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John 4:1-30, 39

“Satisfied, At Last”

A friend of mine, who preaches over the radio every day, received a call from a girl, who was obviously desperate. “My heart is like a desert,” she cried. “I’ve tried drinks and drugs, sex and self-gratification. The deeper I go, the dirtier I become. The more I sin, the less satisfied I am. Right now, I’m not getting anything at all, just guilt and grief. Please, help me!”

I believe that this girl was speaking-out for a large segment of our population. She had a thirst for living, which could not be quenched, even though she had tried some of the strongest things that this world has to offer.

I feel certain that each of us has tried, in his own way, to quench that mysterious thirst, that vague discontent, that nameless unsatisfied longing, that irrational knowledge that something is lacking.

We may have tried other more acceptable means to satisfy that thirst. We may have tried popularity and friends, the accumulation of possessions, the amassing of wealth, that prestige and status which comes from personal accomplishment.

But, face it, these do not quench that inner thirst much better than the excesses of the young lady, who called in to my friend. There remains a void in every life.

And this is no modern phenomenon. This thirst has been a part of man, since the day when our earliest forefathers fell from paradise.

An ancient philosopher stated: “Our hearts are restless, ‘til they find their rest in Thee.” Men and women have always had this restlessness in their souls.

I am confident that there are those here today, who are struggling with that same itch, which you just can’t seem to scratch...that same thirst, which you just cannot seem to quench.

Well, I’m glad you came here, seeking! For I have good news for you! There is a “living water,” which can quench that thirsting, deep within our souls.

The Son of God offered it to a woman in Samaria, years ago, and He still offers it to you and me today!

From this true story in God's Book, please notice:

1. **THE SAVIOR'S CONCERN** (Verse 4)

When Jesus traveled through Samaria, He showed His deep love and concern for all people. You see, Samaria was "off-limits" for any self-respecting Jew.

The Samaritans were a half-breed race with an unorthodox religion. And, over the years, an intense hatred had developed, both ways, between them and the Jew.

Palestine was divided into three sections: Galilee was in the north. Judea was in the south. And Samaria was in between. Most Jews would go miles out of their way, when going from Judea to Galilee, just so that they wouldn't have to go near Samaria.

And yet, it says that Jesus "must needs go through Samaria." Why must He "needs go through" it? Because it was the shortest way? No, because He had a compassion for a thirsty soul, who happened to live in Samaria. Jesus was going on a divine appointment!

Listen, our Savior will still walk through anything, in order to get to you and me! Jesus cares about all races and classes of people. He is not put off by our failures, our arrogance, nor our sins. He is the lover of all men's souls. "He is not willing that any should perish..." He is here today, in order to meet with you!

It says, in verse 6, that "it was about the sixth hour"--that was six hours after sun-up, or around 12 noon. Jesus was tired and hot from His journey. He sat down by the well to rest, while His disciples went into town, to get some food.

Never forget that Jesus understands all that we go through. He's been there. He knows what it is to be tempted and tried and weary and wounded.

But He is never too weary to reach out to a thirsty soul. He is never too tired to give help and hope to some needy person.

"It was in the sixth hour." It was this woman's hour to be saved. And this may be your hour to have the deepest longings of your life met.

II Corinthians 6:2 says: "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation." Don't you leave here today, without meeting Jesus. If you put it off, you may have to go through the remainder of your life with this unquenchable thirst. There is no guarantee that you will come into direct contact with Jesus at any other time.

So be open, as He comes to you right now. He is ready and able to meet the deepest longings of your heart. He truly loves you and cares for you!

Then notice...

II. THE SAVIOR'S CONVERSATION

Notice just how Jesus reached out to this woman. What a demonstration in personal evangelism!

The woman had come "to draw water." That was all she had on her mind, at the time.

Apparently she was rather notorious. The "ladies" of the village of Sychar would not even allow her to come to the village well. So, she made the long hot walk out of town to the intersection of the Interstate highway of that day, where there was an ancient oasis with a well.

