

The Most Satisfying Thing in the World

John 4:4-41

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*Briarwood Presbyterian Church
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John 4:4-10 says

[4] And he (Jesus) had to pass through Samaria. [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. [7] A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." [8] (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) [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.) [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."

Greg Laurie in his book *Life. Any Questions?* says "have you ever felt empty, a lack of meaning or purpose? Many people feel as if there is a hole in their soul. They try to fill it with a lot of wrong things." Harrison Ford one of the most successful actors in the history of Hollywood and has grossed over two billion dollars, on one occasion said "You only want what you ain't got." The fellow interviewing him said "What ain't you got?" He said, "Peace."

Laurie goes on to tell about a distraught, unhappy man who went to a counselor in search of help. After evaluating what the man said in his miserable condition, the counselor said "You need to just put all those things aside, forget those things. There's a comedian performing at the comedy club and he's just great. I want you to go listen to him and forget all these things. It will change you and affect you. So go listen to him." The man said "I am that comedian." When we get back to the purpose for which God placed us here we begin to find real satisfaction.

I believe we find some answers here in this passage we just read where we have Jesus' encounter with this woman at the well and it kind of falls into three conversations. The first is His conversation with the woman. John 4:4-6 says [4] And he (Jesus) had to pass through Samaria. [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. That would be noon our time. Jesus makes a request.

John 4:7-9 says [7] *A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."* [8] *(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)* [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.)* This is like an Alabama guy asking an Auburn guy for a drink. Anyway, John 4:10 says [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."* Notice how Jesus initiates the conversation here. As we look at this we want to pick up some principles of personal evangelism, of reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

One thing we get here would be contacting others socially and then He arouses her curiosity. Bill Hybels in his book *Becoming A Contagious Christian* tells about a man in his church who had a neighbor who had moved in the neighborhood and it was a couple who were living together but weren't married. The church man goes to this guy and says "We have a great concert coming up at our church tonight and we'd love to have you come with us. It will be a great time." The fellow looked at the floor and said "I don't think we want to go to that but if you ever have a backyard barbeque we'd love to come to that." Hybels came up with a principle that said "Barbeque first." If you're going to reach out you need to build relationships on a non-threatening ground. Start with that and then move on. He began by building the relationship and then the spiritual came after.

Years ago I was going through our church directory and I saw a family in there in which I had never met the man in the picture. I called his wife up and said "I realize I have never met your husband and I thought I'd call him to see if he would like to go to lunch." She said "Lots of luck." So I called him up and said "This is Frank Barker. I saw your picture in the directory and realized I never met you and would love to have some lunch. How about some lunch?" He said "Uh, I'll call you back." He didn't call me back. He went home and told his wife "I had the worst thing happen to me today." But I discovered he played tennis and so I invited him to come play tennis with a group of guys I play with. He came and played and then he invited me to play as his partner in a tournament he was playing in.

Then he started coming fairly regularly with a group I play with. When our group meets, before we play we stand around the net and pray for one another. At first he would stand over to the side and would not participate in that but as time went on it got to where he would stand with us. Then he would say "Hey pray for this" and as we prayed one day when we got through he was crying. He said "I need

to tell you guys I have accepted Jesus into my life.” So barbeque first, meaning start off on some non- threatening form and then move forward with the relationship.

Now notice Jesus’ creation of interest in John 4:10 which says [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.”* Wow, what an interesting statement there to create interest. The phrase ‘if you knew’ here shows a lack of knowledge. Most people who aren’t Christians, part of the problem is lack of knowledge. That’s not the only problem but a lot of people do not understand how salvation works at all and they are totally misinformed about it. Notice the riddle like quality of his remark there. It makes her ask because of her lack of knowledge of what is available. What Jesus is offering is a gift. It was purchased by Him at a huge cost. It cost Him going to the cross and dying for our sins, like someone would pay your fine in court but it is offered to us as a free gift. There are conditions we have to meet but it is offered as a free gift. He said “If you knew you would ask.”

What is this living water? John 7:37-39 says [37] *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. [38] Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” [39] Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* They had the Holy Spirit but they had the smaller package of the Spirit. The Spirit is a person not a package but at Pentecost there would be a great indwelling of the Spirit given that is called the baptism of the Spirit. Since Pentecost everyone who becomes a Christian starts off with that greater indwelling that larger package so to speak but “if you knew you would ask and receive this living water.” The living water is speaking of the incredible change that the Holy Spirit makes in your life when He comes to dwell within you and you experience that new birth.

Talking about creating interest, I remember years ago I was driving along in Wisconsin on this country road and here was this man walking alongside the road in a suit, carrying a huge suitcase and walking in this hot weather. I stopped and said “Can I give you a ride?” He said “Yes.” He got in the car and told me his situation. He had gotten on a train and realized he had left his wallet at home. He didn’t have any money and needed money where he was going. He had remembered a friend of his who lived in this small town so he got off the train at this town thinking he would borrow some money from this friend. It turned out that his friend had moved out of town a little ways so he had been walking out of this town to go to this friend’s house.

