

Living Water ...

John 4:10

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Introduction:

Of late I've been having a lot of dreams and they all revolve around water. On Thursday morning in my prayer time I tried to make sense of it all. Was the Lord saying something to me through the dreams? He has often spoken to me in dreams in times past. The difference to these dreams and the ones in time past is that there was no audible voice of God speaking and the dreams were not as directive as when He normally speaks to me. In some of these dreams I was in the water floating, in others I was in a large boat, still others I was a spectator on the shore. In some the waters were calm, in others the waves were stories high and I had water above and water beneath but not overwhelmed by it. In some birds were floating and natives in dugouts were trying to spear them. So why so many dreams about water...? Was God trying to say something...I pondered...

I know that water is the absolute essence of life and the Bible has a lot to say about water...so I thought what did Jesus have to say about water?

***READ John 4:7-15** A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."*

Jesus identifies Himself as living water which He gives to all who ask. I want us to reflect upon the water of God this morning.

1. The water of God overcomes animosity:

Here Jesus is speaking to a Samaritan woman. Between the Samaritans and the Jews there was a lot of animosity. There was a religious opposition that had been going for more than 400 years since they were forbidden by the Jews to assist in the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem. You will recall how the Jews had returned under Ezra and Nehemiah to re-build the walls then under Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple. The Samaritans were a mixed race people of Jews and others the conquering Assyrians had brought into the land including people from Babylon, Ava, Hamath, Cutha and Sepharvaim **2 Kings 17:24**. Most of the Jewish populace had been transported to Media **2 Kings 17:6** by the Assyrians. Those remaining had committed the unforgivable by inter-marrying with gentiles and had lost their purity of

race. They were no longer considered to be Jews. The Samaritans subsequently built their own Temple upon Mt Gerazim where they kept the feasts of the Jewish Calendar. In the time of the Maccabees, the Jews under the leadership of John Hyrcanus 129 BC attacked and destroyed the Temple on Mt Gerazim. This exacerbated the animosity that had been evident between them for years. Religiously they were snubbed then to add insult to injury they had their Temple attacked and destroyed.

Now here despite the history a Jewish Rabbi by the name of Jesus is talking to a Samaritan about living water. A Rabbi never spoke to a woman in public. This Rabbi was different! He says He has supernatural water which means that a person shall never thirst again- this water is a fountain of everlasting life (**v14**)- this He brings into the Jewish/Gentile situation...the generational animosity that has passed down through countless generations, the spiritual, cultural and racial antagonism that has existed for countless years- this water we learn is God's water that brings healing to all kinds of relationships. If man can't be at peace with his fellow man he will never be at peace with God. No greater healing is required than the relationship between man and God. Once this is healed then the healing man to man begins. This is God's way....God's healing!

2. Water is linked to the activity of God's Spirit:

The water and the Spirit go together in the redemptive grace of God. Man can only enter into the eternal realm of the Spirit through the activity of the water of God and the Holy Spirit in his life.

***John 3:5,6** Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

We see in this verse that Jesus picks up on the necessity for a new start. We all wish at times that we could turn the clock back and make a fresh start, especially when things go wrong and we suffer from the unpredictable consequences of our own stupidity. But God is redemptive in all his ways. He wants to give people a new start. What better way to starting all over again than by being born again; the Greek reads "from above."

The water here speaks of cleansing. Some think it is an allusion to a woman's waters breaking during birth. Whether that is so or not scripturally speaking the water speaks of cleansing. Most ancient religious rites included water as some form of initiation into the cultus or sect. We see this with John the Baptist as a baptism to repentance and the Essenes who had this rite of initiation into their cultus.

The Spirit of course refers to power. This power comes from God and is identified with His power to save mankind from his past deprivations, wrong patterns of behaviour, sinful habits and all things contrary to good clean living and life! It is power to live a forgiven life. It is power to live a life victorious over sin! This same water is associated with the word of God.

***Eph 5:25,26.** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

The word and the Holy Spirit act together to bring a person to repentance and to give them new life. (**Romans 10:17; John 16:8**).

Again water is linked to the Holy Spirit's outpouring.

John 7:37-39. *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

The background is the feast of tabernacles or booths, the greatest of all feasts, when people built booths to dwell in which was a reminder to them of their desert wanderings **Lev. 23:40-43**. Secondly, it was a time of rejoicing and thanksgiving because it marked the end of the period of harvest. The people would come into the Temple precincts with the leaves of the Palm, Willow and Myrtle trees then dance and wave them about. The priests would gather water from the pool of Siloam every day and bring it back to pour out over the altar of sacrifice. As they brought the water up through the water gate the people would recite **Isaiah 12:3** *therefore with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation...* Then as they poured the water out upon the altar they would sing the Hallel **Psalms 113 -118**. The whole procedure was riotously celebrative. It culminated with them gathering around the altar and waving their palm leaves at it. On the last day of the feast they walked around the altar seven times just as they had walked around the walls of Jericho remembering God's great deliverance.

Jesus here associates celebrative joy, and the bounty of God's provision in all circumstances coming to the children of God in acts of remembrance and thanksgiving through the Holy Spirit which he identifies as the water of God. Such is the life the Spirit brings.

This year ahead I'm looking forward to an activity of the Holy Spirit in this church which equates to a marvellous outpouring of God's water! In the words of Ezekiel '*...a river that could not be crossed...*' **Ezek. 47:5**

Questions

1. Why were the Samaritans so marginalised by the Jews?
2. Who had they intermarried with and what were the consequences of their intermarriage?
3. What do you think that Jesus meant when He said a man must be born of water?
4. To what activity do you link water?
5. What do you understand living water to be? How does it differ from the water that the Samaritan woman was used to drawing from Jacob's well?
6. What did Jesus associate the flow of rivers of living water with at the Feast of tabernacles?