



RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

THE WEEKLY BRICK

May 9, 2010.

As you come to him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 2:4-5

“Soul Thirst”

John 4:10-12

John 4:14 (Jesus said) ...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.”

Are you spiritually dry? Jesus invites you to the “WELL”

I. Accept Jesus’ W _____.

John 4:10 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.”

Romans 5:8-9 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ^[9] Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!

II. Rely on Jesus’ E _____.

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ^[14] 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.”

Exodus 17:5-7 The Lord answered Moses... ^[6] I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ^[7] And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

III. Trust Jesus’ L _____.

John 4:11-12 “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ^[12] 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?”

Isaiah 43:2-3 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. ^[3] For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...

IV. Receive Jesus’ L _____.

John 4:7-9 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ^[8] (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ^[9] 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.)

Go to the W-E-L-L when you run dry!

(Answers: I. Work. II. Energy. III. Lordship. IV. Love.)

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Day #1--Monday, May 10th Read: John 4:4-6; Psalm 63.

This week, we will explore the surrounding text from the sermon yesterday, as well as some addendum thoughts on the theme of spiritual “dryness.”

“Samaria” in New Testament times was the region in the middle of Palestine, with Judea to the south and Galilee to the north. The Samaritans were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile that grew out of the Assyrian captivity of the ten northern tribes in 727 B.C. Rejected by the Jewish people because of their genealogy and religious practices, the Samaritans established their own temple and religious services on Mt. Gerizim. There were two possible routes from Judea to Galilee that Jesus could follow. The longer was through Gentile country on the east side of the Jordan; the shorter was through Samaria and was the usual route despite the animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans. Verse 4 suggests this latter route was chosen of necessity. Perhaps Jesus chose the route through Samaria in order to reach the despised people of that region? As the Savior of the world He seeks out and saves the despised and outcasts (See Luke 19:10). In this area there still exists to this day a deep well, which according to tradition is the original well from this account. Jesus was tired; this seems an intentional note to stress the true humanity of Jesus and also provides a setting for the opening of the conversation. The *sixth hour* would be noon, the hottest part of the day. From John’s description here the context is set: Jesus is alone, in “enemy” territory, hot and tired. Next we will be introduced to the Samaritan woman who will be transformed after her encounter with Jesus. The woman is “thirsty” for love; Jesus will offer her the “living water” that will satisfy her thirst.

In Psalm 63, David, with passion and hope, expresses his desire for God’s presence. David is as thirsty for God as the desert is for water. The thirst for God is the beginning of a transformed life. As physical thirst leads us to find that which will quench our thirst, our “soul thirsts” can lead us to the One who will quench our every spiritual thirst.

Question/Reflect: Do (did) your “soul thirsts” lead you to God? In the past, how have you tried to “quench” your soul thirsts?

Pray and Meditate: “So I will bless Thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name. My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.” (Psalm 63:4-5)

Day #2--Tuesday, May 11th Read: John 4:7-8.

It was unusual for a woman to visit the well alone. It is safe to say that this woman was something of a social outcast. John adds a note that the disciples were absent to highlight the dialogue between the woman and Jesus. Jesus’ presence at the well overcame two Jewish prejudices—any conversation with a Samaritan and any conversation with a non-familial woman. We can see the issue of prejudice through the woman’s remark to Jesus (v. 9). The normal prejudices of the day prohibited public conversation between men and women, between Jews and Samaritans, and especially between strangers. A Jewish Rabbi would rather go thirsty than violate these proprieties. Here we see a common characteristic about Jesus’ ministry: He avoids no one! No one is beyond the scope of Jesus’ love and mercy.

Question/Reflect: What is significant about this story taking place in Samaria?

Pray and Meditate: “Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His loving-kindness, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.” (Psalm 33:18-19)

Day #3--Wednesday, May 12th Read: John 4:9; Psalm 62:1-8 .

