**Family Service Talk 1st June 2025**

**John 4:1-42**

 ***4****Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptising more disciples than John –****2****although in fact it was not Jesus who baptised, but his disciples.****3****So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.*

***4****Now he had to go through Samaria.****5****So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.****6****Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.*

***7****When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, ‘Will you give me a drink?’****8****(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

***9****The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?’ (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%204%3A1-42&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-26166a)*])*

***10****Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’*

***11****‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?****12****Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?’*

***13****Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,****14****but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’*

***15****The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.’*

***16****He told her, ‘Go, call your husband and come back.’*

***17****‘I have no husband,’ she replied.*

*Jesus said to her, ‘You are right when you say you have no husband.****18****The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true*

***19****‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘I can see that you are a prophet.****20****Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’*

***21****‘Woman,’ Jesus replied, ‘believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.****22****You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.****23****Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.****24****God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.’*

***25****The woman said, ‘I know that Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.’*

***26****Then Jesus declared, ‘I, the one speaking to you – I am he.’*

***The disciples rejoin Jesus***

***27****Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’* ***28****Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,****29****‘Come, see a man who told me everything I’ve ever done. Could this be the Messiah?’****30****They came out of the town and made their way towards him.* ***31****Meanwhile his disciples urged him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’* ***32****But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you know nothing about.’* ***33****Then his disciples said to each other, ‘Could someone have brought him food?’* ***34****‘My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.****35****Don’t you have a saying, “It’s still four months until harvest”? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.****36****Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.****37****Thus the saying “One sows and another reaps” is true.****38****I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.’*

***Many Samaritans believe***

***39****Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I’ve ever done.’****40****So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.****41****And because of his words many more became believers.* ***42****They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.’*

 ………………………………………………

**Talk**

*(Surrounded by glasses of water / water bottles / jugs of water and a gift wrapped and labelled ‘With love from God’)*

Today we have the last in a series of talks at the Family Service about water in the Bible. Having heard the reading already, we know that the scene is based at a well near a place called Sychar in Samaria. It is indeed a well that has been in use for a very long time. It was on land that belonged to Jacob many hundreds of years earlier and he would have drawn water from the well for his flocks of goats and sheep.

Samaria was and is a hot region and, of course, in a hot country in those days, a well was a vital resource as a source of water and therefore became a gathering point for the local community …. as well as those travelling long distances on foot through the heat. Morning and evening the women in the community came to the well and filled their large pots to carry back to their tent or house for all the family to use.

I imagine it would have been a hub of much activity twice a day and a very sociable time as people waited in turn to fill their pots. There were also probably times when it was a worrying moment … would there be enough water in the well for everyone to have what they needed?

We have a well at the bottom of our garden and last year when we had so much rain and the ground was saturated, the water level in the well was only 12 rows of bricks down from the top. Last weekend, however, after this very dry spring, it was more than 24 rows of bricks down from the top and looking a little murky. I would not want to rely on it as our only source of water.

In the story Lyn read to us however, Jesus had arrived at the well on the outskirts of Sychar at about noon when the sun would have been at its hottest. So, it makes sense that he would have been hot and tired and in great need of a drink of water.

He was travelling from Jerusalem where he had celebrated the Passover, back to his home in Galilee. News of the miracles he had done and his amazing teaching had begun to spread and many people were following him. The Pharisees had heard about the popularity of this young upstart of a carpenter and were getting worried. It was time for Jesus to get out of the limelight and return home for a while, teaching and talking and healing those whom he met on the way.

Now the Jews did not like the people of Samaria, (the Samaritans), as they were descended from a group of Jews who had intermarried with some of the local tribes in Samaria centuries earlier. They had been drawn into the worship and practices of the local tribes and had largely forsaken their faith in the one true God. If travelling north from Jerusalem, many Jews would therefore rather go on a large detour round Samaria rather than risk meeting any Samaritan people.

But Jesus was different from most Jews …. He knew he was on earth to meet with all people and was ready to talk to and challenge anyone he met with his radical but loving and compassionate teaching. Going the direct route home through Samaria was therefore not an issue for him.

However, even the direct route was long and hot and very tiring and so, at the hottest part of the day, Jesus, I’m sure, would have been looking forward to sitting down for a rest and a drink. The disciples had all gone off into the town of Sychar to buy food for lunch and so initially Jesus would have been all alone with no means of getting the water out of the well.

But then we heard that along came a Samaritan woman to draw water from the well. It was a strange time for her to be there, suggesting that she might be avoiding the crowds in the morning and evening. But clearly Jesus was glad to see her and asked her for some water.

Now, at that time in Jewish society a man would not speak to any woman outside the home …. certainly not a woman he didn’t know …. and very definitely not a Samaritan woman …. and even more definitely not to a woman who was living in a sinful way.

So straight away the woman questioned why Jesus had spoken to her. But Jesus saw beyond her gender, her race, her sinfulness, the social barriers and rules …. He knew that this lady needed to hear his message just as much as everyone else. The message of the good news of God’s love and salvation that Jesus came to bring was for **all** people, (regardless of age, gender, race etc) …. **And still is today!!**

And so, Jesus told her about the gift of God bringing living water – water that would quench her thirst for ever and indeed would become a spring of water in her leading to eternal life. It must have sounded incredible to her, especially to someone who spent much of their day carrying water from the well.

I’m sure you can all recall how satisfying a long drink of cool water is on a hot day. It quenches and satisfies your thirst. However, even when it is from a refrigerated tap, thirst does not remain quenched and more water is needed.

But Jesus was talking about a different type of water and a different type of thirst. The thirst that each one of us has in our soul for a relationship with God and the fulfilment that comes from being in his presence. Jesus was offering the woman the water of life which leads to eternal life spent in relationship with God

What an offer …. And he made it clear that this was a gift from God given freely to everyone who accepted the water of life that Jesus brings.

The woman initially muddled physical and spiritual water and thought that this would mean the end of her water carrying days but she clearly recognised that Jesus was someone very special …. maybe a prophet?

But then Jesus made it clear that he knew all about her sinful life of 5 husbands and 1 partner (and was still making this amazing offer to her!) and that he was the Messiah!!! Forgetting her water jar in her haste, she scuttled away to tell everyone in the town about this amazing man who knew all about her and was offering a gift from God …. could he actually be the Messiah?

The townsfolk immediately rushed out to see Jesus and many believed because of the woman’s testimony …. She, a sinful, Samaritan woman, was being offered living water by Jesus, the Messiah, which, if she accepted it, would lead to a relationship for ever with God!!! How incredible was that?! What an amazing gift!

The people of Sychar then asked Jesus to stay longer with them which he did for 2 more days talking to them and as they heard his teaching, many more believed that Jesus, the bringer of living water, was indeed the Saviour of the world.

From this one meeting by the well, all these people met Jesus, believed what he was saying and accepted his offer of the free gift of living water leading to eternal life in relationship with God. How wonderful is that?!

But even more wonderful is the fact that Jesus wants to meet with everyone …. He offers each one of us the free gift of living water. Have you accepted that offer? Have you received this precious free gift from God?

If not …. maybe today is the day when you do? And when you do accept that gift, the thirst for ‘something more’ in life will be quenched for ever by the living water that Jesus brings leading to life eternally with God. **Nothing** is better than that.

I pray that if you haven’t already, you will accept this gift of living water today and know for yourself the incredible blessing of eternal life with God.

 Amen