

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK SEVEN: JESUS IS THE LIVING WATER

READING

4 He (Jesus) had to go through Samaria on the way. 5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" 10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." 11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" 13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." John 4 (NLT)

TEACHING

In this story, we find Jesus having a surprising conversation with a Samaritan woman. It's surprising because Jesus was a Jew and this woman was a Samaritan. The Jewish people and the Samaritans shared an ugly history of racism, hate and violence toward each other. A Jewish person would never approach a Samaritan looking for help or for a conversation. But Jesus loved this woman. Jesus loves all people regardless of gender, race, who they are or what they've done! He delights in surprising us with his love.

The woman's response to Jesus reveals her confusion: "Why are you talking to me? And why are you asking me to do something for you?" Jesus continues to surprise her by speaking of a water that will quench her thirst forever. She is talking about natural water, but Jesus is talking about supernatural water—living water. Jesus is the living water!

When I am thirsty, I drink water and it quenches my thirst. You and I need water to live; water gives us strength and satisfaction. But there is a problem—we always get thirsty again. Jesus came to satisfy the thirst of our souls once and for all. We are "thirsty" for meaning and purpose. We are "thirsty" for acceptance and love. And we need someone greater than an OT hero like Jacob to satisfy our parched souls. Jacob was an example of what to do and what not to do. But Jesus wasn't just our example, he was our substitute. He lived the life you should have lived and died the death you should have died so that your soul can find salvation and satisfaction in a relationship with God. Jesus is the living water that gives us eternal life!

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- What is your favorite drink? What is your least favorite?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- How does water help us when we are thirsty?
- Who is the living water?

CHILDREN:

- Why was it surprising that Jesus talked with this woman?
- Who is the living water?
- How does Jesus, the living water, satisfy our souls?

TEENAGERS:

- What does it mean that Jesus is the living water?
- What are some ways that people try to satisfy the thirst in their souls?
- What did Jesus do and how does that give us eternal life?

ADULTS:

- What are the differences between an OT hero like Jacob and Jesus?
- What things do you tend to turn to for satisfaction instead of Christ?

PRAYER

God,

Thank you that you sent Jesus, the living water, to satisfy my thirsty soul. Forgive me when I turn to other things or other people to find that satisfaction. Help me to see and believe that only you can truly satisfy. I want to know Jesus and experience his goodness. I believe that he is everything that my heart and soul are searching for. Thank you that your Spirit will help me know and experience this. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

This metaphor of thirst is not being introduced in this story. The Jewish people would have been well familiar with the language of thirst and water. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, “For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me—the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!” (Jer. 2:13 NLT) The powerful truth here is this: If we don’t drink of the living water, we will look to lesser sources of water. The prophet Jeremiah is pointing out the absurdity of turning to other things by comparing them to “cracked cisterns”—totally useless and empty. May God show us the foolishness of turning to other things for what can only be found in him.