

Impact: When People Meet Jesus
Part 6
The Woman of Samaria
John 4: 1-29

If you have got a Bible I am going to read to you from John's Gospel and Chapter 4.

Let me read to you from John's Gospel and Chapter 4. I am going to read from Verse 1 where it says,

“The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

“When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

“Now he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

“Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.” (That means about midday.)

“When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, ‘Will you give me a drink?’ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

“The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?’ (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’

“ ‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?’

“Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 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.’

“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.’”

And I am going to stop at that point. We are only halfway through this conversation that Jesus has with the woman of Samaria, but that is all we are going to read and talk about this morning.

Many of you know in recent weeks we have been looking at the encounter of Jesus with various individual people in the early part of John's Gospel. We have called it IMPACT: People Who Meet Jesus.

And this is the sixth occasion that we are doing this. And it is the first occasion that we talk about Jesus meeting with a woman. And for the first time the person He is meeting with is unnamed. All the others have been given a personal name.

We know this lady only by the fact that she lives in Samaria, so we call her the woman of Samaria.

You know, when I was a boy, I heard about this story and I used to think it was a story of a very big woman because she was called the woman of "Sam-aria" but then later I realized that that isn't what it means. Samaria was a place where she lives and that is significant, as we are going to see in just a few moments.

The story begins in John Chapter 4 when Jesus was in Judea in the south and He decides it's time to go back home to the north, the area of Galilee where He lived. And there is a whole verse devoted to saying,

"And he had to pass through Samaria."

Now if you look at a map, you will see that is the most direct route from Judea to Galilee, but it was not the route always taken by Jewish people for the simple reason that Jews and Samaritans did not get on. There was antagonism between them and that antagonism had gone back for 700 years.

What had happened was this: About a thousand years before Christ, the nation of Israel had split after the reign of King Solomon into two separate nations. In the south there was Judah, and its capital city was Jerusalem. In the north you had what was known as Israel, and the capital city was Samaria.

In 722 BC the Assyrians from the north came south in a plan of imperial conquest to capture as much of the world as they could. And they took the northern kingdom of Israel, took most of the people off into exile; left a few behind to look after the ground, to keep it fertile; put a few Assyrians in to oversee them and make sure that they behaved themselves.

But they left the southern kingdom of Judah intact because it was a convenient buffer state between the big superpower of the day, which was in Egypt, further south.

These Assyrians and the Israelites who were left in the north intermarried, produced children that were neither Israelite nor were they Assyrian, and they became known as Samaritans.

Now in Jesus' day, Israel occupies much of the northern area, but this area of Samaria is occupied by these crossbred people, partly Israelite, partly Assyrian. And they were rejected by the Jews and had little companionship and friendship with them. They hardly ever spoke to each other, which is why the woman was surprised when Jesus spoke to her.

And of course this is why the story of the Good Samaritan is so significant, because the story Jesus told of a man going from Jerusalem down to Jericho; was beaten up by robbers, left for dead on the side of the road. And a Jewish priest came down, was in a hurry, passed by on the other side. A Jewish Levite came down, passed by on the other side.

And a Samaritan came down the road, got off his donkey and might, had he been any other Samaritan seeing the Jewish man lying on the ground, kicked him while he was down because such was the antagonism between them.

But he didn't. He picked him up. He put oil on his wounds. He put him on his donkey. He took him to a local inn, which doubled up as a local hospital. And not only left him there, but paid for his keep.

And of course the great thing about that story is the fact it was the Samaritan – Jews and Samaritans did not get on with one another.

And now Jesus, going through Samaria at midday; He's tired; He sits on the well while His disciples go into the city to buy some food. And while He was sitting there, this lady comes out of the town to draw water and Jesus asks her for a drink.

This surprised her. She said to Him in Verse 9,

“You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?”

And John adds a little editorial comment in brackets.

“For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.”

But this leads into the longest personal conversation that Jesus had with anybody that is recorded for us in any of the four Gospels. And therefore it is a vitally important conversation. And there are things in this conversation that are important for you and me to know.

And as I have been reading it and re-reading it and trying to understand it, I have discovered in this story seven things that this woman did not know that Jesus had to instruct her about.

And the interest thing is they are the seven things that many, many people today do not know, but need to know. Maybe some of you here this morning; you are going to find

there are things in this conversation that are remarkably, accurately about you, as they proved to be about this woman.

