

The Living Water

John 4:5–42

Let's pray. Father, thank you for giving us your Word as bread to eat and living water to drink. In this moment, may we be fully satisfied as we receive your Word, so that not only our spirits, but also our souls and bodies, may be restored. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of life. Amen.

Today we hear the story of the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter 4. But this is not simply the story of one woman long ago. It is the story of how the Lord seeks those who are thirsty.

The Gospel of John records this story so that we also may meet the Lord just as she did. And my prayer today is that through this word, you may drink the living water that the Lord gives.

Although we did not read it today, in verses 3 and 4, there is an interesting sentence explaining why Jesus went to Samaria. It says, "He left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria."

At that time, Jews did not associate with Samaritans, so they normally avoided traveling through Samaria and instead took a longer route around it. Samaria had been conquered long ago by Assyria, and the people there had become a mixed population. Because of this, the Jews treated them as Gentiles and did not allow them to come to the temple in Jerusalem to worship.

So the Samaritans built their own place of worship in the land of Shechem, the place connected with the patriarchs of Israel—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—and they worshiped there.

Why, then, did Jesus have to pass through that place? There is a principle that always guided the ministry of Jesus. In John 5:19, we read that the Son does nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. In other words, Jesus does what the Father is doing.

It was God the Father who told him to go to Samaria. This reveals the appointed will of God. Even in the marginalized land of Samaria, there was a woman who was even more marginalized by the people, and God desired that she hear the gospel. Just as God had a definite plan to meet that one woman, the Lord also says to us, "I must meet you."

When Jesus and his disciples arrived at the Samaritan town called Sychar, it was about noon. There was a well just outside the town that Jacob had dug long ago. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down by the well. Meanwhile, the disciples went into the town to buy food. While they were gone, a woman came to draw water. It was the middle of the day, when the sun was hot and people usually did not come out. And there, Jesus was waiting. Waiting for this woman to come.

Jesus asked her for a drink of water, and that famous conversation began. As soon as the woman saw him, she realized that he was a Jew. She wondered why he, being a Jew, would speak to her.

At that time, Jews believed that speaking with Samaritans would make them ceremonially unclean, so they avoided conversation with them.

Outwardly, Jesus was indeed a Jew, but in his very being, he is God. Jesus is the Creator God who comes into our lives and speaks to us.

When the woman asked, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" Jesus answered, "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."

In these words, there are two things Jesus wanted this woman to know. One is the gift of God. The other is who it is that is asking her for a drink. In other words, he wanted her to know who the giver and messenger of the gift of God is.

What is the gift of God? It is the Holy Spirit. Joel 2:28 says, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."

And Acts 2:33 says, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, [Jesus] has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing."

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and also the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit is God himself. The gift is that God himself comes to dwell within a person. Even before the creation of the world, God knew that humanity would fall. Yet he determined to restore them and to lead them into his eternal kingdom. For that purpose, he chose to give himself as the gift. May you enjoy this gift.

Then who is the one who says, "Give me a drink," the one who delivers this gift? It is the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus. Why is Jesus the only one who can give this gift? Because in order to receive God as the gift, the problem of sin must be solved. Therefore, we must know who Jesus is. He is the one who resolves the problem of sin by making atonement for us. And the living water that Jesus gives refers to the Holy Spirit, who is the gift of God.

But the woman still did not understand what Jesus was saying. She replied that he had nothing to draw water with and that the well was deep. She asked where he could possibly get this living water. In fact, there was a bucket at the well. Why, then, did she say there was none? Because it was a bucket used only by Samaritans. For a Jew, it was as good as having none at all. Jews did not share eating utensils with Samaritans and did not have fellowship with them. So the woman was still bound by social traditions and therefore could not recognize the Messiah.

She also said that this well had been given by their ancestor Jacob about two thousand years earlier. Jacob had used it to provide water for his family and livestock, and even now the people

were still drinking from it. The water was so good that it had lasted for generations. So she asked, "Are you greater than our father Jacob?"

