirsty land of Israel was completely dependent on the early and later rains, so our spiritual lives are dependent on the Word and Spirit to refresh our souls and bring us eternal life (John 4:23; Psalm 42:1). And so Jesus comes to us and offers Himself. He knows exactly what we've done, what goes on in our minds, the compromises we have made, and our lack of

**Commented [PW14]: John 10:30 (ESV)**  
<sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one."

**Commented [PW15]: John 14:9 (ESV)**  
<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

**Commented [PW16]: John 14:6 (ESV)**  
<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**Commented [PW17]: John 4:23 (NIV)**  
<sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

**Commented [PW18]: Psalm 42:1 (ESV)**  
<sup>1</sup>  
As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.

desire for Him. He loves us anyway! He wants us for His bride anyway. He knows what He can make of you and me if we will place our very lives in His hands (Romans 8:29).

Palm Sunday was five days before Passover. John's gospel makes that clear. The Old Testament had a specific assignment for this day (Exodus 12:3). **It was the day for each family to choose their Passover Lamb.** They had to live with the lamb for five days to be certain that it was unblemished. I believe it was also so that they would become attached to it. Sacrifice for sin should be painful, for it was a picture of Jesus' paying the penalty for our sins on the cross. We have to see how costly sin is and no other picture than blood can convey that message. Sin devastates individual lives, homes, and nations. If the punishment is to fit the crime, the punishment for sin must be severe.

It was that very morning when every Jew in Jerusalem was going out to select their lamb that Jesus came down Hosanna Road (John 12:1,12). It looked as if they were selecting Him, and perhaps some of them were without even knowing it. Others were just caught up with the crowd, hoping for new King David who would deliver them from taxation. Others still were indignant at the children who were crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matthew 21:14).

It seems like the same is true today. Some choose Him, the fountain of living water (Jeremiah 17:13). Some just hang around because they like the company and go along with the crowd. Others can't stand the way people adore Jesus and the faith little children have in Him. But I would ask, which of these really have satisfied hearts?

Jesus calls out today, "If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink." Thirst is a gift from God, and it's my conviction that in every life there comes a time of spiritual thirst by the grace of God (John 1:9). What we do with that God given thirst makes an eternal difference in the state of our soul. Will we come to the only real source of Living Water? Or will we insist that we can quench our thirst some other way?

Ravi Zaccharias says that joy is publicity of the pagan, but is really the secret possession of the Christian. At the same time joy is peripheral to the pagan and sorrow is central, while joy is central to the Christian and sorrow is peripheral.

True joy is only found when our lives are surrendered to our Maker who quenches our thirsty souls (John 15:11). The Lamb of God presents Himself to you and asks why you don't ask Him for Living Water? In spite of knowing everything about us, like He knew the woman at the well, He invites us to become His bride.

It is no coincidence that our Bible ends with an invitation that ties all of these together, the bride, the willingness to hear, the call to come, the free offer of water for the thirsty souls resulting in life. <sup>17</sup> *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.* Revelation 22:17

**Commented [PW19]: Romans 8:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

**Commented [PW20]: Exodus 12:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.

**Commented [PW21]: John 12:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

**Commented [PW22]: John 12:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

**Commented [PW23]: Matthew 21:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant,

**Commented [PW24]: Jeremiah 17:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> O LORD, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living water.

**Commented [PW25]: John 1:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

**Commented [PW26]: John 15:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

This offer is primarily to those who have never found their satisfaction in Jesus, but it is also a reminder to us who once did but have drifted. Are you distracted by the things of this world that promise a satisfaction that is passing? Maybe this is a call to return to the Word to slake your thirst in this well that never runs dry. I hope your desire is to be saturated! That is God's desire for you (John 4:13).

**Commented [PW27]: John 4:13**

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,