And so, having asked of her a drink and provoked her surprise (“How do you ask me for a drink?”), Jesus then said to her in Verse 10:

“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’”

That’s the first thing she didn’t know.

“If you knew the gift of God.”

The first thing she didn’t know was she didn’t know that God had a gift to give away to her. Did you know that?

Well what is the gift of God? Well of course there are many things that could legitimately be described as gifts from God, but Scripture specifically speaks on another occasion about “the gift of God.”

And you will find it in Romans 6:23 where Paul writes there,

“For the wages of sin is death, but *the gift of God* is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The gift of God, the gift from which so many other things are the gifts of God derive, is eternal life.

Well let me talk about this for a few minutes. There are three areas I suggest to you of confusion regarding eternal life. There is confusion as to what it is, there is confusion as to why we need it and there is confusion as to how we get it.

There is confusion as to what it is. What is eternal life?

I remember on one occasion in a cemetery reading a tombstone and it said, “On such and such a date so and so (the occupant - I guess that’s what you call whoever was in there) entered into eternal life.”

Now the date was the date this person had died. Is it true to say that when a person dies they enter into eternal life? And the answer is, no.

Eternal life in the New Testament is not something that you get when you die. Eternal life is spoken of in the present tense.

Go back just a few verses into Chapter 3, the previous chapter and Verse 36, which says,

“Whoever believes in the Son has” (present tense) – “has eternal life.”

In Chapter 5 and Verse 24, the next chapter, it says,

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has” (present tense) “eternal life and will not be condemned; he has” (present tense) “crossed over from death into life.”

In other words, eternal life is spoken of as being in the present tense. It is a present tense experience that is the result of what we talked about last week when Jesus met Nicodemus in John Chapter 3, the result of being born again.

Jesus defined eternal life in John Chapter 17 and Verse 3 when He said this:

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

He says eternal life is knowing God and it’s knowing Christ. And that does not mean an intellectual appreciation of God and Christ, but knowing there is to experience Him. Because eternal life is nothing less than the very life of God lived within a person who will receive Him by the Spirit of God. And that is eternal life.

It has an ongoing dimension. It has an everlasting dimension to it beyond this life; that is true. But it is something that we are to receive here and now in the present tense.

And lots of folks are confused as to what eternal life is. It is that quality of life that derives from the presence of Jesus Christ in us, which now makes sense of this life here on earth, but which we continue to enjoy beyond this life through all eternity.

Now if that is one area of confusion as to what it is, there is also confusion as to why we need it. Why do we need eternal life?

Well the reason is because the only alternative to eternal life is what the Bible calls perishing. And these two things are set in contrast several times in the New Testament. For instance, previous chapter, John Chapter 3 Verse 16:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but” (here’s the alternative) “have eternal life.”

Perishing in the New Testament is also a process. It’s not something that happens one day. Perishing by definition is a process.

Rubber perishes. Many years ago, when I was a boy, on a cold winter’s night I went to bed, as was the custom in my family, with a water bottle, a hot water bottle. Now some of you who live in air conditioned constant temperature environments don’t know what a

water bottle is probably. But a water bottle is a kind of rubber bag you put hot water in and you kind of put it in the bed to warm it up and you cuddle it when you go to sleep.

Well I went to bed one night, as a boy, cuddling my water bottle and I woke up halfway through the night wet. I was pleased to discover it was my water bottle. The water bottle had perished.

What had happened was that when that water bottle left the water bottle factory, it began a process of perishing that culminated unsuspectingly one night in my bed when it began to leak.

And in a similar way, when you were born, when I was born, we began in this life a process of perishing, having been born in a state of separation from God, in a state of spiritual death. We begin that process of perishing, which one day, unless it is halted and replaced with the process of living an eternal life, will culminate in eternal separation from God in a place the Bible calls hell.

But the perishing process has already begun. That's why it speaks of perishing in the present tense. Here are a couple of verses:

1 Corinthians 1:18:

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (Not who will perish; who are perishing - in the present tense), “but to us who are being saved” (again, present tense), “it is the power of God.”

2 Corinthians 4:3:

“If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.” (Present tense again; it's a process.)

And every one of us is naturally in the process of perishing and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is about Him intervening in a person's life, halting the process of perishing and replacing it with the process of living.