This well was something the woman depended on. In the same way, we also have our own "Jacob's wells," These are the things we rely on in life. They may be our traditions, our customs, or the things of the world that we trust in. Yet as Jesus says, whoever drinks of that water will thirst again.

But when Jesus spoke about the water he gives, he said it will become in a person a spring of water welling up to eternal life. And those who drink it will never thirst again. When the woman heard this, she asked him to give her that water.

At that point, Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." Now he began to address her sin. She replied, "I have no husband." Her life had been very difficult. She may have had some moral failures, but it would not be right to say that it was entirely her fault. In that time, women did not have the power to leave men as they wished. In fact, the opposite was true.

When Jesus said, "You have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true," he was speaking as the Creator who sees and knows every detail of a person's life. But this word of knowledge was not meant to condemn her. For her, it became a tremendous comfort.

The woman now began to think of Jesus as a prophet. Let me ask you something, if you met a prophet who knew everything about your past, what question would you ask? This woman did not ask when the misery of her life would end. She did not ask about her personal problems. Instead, her concern was about worship. What she had long wondered was where she should worship. Because there was a deep spiritual thirst in her that the world could not satisfy.

Since the Jews considered Samaritan worship to be inferior, she asked where worship should be offered. But in response, Jesus spoke about the hour of worship. He said it would be neither in Jerusalem nor in Samaria. The hour was coming when people would worship the Father not in that way, but in spirit and truth. And he said that this hour is now.

Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes into us, the Spirit of Christ comes with him. When we worship, the Holy Spirit helps us. We do not worship by our emotions, our thoughts, or our knowledge alone. If that were the case, how could Christians in places of persecution such as North Korea or Iran secretly gather and risk their lives to worship in such terrifying circumstances?

When Jesus speaks of worshiping in truth, truth means reality. If you open a gift box and it is empty, there is no reality in it. Reality means something that truly exists. That reality is Christ, the

blood of Jesus, the Spirit of God, and the living water. And those who believe in Jesus possess this reality.

Then the woman said that the Messiah, who is called the Christ, would come and declare all things to them. At that moment, Jesus made a bold declaration. He said, "I who speak to you am he." This statement completely shattered the rigid framework of religious custom and tradition in which the woman had lived. The living word of Christ, which John 6:63 calls "spirit and life," pierced her heart. And it led her to a decision.

The woman left behind her water jar. That water jar was the symbol of the self-reliance she had always depended on. And she went back into the town to testify about Christ to the people. They heard her testimony and believed in Jesus. Now, having received the Spirit of Christ, she no longer focused on her shameful past. Instead, she became the first apostle who testified about Christ. And Jesus lifted up the woman who had been suffering in the lowest place.

Let me ask you something. When did this woman receive the gift of God? When did she receive the Holy Spirit, the living water? She received the gift while she was speaking with Jesus. And in the same way, as we worship now and share in the word, we are drinking this living water.

If we focus on our problems, we will remain thirsty. But when we focus on our conversation with the Lord, when we worship God, learn his word, and praise him, the Lord himself deals with our problems. When we worship in spirit and truth, when we recite the word aloud, pray, and sing praises, we are drinking the living water. And this living water is washing us, and the Holy Spirit within us is in communion with the Father and Christ on the throne.

So regardless of our circumstances or how we are feeling, I encourage you to live a life of continual worship in faith. Believe that you are worshiping in spirit and truth. When you worship, do not focus on your problems, or outward things, traditions, or appearances. Instead, fix your attention on Christ, the reality, who is within the Spirit, and become a worshiper who longs to know him.

May you live each day enjoying the living water of the Holy Spirit, the gift of God. Amen.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, how grateful we are that when we come to God in faith, You freely give us the gift of God — the Holy Spirit, the living water! We bless Your name. As we commune with You daily through Your Word in spirit and truth, may we experience ever more deeply the Holy Spirit within us, alive and at work. May this spring of water, welling up to eternal life, overflow and abound, so that we too, like this Samaritan woman, may become apostles who boldly testify of You. In the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.