Jesus uses the woman’s question to deepen and redirect the conversation. The necessity of water for the physical body would be compared to the necessity of God’s love and presence for the spiritual life. The woman was thinking of Jesus as a “typical” Jew; Jesus uses this misunderstanding to reveal to the woman his identity. If she knew who Jesus really was, she would have asked for *living water*. The phrase, “living water,” contains a double meaning; either running water, *i.e.* spring water. Or, “spiritual water,” *i.e.* connected with the “flow” of the Spirit. The Rabbis thought of the Torah as “living water,” which shows its metaphorical use. It is, however, not surprising that the woman thought only on the human

level. Surprised and curious, the woman cannot understand why Jesus is talking with her in this way---treating her like a human being! With the simple act of asking her for water, Jesus will reject the belief that Samaritans, especially Samaritan women, were “unclean.” A Rabbinic law of A.D. 66 stated that Samaritan women were to be considered as continually menstruating and thus unclean. Therefore a Jew who drank from a Samaritan woman’s vessel would become ceremonially unclean. Jesus’ request was a way to open the conversation and share with her the truth about “living water.” Whenever Jesus talked with people, He did so in ways that would be consistent with their personal circumstances or situation. To Nicodemus, He spoke about new birth; but to this woman, He spoke about living water. Again, the woman coming to the well at such an hour (the sixth hour, noon time) would indicate that she is avoiding contact with people as most women (usually women) would draw water in the early hours due to the heat of the day. Perhaps this is another reason why she is so surprised at Jesus’ willingness to relate to her.

Question/Reflect: Since “nice girls” did not come to draw water at noon time, why do you think Jesus risked his reputation to ask a favor of the woman?

Pray and Meditate: Use Psalm 62:1-8 as a prayer.

Day #4--Thursday, May 13th Read: John 4:10-12.

Having captured her attention and stimulated her curiosity, Jesus uses water as a metaphor to describe the woman’s spiritual thirst. Jesus begins by slowly articulating who He is and what He has come to do for all people—even Samaritan women! Again, Jesus’ words in v.14 about living water, involve a double meaning. Literally, the phrase refers to fresh spring water (Genesis 26:19; Leviticus 14:6). Jacob’s Well was 200 feet deep. A second meaning is characteristic of John’s gospel. John (John 7:38-39) identifies this “living water” as the Holy Spirit dwelling within a believer (Jeremiah 2:13; Ezekiel 47:1-6; Zechariah 14:8). The connection between water and the Spirit is also an Old Testament concept (Isaiah 44:3). Clearly, as v. 11 reveals, she was taking Jesus literally. It seemed foolish to her to think of drawing water from a deep well without any means of drawing it! Her vision stretched no further than a bucket. Her comparison of Jesus with Jacob who dug the well (In Greek this question expects a negative answer), just adds irony to the narrative. Her inability to imagine any one greater than Jacob, as well as her incredulity about having nothing to draw the living water with, coalesce here to reveal the true identity and purpose of Jesus. The real superiority of Jesus was in the *living* quality of the water He can provide. Jacob may have dug the well, but he died. Jacob’s well could only temporarily quench the thirst (v. 13). In contrast, Jesus was the eternal God speaking to her, offering her eternal life! Like the woman at the well, how often do we, in our assumptions and preoccupations, miss what Jesus is offering to us? Here is an excerpt from one of Luther’s meditations that speak to the risk of surrendering our lives to Jesus so that we may receive the living water that comes from only Jesus:

“I take the risk of placing my confidence only in the one, invisible, inscrutable, and only God, who created heaven and earth and who alone is superior to all creation. Again, I am not terrified by all the wickedness of the devil and his cohorts because God is superior to them all. I would believe in God not a bit less if everyone were to forsake me and persecute me...I believe no less though I am a sinner...If he is the Creator of heaven and earth and Lord over everything, who, then, could deprive me of anything, or work me harm (Rom. 8:31)? Yes, how can it be otherwise than that all things work for good for me (Rom. 8:28) if the God, whom all creation obeys and depends upon, is well intentioned toward me? (Martin Luther, “Personal Prayer Book” in *Steadfast in Your Word: Daily Reflections From Martin Luther*, Barbara Owen, ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2002, 4).

Question/Reflect: In what ways have the changes in your spiritual life been stressful or unsettling? How have you worked through that?

□ Day #5--Friday, May 14th Read: John 4:13-15.