That's why you need the gift of God, which is eternal life. There is no third path. You perish or you live.

And if people are confused as to what it is and confused as to why we need it, they are equally confused often as to how we get it.

How do we get eternal life? Well here is the answer: it is a gift from God.

What do you do when somebody offers you a gift? You reach out an empty hand. You take it and you say thank you.

The marvelous thing is there is nothing you could do and therefore need to do to earn this. Eternal life is never a reward; it is never just payment for anything. It is a gift which requires in humility an empty hand that says thank you.

And, said Jesus to this woman, “If you knew the gift of God.” And He goes on to say in effect, if you knew the gift of God, you would have been satisfied; it would have met the deepest need of your own heart.

But that leads to the second thing she didn’t know because back in Verse 10 again, Jesus said to her,

“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

The second thing she didn’t know was she didn’t know who Jesus was. (“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is speaking to you.”) But she didn’t.

As far as she was concerned He was a stranger sitting at the well and she had no clue at all as to who He is.

The reason why most people getting up this morning in the city of Toronto did not even for a fraction of a moment have the thought pass, cross their mind “today is Sunday; I will go to church,” in the vast majority of cases, simply because they do not know who Jesus Christ is.

They will of course in the main have heard His name. And they will probably acknowledge He was a good man, a great leader, an excellent teacher.

I am interested in a survey taken in Britain; I think it was last year – I heard about it two weeks ago – asked young people who from all of history would you most like to meet? And the first place went overwhelmingly apparently to Jesus Christ.

But most young people who would love to meet Jesus Christ are not in church because most of them, for whatever reason they would like to meet Him - and by the way, I am very encouraged they would like to meet Him because He would like to meet them too. And that’s a start, when something inside somebody says, “I would love to meet that man.” But He will never make sense until we know who He is.

So He says, “If you knew who it was that was talking to you...”

Well, who is He? Well, she begins to probe. She says in Verse 12,

“Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his flocks and his herds?”

Remember the Samaritans shared a common ancestry with the Jews, so she speaks of “our father Jacob” and this was a well that Jacob had built and had given it to his son Joseph.

And she is saying, in effect, “You are talking about water – living water- and you are saying if I knew who you were, I would ask you for this living water. Are you greater than Jacob and is your water better than his water?”

“Because two thousand years ago – that’s how long it was since Jacob – two thousand years ago, Jacob dug this well. And for two thousand years we have drunk from this well and during all of that time it has never run dry. So it’s a pretty good well. Are you greater than Jacob? Do you have a better well than he does?”

And by the way, if you were to go to Sychar in Samaria today, which most tourists don’t because it’s in a very inflammatory part of the West Bank (though I have been there a number of years ago and I have sat on the side of this well and it is still producing water. That means it has been there for four thousand years as a source of water to people.)

“Are you greater than this? Are you greater than Jacob?”

Now Jesus doesn’t answer the question; He sidesteps it. But He could have said this, if you will allow me to put some words into Jesus’ mouth, which actually do come out later. But He might well have said to this woman, “Who was Jacob’s father?”

And she would have said, “Isaac.”

“And who was Jacob’s grandfather?”

And she would have said, “Abraham.”

And Jesus could have said to her what He said to the Jews later in John’s Gospel, John 8:58, when He said to them,

“Before Abraham was born, I am!”

He could have said to her, “Before Jacob was born, I am.”

Now when He said that, it may have sounded like poor grammar. “Before Abraham (past tense), I am (present tense).” But actually it was wonderful theology because the name “I Am” is a title that God gave Himself, meaning He exists and operates eternally in the present tense. And we get our English name Jehovah or Yahweh from this name “I Am.”

So Jesus was taking upon Himself here the very identity of God Himself, and that was either blasphemy or it was true. And it is true that Jesus Christ was never less than God, though He became incarnate in human form. And we will never believe in what Jesus

Christ can do until we recognize who Jesus Christ is because it is Jesus Christ being who He is that qualifies Him to do what He does.

And if you don't know who Jesus Christ is you won't understand what Jesus Christ says. But if you know who Jesus Christ is, everything He says makes perfect sense.

You see, as far as this woman is concerned He is talking riddles at this point. "What do you mean talking about water you cannot thirst after drinking?"

"But if you knew who it is that is speaking to you, you would ask Me for this and I would give it to you because it would all make sense.

