

How to Witness (7): Living Water

Sermon for March 12, 2023

Scripture reading: John 7:37-41 & John 4: 9-15

Golden verse: “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” John 7: 37/b-38

What kind of feeling is it to be thirsty?

Try to recall that moment when you were walking, on a very hot summer day, and you were very thirsty, but you didn’t even know when and where you could get some fresh water.

On Wednesday evening, a gentleman came to my house to check how healthy the water we are drinking is and how our water softener worked - protecting our appliances, our clothing, and our own skin. I was very pleased with the system we installed last year since all the tests showed that we are drinking perfectly clean water, and our water softener works very well.

Drinking clean water is essential for a healthy life.

I did research about water, and I learned that unsafe water is responsible for 1.2 million deaths every year. So, unsafe water is a leading risk factor for death. More than 6% of deaths in low-income countries are the result of unsafe water sources. One out of four people does not have access to safe drinking water.

I feel more comfortable drinking from a river than from a lake. In my childhood, I had my favorite creek. My grandfather had a vineyard at the top of a huge hill. At the bottom of that vineyard, there was a little creek with ice-cold, clean water. It always puts a smile on my face as I remember how happy I was drinking from that little creek. It is so sad to know how many people are missing clean drinking water around the world.

In our story, we see again Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman. Today, we are focusing on that part of their conversation when Jesus is offering her “living water”: fresh, clean, and healthy water. The Samaritan woman was coming day by day to Jacob’s well to get fresh water: to satisfy her body and her thirst. Jesus turns this conversation, offering her “living water” for her spirit.

This woman carried a lot of pain inside since she was neglected, hated, and ignored by everybody in her city. Her spirit was restless, hurt, and thirsty for love, peace, and respect. Her self-esteem had to be renewed, by taking a bath in clear water.

Many people are missing the clean drinking water in this world, but many more are missing that living water that only Jesus Christ can give to all of us.

Our spirit is thirsty. We all have needs. We all are longing for something new, something which would satisfy our thirst, something that would make us happier, or more complete. We all have a never-ending list, and all kinds of dreams, thinking that those could satisfy our souls.

We all have a longing in our souls. Some call it anxiety or lack of fulfillment.

Once somebody said:

"I've been a chaser for most of my life. My life felt as if nothing was ever settled. I almost feared settling, or I feared missing out on something. Or maybe what I feared most was actually being happy."

"Contentment felt like surrendering to life, and I never found myself in a place where I was ready to settle in."

"I always wanted more. The next project, the new couch, more money, I'd settle for peace. Then I would be happy. Then I would settle down."

"It was a cycle that kept me stuck, living in my pain, a feeling that I hated but one that kept me safe. That's why I relate so much to the women at the well. Jesus showed me too the Living Well. What I know in Jesus, is no earthly longing, no amount of chasing or looking for the best thing. No perfect diet, the fairy tale relationship, or getting to your goal weight will ever truly satisfy."

Dear beloved, there is a hole in our lives so deep, a longing so great, that can never be satisfied: a hole, longing for more earthly things that we believe will satisfy us. We all have that unsatisfied longing, such as good health, money, career, or luxury items. Many of them are not necessary, but the longing comes from greediness to have more and more and more. And we try desperately to fulfill our heart's desire. Longing for more is a bad feeling.

This unsatisfied greediness will create much more problems for us. By longing for more, longing for different things, we can lose our control and we would do anything to find something more. While longing, we might reach the point when we would try everything desperately to fill our desire. We all are facing a huge danger when we would go down the ethical hill just to satisfy our needs. Often, we see that some people compromise because they lose their limits, they lose their own values, and they would try anything, they would pay for anything, just to satisfy their thirst.

From now, when we will face our longings, this has to remind us that we are God's children, and we should be very careful about our needs. We have to ask ourselves: what we need, why we need things, and if they will satisfy us and our spirit. We have to change drastically.

Here and now, Jesus is offering us living water, which can be translated as satisfaction, contentment, inner peace, self-love, salvation, eternal life, place in heaven, eternal heavenly glory, eternal life with our loved ones, with those who are there and with those who will follow us. Jesus is here to offer us these gifts. Jesus offers them to you now. He is always the one who is offering. The question is: will you receive it?

The giving of Jesus is a guarantee. The receiving on your side can be a stumbling block.

Receiving is hard. Especially when we believe we don't need what Jesus is offering. Or perhaps you had faith enough to receive salvation, but you're struggling to have faith enough to advance it.

Receiving is not a destination. It's an action, a daily choice that we never cease to do. It is in the receiving that our satisfaction is quenched.

Are you longing to go out and share the good news that Jesus can give us living water and everlasting gifts?

Are you ready to share that, in Jesus Christ, we all can receive love, truth, redemption, and acceptance? Are you ready to come and get filled so you can go out and do and live your God-given purpose?

Tell others that Jesus Christ is not a temporary source of comfort, but choosing to receive His filling daily allows us to overflow into all aspects of our lives. Invite people to Christ to come and get filled. And in the filling, we will have the energy to go out and live a happy life.

May you be a healer, as you guide people to Christ: your healer and your guide.

Come back to Jesus daily, for He is the living well, and He alone can help you to live well.

Through Christ, you can be filled up and find everything you need.

Somebody said: "*I struggled with trying to find myself and came up empty. But once I looked to Christ, my world was flipped.*"

Get filled, and may you never thirst again. Amen