This was obviously a pain-in-the-neck to her. Frankly, she was more than a little upset. Actually, her spiritual need--and the saving of her eternal soul--were the farthest things from her mind.

So Jesus had to find a way to get her attention and to bridge that gap to her heart. He approached her by asking a question. Could He have a drink of water?

The best way, to turn any conversation toward the spiritual side, is to ask some questions. Why don't you try by fist asking some questions.

Unfortunately, most people are not too interested in spiritual things. Perhaps you are here today, and you are--quite frankly--not too concerned with the things of the spirit, either. Most of your thoughts may be about the obvious things on the surface of life. Your attempts, to fill that emptiness and thirst for living, may have all been pursued on the outward superficial level.

She was the same way. You can tell by her conversation. For instance: "How is it that you, a Jew, would talk to me, a Samaritan? Don't you know that Jews usually have no dealings with Samaritans? Don't you know that what you are doing is socially unacceptable?"

Jesus thought, "Who cares? Don't you know that you have needs which are far greater than the social aspects of your life?"

Oh, how many people look to have their deepest needs met on the social level? Teen-agers are overly concerned about having friends and being popular with the "in" group. Adults are so taken-up with social activities and being a part of the right "set".

Unfortunately, the main thing, for which some people look in a church is whether or not they have friends there. It matters very little whether they learn anything or hear the "truth." Their interests are mainly on the social level.

Well, this may all be well and good. But I'll tell you something: being socially-accepted and popular will not satisfy that deepest longing nor that inner thirst in your life. It is nice, but is not enough. It will not even give you any lasting self-esteem.

And I'll let you in on something else: friends will sometimes disappoint and even turn on you. Even family can let you down. At best, they will have to depart from you in death.

Sexually liaisons can turn to disappointment, hatred, and remorse. Just look around. I see it every day.

If you are sitting out there, day-dreaming about your friends and your popularity, you'd better wake up. This will not satisfy the deepest longings of your heart on a permanent basis.

This woman-at-the-well was also very concerned about the PHYSICAL ASPECTS of life. When Jesus offered her "living water," so that she would never thirst again, she completely missed His point. She never even guessed that He was talking about some inner source of satisfaction and the overflow of a spiritual well-being.

No. All she could think about was that long physical walk from town, every day, in order to get water. She says: "Give me this water...so I won't have to come way out here every day to draw more" (verse 15).

Again, how much was she like many people today. Their main concerns are for the outward physical comforts and pleasures of life. They hope for happiness in the acquisition of physical things, like houses, cars, and jewelry. They look for security in physical things, like bank accounts, stocks, bonds, and landholdings. They measure "success" in terms of physical wealth or their position on the corporate ladder.

Let me tell you something, my friend. That deep spiritual thirst and longing can never be satisfied by physical outward things. Jesus said that "a man's life does not consist of the abundance of 'things' which he possesses."

I can show you a lot of lovely houses, which have not been able to create an inner happiness. I can show you a lot of big bank accounts, which do not produce security nor self-respect.

Even our physical health is not ultimately important. The ad says, "When you have your health, you have everything!" I'll agree that physical health is a blessing; but it is not everything."

Why, I have known people who have destroyed their physical health, because their inner life was not "right." Their guilt and their lack of purpose and their inability to control some addiction have eventually eaten away at their vitality and health. The writer of Proverbs is right, when he urges us to "keep your heart (right), for out of it flow the issues of life."

But this poor woman had all of her attention on the physical aspects of life. No wonder she was so inwardly thirsty and dissatisfied!

She may have even had a passing interest in the RELIGIOUS ASPECTS of life. Verse 20 shows that she was familiar with the different places of worship.

But, to her, it must have only amounted to a lot of outward formalities. She asked: “Which is the right place to worship? Whose forefathers handed them down the right set of rituals?”

Listen, friend, a religion of forms and ceremonies cannot do a thing to meet the thirst of your soul! Going to some cathedral can not do any more, to make you a radiant and satisfied child of God, than placing a wheelbarrow in an automobile factory can turn it into a shiny new Cadillac.