You see Christianity will never make sense until you know who Jesus Christ is.

And you may be here this morning trying to make sense of Christianity as a philosophy of life, as an ethical code to live your life by. It will never make sense until first and foremost you understand who Jesus Christ is. And you will never do that without the work of the Holy Spirit who reveals. And that's why your heart needs to be open towards God that He reveals who He is.

"Are you greater than our father Jacob?"

Not only could He have said, am I greater than Jacob, but I have a different kind of water, and if you drink it, you will never thirst again. He says in Verse 13,

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again."

"Jacob served you well sinking this well, but you come here today and fill up your water jar and you take it home, you will come back tomorrow and you will take home another full jar, and you will be back the next day, and your mother did this before you and your grandmother did this before you. And every day since Jacob sank this well, for two thousand years, people have come to this well to draw water."

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst."

And the third thing this woman didn't know was that it was possible to be completely satisfied. "The kind of water I am talking to you about will be such that you will never thirst again."

Jesus recognized in this woman a thirst for something she hadn't got. It wasn't that she hadn't tried to satisfy her thirst, because like everybody else, she had. We know little about this woman, but we do know later – and we'll see this bit next week because I originally wanted to cover the whole passage this morning but there is too much here to do that, and we'll see this next week.

But we'll discover then something we know about her, that she had been married five times. And at this point she was living together with someone to whom she was not married. How many other men she had lived with and married to, we don't know, but if he was the first, she has lived in either a legal or common law relationship with at least 6 men.

And all of this was symptomatic of the fact she was searching. She was searching for meaning; she was searching for satisfaction. She was probably beginning to realize you will never find it in a man, but she looked anyway.

I love the fact that Jesus, in His interaction with people in the Gospels, saw their sins so often as symptoms of what is going on deep down and what is going on deep down was good – they're searching. There's nothing worse than giving up the search.

And sometimes that searching can take us down dangerous roads and precarious roads and this woman had been down dangerous roads. She had left five men already. We don't know if she had any children. We know all the hazards and trauma that that kind of living would have on any children that she would have.

But Jesus was so wonderfully wise and kind enough to recognize this is a symptom of something good – you are looking, you are searching. And it's the lack of quenching your thirst that He is identifying.

Maybe there are many of us here this morning and you are searching, and you are searching for meaning, you are searching for love, you are searching for purpose, you are searching for acceptance, you are searching for satisfaction.

And you might have done all kinds of foolish things in pursuit of that search and you have never found what you are looking for. But I am glad you are searching, because those who seek find.

G.K. Chesterton is reputed to have said,

“Every man who knocks at the door of a brothel is looking for God.”

I tried to trace that source of that quote this week. I have heard it several times attributed to Chesterton, but actually it seems to have occurred nowhere in anything Chesterton wrote. I found it attributed to Francis of Assisi or to Augustine, though nobody has any quotation in any context. It's more likely that it's more recent than that.

In 1945 a man called Bruce Smith wrote a book in which he said this:

“The young man who rings the bell at the brothel is unconsciously looking for God.”

He is trying to meet a need that he thinks sexual gratification will give him, which she thought romance and marriage and sexual experience would give her, and of course it doesn't.

There is a much deeper need than that. Augustine, in the 5th Century, he did say this – he said,

“You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.”

“Madame,” said Jesus, “Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.”

Do you believe that? I mean people pursue wrong things often in search of right things. That's why Jesus didn't criticize people in their sin. As He said, “I did not come to condemn the world. I came to save it.”

Any Tom, Dick or Harry can condemn somebody for their sin. Anybody can do that. You don't have to be smart; you don't have to be wise. But the wise person, as Jesus demonstrates, sees that as a symptom and will trace it through to its cause.

Married five times? That's not the problem. She knows as much as anybody, if not more so, that she has messed up her life in that area. But what that tells me is she is searching and she has not found it yet.

“And I am offering what you are searching for,” says Jesus, in effect. “Madame,” He might have said, “you might have been drinking water but it's salted water. It doesn't satisfy your thirst; it only intensifies your thirst. And if you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.”

And then Verse 14:

“Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.”

You know sometimes people come to Christ and they know that something very wonderful has happened in their lives and they are excited about it for a while. Then they begin to slide away. And God spoke to Jeremiah about this and uses the same imagery that Jesus is using here in John 4 when in Jeremiah 2:13, God said to Jeremiah,

“My people...”