We return to the issue of Jesus metaphorically moving back and forth between what real water provides and what He provides. Jesus was speaking about “spiritual water,” His Spirit within us. To paraphrase Jesus’ reply in v.13-14, “Whoever *continues to drink* of this material water (or anything the world has to offer) will thirst again. But whoever *takes one drink* of the water I give will never thirst again!” (John 4:13–14) How true it is that the things of this world never completely satisfy. In John’s gospel, the concept of “life” is one of John’s key themes. He uses the word at least thirty-

six times. Jesus provides the kind of life that we are created for. The metaphorical interplay between physical life and spiritual life is an emphasis in John. Jesus provides the “breath” (Spirit) of God (John 3:8; 20:22); Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:48) who feeds us, and the Light of Life (John 1:4–5) who leads the way through a dark world. And, to our text, Jesus gives us the water of life. The woman’s immediate response was to ask for this water, but she did not know what she was saying. The woman (v.15) was still thinking literally. She imagined a constant water supply that would eliminate her visits to the well. She had not yet grasped the spiritual dimension. There is more significance than seems apparent in Jesus’ answer to the woman. With this woman, Jesus unveils the truth about who He is and the “water” He provides. Jesus, as Messiah, provides continual satisfaction of needs and desires. In addition, the man or woman who “drinks” His living water, will have within themselves a “spring of water welling up to eternal life.” This inner spiritual spring contrasts with the water from the well, which necessitated hard work to acquire. The Samaritan woman was thirsty for love as is reflected in the next few verses about her having had five husbands and is now with a man but not married. Clearly she was thirsting for someone who would keep on loving her; not just using her and throwing her away. She kept going back to the “well of human love” and was continually disappointed. Jesus wanted to give her real and lasting spiritual water that would quench her thirsting heart and soul. Jesus wants to continually quench our spiritual thirsts as well.

Question/Reflect: How would you describe this woman’s response for most of her conversation with Jesus? a. Searching—“Is it possible this is what I’ve been looking for?” b. Avoidance—“I think I’d better try to change the subject.” c. Skeptical—“Who does this guy think he is?” What have been your responses to Jesus?

□ Day #6--Saturday, May 15th Read: John 4:16-22

With just a few words, Jesus had revealed the woman’s life of sin, emptiness, and longing, as well as her need for salvation. The only way to prepare the soil of the heart for the seed is to plow it up with conviction. This is why Jesus told her to go get her husband: He forced her to admit her sin. The woman was forced to face reality in admitting she had *no husband*, although she hid the fact that she was living with a man. There can be no conversion without conviction. Insight into one’s self and circumstances is the beginning of conversion. From insight follows a dual turning: turning *away* from sin and *toward* Jesus. This is the “biblical math:” insight + turning (repentance) = conversion. It is through repentance that the Holy Spirit regenerates our minds and hearts and from this regeneration comes a new life (conversion). When the woman acknowledged that Jesus was *a prophet* (v.19), she probably thought of an inspired person. This is at least some advance on her earlier view of him. Although the woman’s introduction of the issue regarding the place of worship, may seem a diversion to avoid an unpleasant subject; perhaps her conviction was leading her to find forgiveness through the temple sacrifices/rituals. When Jesus says “salvation is from the Jews” (v.22), Jesus is pointing out that it is through the Jews that the world will know about God’s plan of salvation. Since the neuter *what* (“You worship *what* you do not know; we worship *what* we know...v.22) is used in both cases, this draws attention more to the essence of worship than to the person worshipped. The reference to *a time is coming* (v.23), modified by *has now come*, shows clearly that it is the ministry of Jesus which would radically transform worship. The mode of worship is now to be *in spirit and truth*, which transcends all racial and local considerations. The object of worship is Jesus who quenches the spiritual thirst. In one of his sermons, Luther said:

“Christ wants to say here: ‘You have heard that you must trust in God. But I want to show you where you will truly find him, lest your thoughts create an idol bearing the name of God. If you want to believe in God, then believe in me. If you want to apply your faith and your confidence properly, that it may not be amiss or false, then direct it toward me, for in me the entire Godhead dwells perfectly.’” (Martin Luther, “Sermons on the Gospel of John” [1537-38], in *Steadfast in Your Word*, 6).

Question/Reflect: What have been the most significant changes you have gone through in your spiritual life?

