

SERMON FOR MARCH 12, 2023

TEXT; JOHN 4:13-14

THEME: LIVING WATER

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.”

In the name of Jesus:

On a recent drive down to Athens I pulled off route 33 on a sightseeing expedition. Getting off at the Nelsonville/Buchtel exit, I traveled three miles down route 78, past Nelsonville York High School, to the small community of Buchtel. Stopping at the local Marathon Gas Station for directions, I drove past the school bus barn on the left and then turned left, driving about 100 feet on Franklin Street. At the end of the street you will find a local spring, where a concrete slab with a group of three pipes protruding from a hillside, spilling water into another concrete tub. (You can see a picture of what this spring looks like in the bulletin insert for today). Some families come to the Buchtel Watering hole once a week to get water for the week, collecting it in empty bottles and empty milk jugs, drinking the water which flows from the spring.

It is said that over 1000 people a year come to this spring as tourists, seeking water from this source of living, flowing water. While the Athens City and County Health Departments do not recommend drinking the water, because it doesn't come from an approved water source that has been regulated by the government to ensure its safety, some students from Hocking College test the waters about every other day to ensure that it is safe to drink. The spring is on private property, but as you can see, it has become a source of living water for the public to use. The Health Department hopes that the owners will submit to a regulatory agency to test the waters, but there is only so much they can do, they can't force the owners to go through the regulatory process, all the Health Department can do is suggest that the public not drink the water. But people still come, to see it, to touch it, and yes to drink from it.

Our text today is the story of the woman at the well, a thirsty woman who came to the well in the town to draw water to drink in the middle of the day. She is a Samaritan woman, who goes to the well daily in the middle of the day so as not to encounter others. She goes privately, day after day. Drawing water for daily use, drawing water to quench her thirst.

So it comes to her as a great surprise that the village has a visitor, Jesus, who is sitting by the well, tired and thirsty, after traveling some distance from Judea on His way to the region of Galilee. Our text tells us that Jesus was

weary from His journey, it is about high noon, sun beating down, it's the heat of the day.

As the woman comes out to draw water, Jesus begins a conversation with her, saying, "Give me something to drink." The woman is caught by surprise, one because Jesus is a stranger and two, Jews didn't associate or have any dealings with Samaritans. So Jesus asks her for something to drink, at Jacob's well, which ties into and is fed by an underground stream, but like the spring that you saw in the picture of the well spring in Buchtel.

This woman is surprised by Jesus instigating the conversation. What is even more surprising is the ongoing conversation that follows. They seem to be on different wavelengths, she is looking for an ongoing source of physical water, and Jesus is leading her into a conversation about the waters that lead to eternal life. The woman comes to the well with a physical thirst, but by the end of the conversation, Jesus is offering to her the waters that quench the thirst she felt in her soul.

This woman had a thirsty soul. She revealed this to Jesus when Jesus told her to go get her husband. She responded that she had no husband. Jesus said to her, "Right you are, you have no husband, you have actually had five husbands and the man you are living with presently isn't your husband either." Jesus revealed to the woman that she was thirsty for a lasting relationship, a

relationship where she would be loved, accepted, and valued. She hadn't had that need met, even as she was in and out of a number of different relationships. She wanted something more. So, the Samaritan woman has a V8 moment, so to speak, and it dawns on her that Jesus is some kind of prophet sent from God. No, Jesus is more than that, He is her Savior, who came to give her eternal life.

Jesus is your Savior too, He comes to give you eternal life and to quench your spiritual thirst. Yes, just as you have physical thirst, you also have a spiritual thirst as well. Your thirst may be for more meaningful work, more pay, an appreciation for who you are and what you do, maybe it is a thirst for forgiveness, or that justice might be done.

Jesus didn't promise to the woman, nor does He promise to us, to grant to us a quenching of our thirsts, in manners and ways that we expect. What Jesus does offer to you is exactly what He offered to the woman and others. Jesus says: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." (John 7: 37-39).

If you are thirsty, go to Jesus, for He offers Himself to you. He came to be your Savior. Jesus was born for you, He lived for you, He suffered, died, and rose again from the grave for you. At Pentecost Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit, who works today in and through the Word, your Baptism, and the Supper to quench your thirsty soul.

Jesus quenches your thirst for forgiveness by actually and really forgiving you all of your sins through His life, suffering, death and resurrection. He quenches your thirst for having a meaningful relationship in that He not only gives you a relationship with your Heavenly Father but also places you into this family called Redeemer Lutheran Church, where you are surrounded and supported and loved by other members of the Body of Christ. Jesus gives you hope and purpose in your life by calling you His very own in the waters of your Baptism and sending you out in your life to be a witness to others about Jesus and His love. Jesus has forgiven you all of your sins and in Him He has made you into His new creation, giving you new and fresh opportunities to serve Him daily in all that you do.

The woman at the well life was changed because of her conversation with Jesus. Jesus quenches her thirst by forgiving her, by giving her an eternal relationship with the Father, and by restoring her life so that she would lead others to Jesus. And this is exactly what she did for we read that the woman left her water jar and went back into town, witnessing to all about who Jesus is and what He had done, so that the people came from all over to hear about Jesus and to follow Him. And what Jesus did for the woman, He still does for you today. Giving you living water that you might go and offer Jesus to others.

People will travel a great distance to see and encounter living waters.

Why? Because they have an interest and have a great thirst. So too, when you share the Good News of Jesus with others, they too will come and follow Him, for He is the Living Waters sent from heaven to give eternal life to all.

Amen