(This is “My people” now – not people outside of a relationship with God – these were the Israelites in a covenant with God.)

“My people have committed two sins:” (number one) “They have forsaken me, the spring of living water.”

“They have known me but they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, the source of this satisfying water.”

And secondly – that’s the first of the two sins (they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water) and Number two:

“They have dug their own cisterns” but they are “broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

You see when a person turns away from the living God and therefore from the living water that God spoke to Jeremiah about, he doesn’t then move back into some kind of no man’s land, some kind of vacuum – of course he doesn’t. He builds his own cisterns, he digs his own cisterns, because he needs something that gives your life meaning and gives you a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

The only problem is they are broken. And do you know how you know someone is digging out of broken cisterns? I’ll tell you how you know – it tells you – they are drained. They are drained; they are weary.

And the message to Jeremiah was the people have to come back.

And I know in speaking this morning that many of you here, most of you here, are already Christians - not all of you in likelihood. Those of you who are watching on television or listening on the radio, many of you are Christians but some of you are not.

But this is a message which speaks to both those who are the people of God and those who are not the people of God in the sense that this woman was not in relationship with God and so she was thirsty; she was seeking to satisfy her thirst.

And the opposite of this water that will never thirst, but using the same imagery, God says, “Jeremiah, hey listen, My people have given up on Me. The glitter of alternative things has tantalized them and seduced them and sucked them away and they are living with broken cisterns. If they are smart enough they will wake up to that and come back, come back to Christ.”

There is an old hymn that we used to sing when I was younger. The hymn is called Now None But Christ Can Satisfy. And there is a verse in that hymn that says,

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But ah! the waters failed!
E’en as I stooped to drink they’d fled
And mocked me as I wailed.

And then the refrain says,

Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me;
There is love, and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee.

And this was the message Jesus had for this woman after years of drinking from broken cisterns.

Then He describes this water. He says in Verse 14,

“Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed” (listen to this),
“the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Some translations like the King James, The New American Standard, The New King James read it this way:

“The water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

So some translations say it'll be a spring of water welling up. Others say it will be a well of water springing up. I'm not altogether sure why they read that slightly differently. But either way, here is the idea: “the water I give you will be in you like a well (and a well is always deep), it'll be in you like a spring, and a spring is always fresh.”

If you want to know this water from which you will never thirst again, it has to go deep like a well and be fresh like a spring. You will never find satisfaction in a superficial Christianity, metaphorically tipping your hat to God and saying, “Okay, I acknowledge You. I would like to be forgiven. I'd like to go to heaven when I die. Okay, I hope I can get that much.”

That will leave you totally frustrated. We will never be satisfied until Jesus Christ goes deep into every part of our lives. I have talked with people who have said to me many times with things to this effect: “Well, I'm a Christian. It didn't work for me.” And they are telling the truth. It doesn't work for them because they have not given Jesus Christ access into the deepest places of their heart.

If you want this water from which you will never thirst, it will be in you like a well.

When I was in Africa last month I visited more than one place, but one place in particular where they had sunk a borehole many metres down into the ground and had this fresh water coming out now. And they had never had this in this particular place before, never had running water like that before.

And I thought to myself, you know, why didn't they do this fifty years ago or a hundred years ago or two hundred years ago? And the reason was because the water table was

deep and you needed machinery and you would locate it first and then you would know where to go down. And they brought in this big machinery, sunk these boreholes and had gone deep down and out came this fresh water that was now a constant supply at the village pump.

If you just go six feet down you won't get much water in most cases. That's why Jesus Christ enters our lives to be Lord. While we are to live in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, while we are to live lives that are surrendered to Him, that He might lead, guide and direct our paths and as He does so, there is a depth which brings with it that satisfaction that you will never thirst again. And not only that, but it will be like a spring springing up into eternal life, that is springing up with life-giving quality; it'll be fresh.

The deeper Jesus Christ goes the fresher and richer our experience of Him is. And the shallower you let Him go, the more quickly you will turn away. There's not much there for you.