I told him I was a pastor and said “Do you go to church?” He said “Yes I’m a Lutheran.” I said “Oh really? Isn’t it great what ole Luther found out?” He said “Yeah, what was that?” I said “Remember he wanted to be sure he was going to

heaven so he was working real hard but then he found out you could know for sure.” The man said “Yeah, what did he find out? How can you know?” I said “He read the passage in the Bible from Romans 1:17 that says “The righteous shall live by faith.” He had been trying to live by all his religious activities and good deeds and when he read that he realized it was not something you earn but it was by trusting in Christ. He put his trust in Christ and it made all the difference. Have you done that?” He said “No I haven’t.” I said “Would you like too?” He said “Yes I would.” So he responded to the Gospel. It’s about creating interest as Christ did here in John 4. You create the feeling that there is something out there that’s available that they’re missing.

Notice her confusion in John 4:11-12 which says [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.” Now notice His comparison of the two kinds of water in John 4:13-14 which says [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 again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Wow, there is a permanent satisfaction of His water and there is a priceless excellence of that. The first most satisfying thing in the world is that water of everlasting life, that indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that relationship with Jesus Christ, that gift of salvation. If you drink of that you’ll never thirst again.

Over fifty years ago a permanent change took place in my life. I have never been the same since and there is nothing to compare it to – receiving that living water of Jesus Christ coming to live within you by His Holy Spirit. Now notice her petition for the living water in John 4:15 which says [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.”

Then we see His direction to her to call her husband in John 4:16-18 which says [16] Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” [17] The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; [18] for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” Why did He tell her to go call her husband? It was because if she wanted this living water she needed to face her sin. So He confronts her with her sin. We have to repent to receive it. We have to put our trust in Christ alone and surrender our will. Often that surrender is just built around some one area of your life. There is an initial surrender and an ongoing surrender. With the rich young ruler his area was built around money. In my life it was around peer pressure when I was in the fighter squadron and I wanted to break with some of my practices. You have to come to that surrender and really surrender your will to Christ. So Jesus confronts her with this sin in her life. He may say to you “Go call that bad habit and deal with it, surrender it to Me.”

Notice her perception of His power here in John 4:19-20 which says [19] *The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. [20] Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."* Here is a question about which religion is right, the Samaritan religion or the Jewish religion or what. She may be trying to be evasive here or she may really be trying to find out but notice Christ's response in the following verses.

John 4:21-22 says [21] *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. (The location is not important.) [22] You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. God selected Israel to be a light for the world yet they twisted the truth around in various ways. Jesus was sent to the world through the Jews being a seed of Abraham. In a sense there is not a number of different ways to God, there is one true Way to God and that is through Christ. Christ said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Me. (John 14:6)"*

Jesus goes on to say in John 4:23-24 [23] *But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. [24] God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* Here I think of Christ's parable about the lost sheep and the shepherd who goes after it. God is seeking such people. I believe that is why Jesus was sitting at that well. God was seeking that woman. I believe that is why the man who left his wallet at home was walking along the road when I came by. God is seeking such and He will set up situations where we are brought into contact with others and have opportunities to tell others about living water.

Then there is the revelation about His Messiahship in John 4:25-26 which says [25] *The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."* [26] *Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."* What a powerful statement He makes there about Himself, "I am He." In another principle in evangelism we need to bring people face to face with the claims of Christ. He is God the Son, He died for our sins, He rose from the dead and He evidenced this in His resurrection and other ways. Salvation is through Him. We are all in need of a commitment to Him.

Then He gets an interruption in John 4:27 which says [27] *Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"* Now notice her conversation with the men of the city in John 4:28-29 which says [28] *So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, [29] "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"* She has come to believe in Him and she wants to tell others. She is so excited. I

believe she put her trust in Him and surrendered her will to Him. She is really a new creation here. She has made her decision and wants to tell others. She's a strong witness, a powerful witness. A simple testimony is a powerful witness. Telling someone what you discovered and the change it had in your life.

We see the people's reaction in John 4:30 which says [30] They went out of the town and were coming to him. Then we get Jesus' conversation with His disciples in John 4:31-34 which says [31] Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." [32] But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." [33] So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" [34] Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Here is the second most satisfying thing in the world. First is receiving Him and then it is doing God's will. The third most satisfying thing in the world is seeing others come to Christ, getting that living water. Notice His observation here on the readiness of the harvest in John 4:35-38 which says

[35] Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. [36] Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. [37] For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' [38] I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

John the Baptist had done some sowing but now look how the fields are white. That's true around us too if we'll just go share this Good News we'll be able to reap the readiness of the harvest there.

Now look at what happened in John 4:39-41 which says [39] *Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."* [40] *So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days.* [41] *And many more believed because of his word.* The fruit of this is so satisfying. If you're a Christ what is the most satisfying thing that has ever happened to you? It is when you received that living water. Now you want the satisfaction of seeing others receive it.

We need help in training and we have some training coming up at the church. A week from this Wednesday at 6:30pm in room S109 we'll be offering our Bridge for Life training in evangelism and how to share your faith. This is a great opportunity to learn how to share your faith. The fields are white but we need to be sharing the Great News and learning how to do it.

If you've never had that most satisfying thing happen in your life, you've never received that living water then you can do so today. If you'll just put your trust in

Christ alone and surrender your will by saying “Lord, I purpose to obey you.” If you would like to do that do it right now. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, we thank You for this wonderful picture here of what You would have us do and the fruit of it. Lord, we want to see others experience this most satisfying thing in the world and we want to be part of that to have the satisfaction of doing Your will and seeing others receive it. Father, we pray for anyone reading this who has never received that living water. If you’re willing to meet the terms pray in your heart right now “Lord Jesus I want Your living water. I want You. I surrender my will to You as my Master and I trust You as my Savior. Come live in me. Make any changes You want to and in faith I thank You.” Amen.

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