It doesn't matter so much WHERE you worship, but HOW you worship. God must be worshipped “in spirit and in truth” (verse 23). The innermost part of our being--our spirits--must come in touch with the life-giving Spirit of God and must submit to the truth of God's life-changing Word!

Anything, short of that, is a waste of time and a study in futility. No wonder so many people, who have “tried religion,” gave it up as a “bummer!”

Do you see what I am saying? This poor woman had gone all her life, concentrating only on the superficial surface of things. But her inner being was thirsting for something, which would give her some lasting satisfaction.

But how could Jesus get her attention and force her to see this need within herself? He tries to bait the hook, by offering her a drink of “living water” (verse 10).

But, alas, she can only see the obvious. She looks and sees that He has no bucket. And the well was 78 feet deep, before you hit water. “Now just how are you going to give me a drink?” she asks (verse 11).

At least she was paying attention now. So Jesus took her a step farther toward the truth (verses 13-14): “If you only drink out of this well, you will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water that I give him shall never thirst again...he will find that missing ingredient, that satisfaction of the deep longing within--and the water that I give him shall be, in him, a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.”

Wow, that got her attention! Jesus was offering satisfy the deepest longings of her soul, for time and eternity.

Now she was thinking deeply. Up until now, she had never even given a second thought to eternity.

Do you? Will you live all of your life and wake up some day in eternity, realizing that you have completely ignored the major part of your life...realizing too late that you are totally unprepared?!

It is just hard for me to believe how spiritually insensitive some people can be. This woman actually thought that Jesus was “far-out,” when He mentioned eternal life. She began to

humor Him, like you would humor a mad man. Facetiously, she said: “Oh, yes, give me some of this living water. Then I won’t have to come way out here every day to draw more.”

Poor lost person! How was Jesus ever going to wake her up and help her to find the answer to that great need in her heart? It was time to get blunt and get specific.

You know, some of us use so much tact that we never get around to the at-tack. We are almost afraid to bring up the subject of sin, which is the proof that something is wrong in people’s lives.

“Go and get your husband,” Jesus said. Suddenly her face flushed in embarrassment. He had hit a raw nerve. She was not going to play word games any more.

“I...have...no...husband,” she said. “You are right,” answered Jesus, “you have had five husbands and you are now living with a man, who is not your husbands” (verses 16-17).

Wow! Jesus really knew how to cut through all of the smoke, didn’t he? This gal had made a big-time effort to find satisfaction. She had tried six times to fill that empty void inside. She had tried five marriages and now an “affair.” She could no longer deny to Jesus that she had a fierce craving and an unsatisfied thirst within her.

She was stunned. “How could this stranger know all of this about me,” she wondered? It was because He is God’s Son and knows all about us.

But it’s not really too hard. The fact is that “all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glorious expectation” (Romans 3:23). In every life there is the evidence that we have “missed the mark,” somewhere.

Oh, how I wish that I could see inside of you, my friend, like Jesus does. I wish--in love--that I could touch that aching void in your life, just to prove to you that you need to look to Jesus for help, today.

I so often speak to seemingly deaf ears and look into seemingly disinterested eyes. But I know that, if I were able, I could prove to you that you have a need for that gift of “living water,” which only Jesus has to offer.

I just pray that His Holy Spirit will open your eyes this morning to see your deep spiritual needs...to see that your thirst is so deep that nothing short of a spiritual rebirth can help! And if you do not let Jesus meet that spiritual need today, you will continue to “exist,” throughout an endless eternity, with that same hopeless and unquenchable thirst. Oh, it will be HELL to go on that way, forever!!!

But back to the story. At last, the Samaritan woman woke up and saw the reality of her spiritual need, the reason for her inner thirst.

She was stunned. She said: “You must be a prophet.” (A prophet is someone, who speaks for God to men. Of course, Jesus was much more than a prophet. But, at this moment, He was doing the work of a prophet.) I pray that I can be God’s prophet, through whom He can speak His loving offer to you today.

There are **two things which you must see**, if you are going to find satisfaction, for time and eternity. You must **see yourself** as you really are, and you must **see your Savior** as He wants to be for you.

