

# Living Water

*John 4:1-15*

**Thought for the Day:** Jesus Christ alone can truly satisfy the spiritual thirst that we all have in our inner being.

Jesus cares for and calls individuals to Himself. He does not hesitate to reach out to those who are considered to be outcasts of society. No barrier is too great for Him to overcome. No one is beyond His love, no matter how great their sins may be. He delivers those who trust in Him from the guilt and shame of their sinful lifestyles and gives them the gift of eternal life. He alone can truly satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts and lives.

**1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.**

- “Knowing that the Pharisees (in Jerusalem) had heard about his popularity and that they would begin watching him closely, and at the same time knowing that his ‘hour’ had not yet come [the hour that He would give His life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world], Jesus wisely decided to withdraw from possible conflict by leaving Judea and returning to Galilee. Thus, Jesus' first Judean visit had come to an end—a visit begun by his coming to Jerusalem for the Passover.” (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)
- Jesus realized that the Jewish leaders were already rejecting Him and His message, so He departed for Galilee where people would be more responsive to His ministry.

**4 And he had to pass through Samaria.**

- Literally, “It was *necessary* for Him to pass through Samaria.”
- The necessity was not geographical nor chronological; it was spiritual.
- Because of their hatred for the Samaritans, when traveling from Judea to Galilee, Jews would normally cross the Jordan River to the east of Jerusalem, then make their way north traveling through the regions of Perea and Decapolis, and then recross the Jordan River, back into Galilee.
- Jesus was compelled by the Holy Spirit to pass through Samaria in order to give the people there the opportunity to receive God’s gift of eternal life.
- If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it is because God made a special effort to reach you with the Gospel. (John 6:37; Eph. 1:3-14; Romans 8:28-30)

**5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.**

- The journey from Judea to this point in Samaria would have taken about two days. Jesus, in His humanity, was weary.
- The “sixth hour” indicates that it was noontime, approaching the hottest part of the day.

**7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water.**

- This woman was deliberately trying to avoid contact with the other women of the city.
  - There were two other wells closer to Sychar than Jacob’s well.

- Women generally drew water early in the morning and later in the afternoon, when the temperatures were much cooler.
- This woman was at this well at this time by divine appointment!
  - When you met Jesus and received Him as your Savior, the timing and the circumstances were by divine appointment—it was not an accident!
  - “The Lord Jesus knew all along that she would be at the well at this time. He knew that she was a soul in need, and so He determined to meet her and rescue her from her sinful life.” (*MacDonald, Commentary, p. 1438*)

**Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)**

- Again, we see the genuine humanity of Jesus: He was tired, thirsty, and, at this moment, completely dependent on others for food and drink.

**9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)**

- “The Samaritan woman was very surprised—first, that a Jew would even speak to a Samaritan; second, that a Jewish male would speak to a Samaritan woman (she also had a bad reputation and this was a public place); third, that a Jew would drink from a Samaritan's cup.” (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)
- Most Jews in Jesus’ time considered the Samaritans to be permanently unclean. They refused to use the same utensils or facilities that the Samaritans used.
- Jesus was violating all the social norms and crossing all the common barriers to share the Good News with this woman; He wants us to be willing and available to do the same!

**10 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."**

- She did not yet realize that Jesus was both the Messiah and the Son of God—literally, her own Creator—and that He was offering her the gift of eternal life through faith in Him.

**11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."**

- As in chapter three with Nicodemus, so here: Jesus is speaking of spiritual realities while the woman was only thinking in terms of physical realities.
- She desired physical water that would satisfy her thirst once-and-for-all; a physical impossibility, just like entering your mother’s womb and being born a second time.
- The Samaritans considered Jacob to be their physical as well as spiritual ancestor. “Are you greater and more important than he?” “Yes, as a matter of fact, I am!”

**13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**

- “People need water daily because thirst will always return. The water from Jacob's well would indeed satisfy the woman's thirst, but only temporarily. She would always need to

return for more water. So also are all the other "drinks" of life — they never satisfy. Some of them even create more thirst. The human needs for love, food, sex, security, and approval, even when met, do not give complete satisfaction. Attempts to find full satisfaction [in the things of this world] will lead only to disappointment and despair."

"The water Jesus offers quenches spiritual thirst so completely that those who drink will never be thirsty again. Jesus' "water" continually satisfies the desire for God's presence because "the water that [He gives] will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." *NRSV* The gift that Jesus gives... suggests the availability, accessibility, and abundance of the divine life for believers. The expression *to eternal life* probably means 'resulting in eternal life.'" (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)

- "[This woman] had been coming out day after day to draw from the well; yet the need was never completely met. And so it is with all the wells of this world. Men seek their pleasure and satisfaction in earthly things, but these things are not able to quench the thirst of the heart of man. As Augustine said in his *Confessions*, 'O Lord, You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in You.'

"The water which Jesus gives truly satisfies. Whoever drinks of Christ's blessing and mercies will never thirst again. Not only do His benefits fill the heart, but they overflow it as well. They are like a bubbling fountain, constantly overflowing, not only in this life but in eternity as well. The expression *springing up into everlasting life* means that the benefits of the water which Christ gives are not limited to earth, but will go on forever. The contrast is very vivid. All that earth can provide is not sufficient to fill the human heart. But the blessings which Christ provides not only fill the heart, but they are too great for any heart to contain... The pleasures of this world are for a few short years, but the pleasures which Christ provides go on into everlasting life." (*MacDonald, Commentary, p. 1439*)

### **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."**

- "The woman mistakenly believed that if she received the water Jesus offered, she would not have to return to the well each day. She was interested in Jesus' message because she thought it could make her life easier. But if that were always the case, people would accept Christ's message for the wrong reasons. Jesus did not come to take away [the] challenges [of this life], but to change us on the inside and to empower us [by His Spirit] to deal with problems from God's perspective." (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)
- "Living water" = the indwelling Holy Spirit who enables us to enjoy all the blessings which come to us through faith in Jesus Christ, especially His gift of eternal life, a new quality of life that transforms us from the inside out.
- Have you received the gift of "living water" which only Jesus can provide?

### **What did Jesus mean when He spoke of living water?**

Jesus uses the phrase "living water" in two instances in the Bible. The first instance is found in John chapter 4. Jesus was tired and sat at a well while His disciples went into town to buy food. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. The Samaritan woman was quite shocked because Jesus was a Jew, and Jews simply hated the Samaritans. Of course, she had no idea who Jesus was and asked Him how He could ask her for water since He was a Jew.

Jesus ignored the question and went right to the point, "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" (John 4:10). Notice that He does not say that He is the living water, but that He would give living water to her, and when she received it, she would never thirst again. Of course, that does not tell us what the living water is! For that, we must go to another passage of Scripture. In this case, Jesus is in the temple surrounded by a throng of worshipers. He suddenly cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' By this *He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive*, for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37–39, emphasis added).

Here Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the living water. External influence of the Spirit had always been given in the conversion and sanctification of the Old Testament saints and prophets, but the gift of the Spirit who would indwell believers had not yet been received (Acts 10:44–45). So, though many people say that Jesus is the living water, Jesus Himself intended the phrase to mean the Holy Spirit who dwells in believers and seals them for salvation (Ephesians 1:13–14). It is the ministry of the Spirit, flowing out of a heart redeemed by God, that blesses believers and, through them, brings life and light to the world.

© Copyright 2002-2022 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved.  
[www.GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org)