I love that verse in Lamentations 3:22 when Jeremiah, walking through the rubble of Jerusalem after its destruction, he writes this:

“Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

And the significance of that is He is in the middle of rubble when He says this. Everything has been destroyed. Everything Jeremiah loved had been taken away. And yet he says, “I have this: that His love never fails, His mercies are new every morning. I don't live off stale blessings. I don't live off memories of what God did in the past. I live everyday from this fresh supply because God Himself is my life, my strength, my source.”

And no matter what's happening to you, what's happening in you is you have a source that is fresh and deep.

Last year Hilary and I were in Switzerland in I think it was in August. We had been invited there to speak at a conference of missionaries from all across Europe and they met in a beautiful hotel halfway up a mountain in the Swiss Alps.

And we planned to stay on a week after that conference to take a week's vacation. And we hadn't made any plans. We just, at the end of that conference, got in our rental car and drove higher up the mountain, found a little village which had a little guest house in with about four bedrooms in it and we stayed there for the week.

And every day we would leave our guesthouse and go out into a different area in the mountains and we would walk and hike. And we would spend the day up in the hills and we loved it. But we would take a bottle of water, which is you know a big bottle – it's a lot of weight to carry in water. But we discovered that bubbling up on all these hills were springs. So we took a bottle and when the bottle was empty, we would find a spring –

they were all over the place – and just take the water (we would look it up and make sure it was clear, and it nearly always was; sometimes there had been a few goats or cattle just further upstream and it was always good to avoid that.) But if you get it coming out of the ground, it was fresh, had a beautiful, cool taste to it. And this is the image.

“The water I give him will be in him a well – deep like a well – springing up fresh like a spring.”

Jesus never, ever offered a superficial gospel. He never offered a rescue package from hell. He offered a full-blooded gospel, which would be the intervention of Jesus Christ Himself to halt that process of perishing, replace it with the process of living. But that life would involve something which goes deep like a well into every part of your life and will be fresh - fresh every day.

Is that your Christian life? If it's not I'll tell you what's happened. If you are a Christian, I'll tell you what has happened: you have forsaken, as Jeremiah says, you have forsaken the spring of living water and you are digging out cisterns to hold your own water, but they are broken and they leak and you are drained.

Verse 15 – and I finish with this. Verse 15:

“The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’”

Now things are looking up. She says, “Give me this water.” But, as we will see next week, she still hadn't understood what He was talking about. In fact, this initial “give me this water”; there is a slight cynicism to it. “Okay, mister big man, give it to me then. Why? So I don't have to carry my bucket here every day.”

We'll talk about her bucket next week because it is very significant. It is significant because the day came – at least the moment came when she left her water jug, she left her bucket. Then you know you have got the real thing.

But at this moment she said, “Okay, give me this water.” But nevertheless she is beginning the process. “I want what You are offering; what You are talking about resonates with the deepest need in my own heart. Give me.”

And maybe this morning for some of us here, as we have looked into this passage of Scripture, you have found yourself looking into a mirror and you are seeing reflected a picture of yourself.

Of course you are different, but the similarities are enough for you to know that God is speaking to you this morning that you need this gift of God.

And He needs from you an open outstretched hand that, in so doing, says, “I have nothing to offer in myself, nothing to give You except my empty hand. I am in that process of

perishing. Forgive me and intercept that process and replace it with this new process of living in eternal life. Please come and live within me. Not only that, but please go deep to every part of my life, into the life nobody else knows about, into my family life, into my home life, into my work life, into my mind, into every part of my life. And as You go deep and do Your work in every part of my life, thank You for the freshness of that springing up of life.

And if you are here this morning and you have known Christ in a way that has been real, but like the people of Jeremiah's day, you have committed two sins - you have forsaken the fountain of living water – you need to come home. You need to come home and say, "Lord, I am sorry. Forgive me." Because otherwise the only thing you can ever live off are broken cisterns. And they will frustrate you enormously until you come back to the true water of life, the Spirit of God reigning within you.

And we are going to pray together and I am going to give you just a moment just in your own heart, to respond to whatever it is that God has been saying to you through His Word this morning. Some of you will recognize the broken cisterns that you have been looking for water in. You need to confess that and ask that the Spirit of God will fill you again with Himself.

Some of you need to come for the first time and say, "Lord, I need You in the very center of my life. I need the Spirit of Jesus Christ to come and live within me. Forgive me of my sin. Cleanse me on the grounds that You died for my sin and come and fill me with Yourself.

Just a moment of silence to give you time to speak to God yourself.