Actually, no one truly sees himself, until he sees himself in the presence of the Savior. I never saw what I should be, until I saw myself in comparison with Jesus Christ. He shows what I could be. And when I see what I could be, I realize how far I fall short and what a great need I have. I see that, by comparison, I fall far short of what God hoped I could be.

And that’s where God’s salvation always has to begin, by coming face-to-face with the fact that we have fallen short of God’s glorious expectations (Romans 6:23). Won’t you come face-to-face with yourself, my friend? Look within for the real source of your problem.

That thirst, that unfulfilled longing, is not due to something on the outside which needs to change. The problem is on the inside.

You don’t need a new job, nor a new hobby, nor a new toy, nor a new wife. You need a new heart--a heart that is cleansed from the guilt of sin--a heart that is right with God--a heart that is in touch with its Creator, the Source of the “living waters.”

Your inner self has been soiled by sin and separated from your holy Creator, God. And that uneasy awareness is the root of that vague discontent and that indescribable longing, on which you cannot put your finger and which nothing can seem to fill! Won’t you see this?

At last, that woman-at-the-well saw it. She knew that she needed to get right with God, and the only way she knew, to do so, was to bring to the Lord a sacrifice for her sin.

But which was the right place to offer it (verse 20)? Which temple would be the right one? The one in Jerusalem, or the one in Samaria ? The Baptist? The Catholic? The Methodist? The Pentecostal?

Jesus said, “It doesn’t happen in a building. It has to happen in your spirit, in your innermost being!”

My friend, it matters not that you are now in a Baptist church building. Jesus’ Holy Spirit wants to do business with your spirit. He wants to offer you a “gift” (verse 10): the gift of living water, a new life in the place of your old life, from this day forward!

And you don’t need to offer some kind of sacrifice, nor to make God some kind of a bargain nor promises about the future. Thank God, Jesus offered His life’s blood as the sacrifice,

once and for all, when He died on Calvary's cross. It is because of that all-sufficient sacrifice that we can be cleansed from the guilt and stains of our sins, just for the asking.

And God has offered to begin looking upon us, as if our old sinful self had been buried with Jesus, when He died in our place. Now we can each face life as a "New creature in Christ Jesus" (II Corinthians 5:17).

All this is offered to us as a gift. But we must receive that gift at some definite time and place in our lives. That moment is when we are "born again."

And once He has given us this new beginning, Jesus' presence will continue to live in us. His presence will become the source of peace and satisfaction within, from that day and forever.

And from that new relationship will spring a never-ending supply of hope, peace, security, meaning and purpose for living...and even a new self dignity. Like that fallen woman of Samaria, you will be able to walk away from meeting Jesus, by standing tall and facing the future with a Christ-centered purpose and confidence! Halleluja!

There is just one more thing that I want you to notice...
III. **THE SIINER'S CONVERSION** (Verses 28-30, 39)

By this time, the Samaritan woman began to wonder if Jesus could not be the promised Savior, the Messiah. She said (verse 25), "I know that the Savior will come..."

Jesus answered: "I am He. Trust me to save you."

And she did put her complete confidence in Jesus. She stopped "trying," and she began "trusting" Him. And her life was never the same. How wonderful!

She ran into town. No longer did she hide from the respectable women. She ran up to them. She told them about her Savior. "Come and see the man...Who satisfied my deepest need," she said to one and all. And, as a result of her changed life, many other Samaritans came to experience a new life in Christ!

My friends, a genuine meeting of the Savior and an infusion of "living water" will spill over to others. We cannot keep it to our selves. We must share it with others. And our changed lives will cause others to come to Christ, so that He can meet the deepest longings of their lives, also.

Wouldn't you like to share with others what Christ has given to you? You can come forward, at our "invitation," and show that you are grateful for the new life, which Christ has given to you.

Or are you still searching? Are you still trying to fill that elusive craving, that thirst for lasting satisfaction? Come today, and let us introduce you to the One, who knows everything you ever did, but who still loves you and wants to offer you His "living water, so that you can be SATISFIED, AT LAST!