

Sermon Notes of Guest Speaker Susi Albrecht's Sermon on April 18, 2015 "Thirsty?"

[In today's sermon, guest speaker Susi Albrecht shows us from the story of the Samaritan woman at the well of how Jesus offers to every person, who is spiritually thirsty, living water which represents His forgiveness, hope, and love.]

Notes:

Introduction:

- Played a short video titled: "The Three Amigos." There were riding horses in the desert and were really thirsty.
- When's the last time you have been really thirsty?
- Couldn't wait to have a drink?
- Probably nothing like these three guys in the video, hopefully.

- Last year our family took a hike in our local mountain.
- We learned of a trail that someone had raved about, called the Glasshouse hike.
- It's about 12 miles round trip, beautiful.
- We took water with us, but that day it was hotter, and the hike was more strenuous than we had thought.
- We ran out of water on the way back, so we had to ration it, even though we really were thirsty.
- I thought for sure we had killed our small dog, she was so dehydrated. It took her days to recover.

- We find ourselves in a serious drought in California, and water has become more precious to us than maybe ever before.
- But unlike the Three Amigos, we are not faced with such desperation that we don't have enough water to drink.
- In the developed world, we are so blessed to have access to clean, pure drinking water that we take it for granted. In fact, we have become water snobs!

The bottled water industry:

- The bottled water industry is flourishing as we pick out our designer waters, each promising to be superior to the next.
- It is a multi-billion dollar industry.
- Even giants like Coca Cola want a piece of this pie!
- The labels usually depict mountains, glaciers, springs, etc.

- Research shows that despite the packaging, the promises, the claims, about 44% of that bottled water gets its source from a public water supply, meaning it is tap water.
- But this water is only about 100 times more expensive, than if you drink it from the tap.

- Susi said that she is often persuaded by the pretty bottles and their pretty labels she sees on the supermarket.
- But whatever side of the debate you are on, when it comes down to it, it's what is inside that is most important.
- Unless we hydrate our bodies with an appropriate amount of water, no fancy bottle, no glass of tap water can help.
- We have to drink from it for it to do any good.

The importance of water:

- Water is essential, only second to air.
- Some resources say 50% of Americans are mildly, chronically dehydrated.
- Turn to the person next to you and say, "You need to drink more water."
- The #1 cause for daytime fatigue is being slightly dehydrated.
- A mere 2% drop of body water can trigger fuzzy thoughts and forgetfulness.
- When someone ignores the body's natural signs to signal that the body needs water, we can start the process of being chronically dehydrated, especially as we get older.
- So despite the multi-billion dollar U.S. industry of fancy, bottled water, which by the way 33% of it is consumed in California, we are still in danger of being dehydrated.

Two very thirsty people:

John 4:1, Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John – 2) although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, 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.) 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."

- Jesus had been in Jerusalem, on his way to Galilee, instead of going around Samaria like a good Jew in those days would have done, he went smack through it.
- Around noon, you don't get water. Gathering water was done in the morning and at night, it was a communal activity.
- Jesus thought he had some alone time.
- But this woman came at noon to draw water so she could avoid people, who probably didn't treat her that nice.
- Jesus is thirsty physically, and this woman was spiritually thirsty.
- Susi is spiritually thirsty.
- And so are we.
- We need Living Water, the presence of God in our lives to satisfy our thirst.
- It is as essential, as vital to our spiritual soul and spirit as water is to our physical body.

Psalm 42:1, The writer says: “as the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, oh God.”

- We thirst for God. We want to be in the presence of the Lord, and we want to have that kind of thirst for God.
- Whether people know it or not, our human souls, our spirits, thirst for God.

Dead Water versus Living Water:

- Israel was a land that frequently experienced drought, and people were keenly aware of water sources and water quality.
- There was “dead water” which meant stored or standing water.
- And there was “living water” which referred to moving water like rivers, streams, and springs, which of course was preferred.
- Since Samaria has no river, imagine the surprise the Samaritan woman felt when Jesus was talking about living water.

John 4:16, Jesus 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.”

Qualities of living water:

1. Living water revives our lives.
 - The woman had lived a disappointing life – 5 failed marriages. Living with a guy at this point.
 - She was a social outcast, marginalized.
 - Her life left her spiritually severely dehydrated.
 - She needed hope, forgiveness, love – she needed living water.
 - So do we.
 - Our disappointments, our realities, our struggles, situations make us dry and thirsty.
 - Regardless whose fault it was – ours or someone else's, we need the healing presence of God in our lives.

- We might be in a season of life where we feel like a desert, cracked and dry.
- God knows how we got that way, and he offers us forgiveness, hope, love!
- He knows what we need, and how to heal our spirit and soul.
- He is offering living water right this very moment to each of us.

John 4:10, 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.”

- Jesus is telling the Samaritan woman to just ask, and he WILL give her living water.
- He was ready to meet her where she was, broken, sinful, neglected.
- He didn't say, 'go home, but your act together, then come back and find me for living water.'
- She was a Samaritan, in those days she did not even deserve (not worthy of a rabbi) a teacher, a mentor, let alone the Son of God.
- No matter what causes us to live in a desert, Jesus comes to us.
- It is not about deserving it or earning it. He loves us.
- He says to us I have Living Water to offer.
- He meets us where we are. He has a plan for our lives. What's his plan?

Isa. 35:7, “Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs.”

- That is God's plan for the redeemed, which means for all of us.
- His plan for our desert lives is to allow springs to gush over our wasteland.
- Our parched souls will become a pool!
- He doesn't plan on sprinkle or mist our lives a little bit with himself.
- He intends to flood us with Himself.
- You see, living water comes to us, it flows.
- What is our responsibility?
- We have to be prepared to receive the living the water of life.
- And then we need to share this awesome message with everyone we come in contact with.

Deut. 11:10, The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. 11) But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven.

- Here we read about the difference between Egypt and the Promised Land.
- In Egypt, the Israelites had to irrigate their fields that provided food.
- The Promised Land, on the other hand, would have mountains and valleys, and the water would come from heaven.
- Irrigation works great, look at the central valley, so much food production is accomplished thanks to irrigation.
- The problem comes when there is no rain for a substantial time.

- In Switzerland, where Susi was born and grew up, it rains a lot – they are prepared for the water.
- In SoCal, we are not prepared for the water.
- In So. Cal. when it rains hard, the water has nowhere to go, and streets are flooded pretty quickly.
- We need to be ready for God's rain to come.
- Susi doesn't want to live a life that just wants a drizzle.
- She wants a downpour on herself, she wants the living water to be effective in her life.
- God can transform her desert dryness, regardless how it became that way, into a lush garden.

Qualities of living water:

2. Living Water restores our focus.

John 4:15, 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.”

- When Jesus promised she would never thirst again, the woman became excited at the thought that she won't have to come to the well every day for this hard work.

16) He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

- But Jesus quickly refocused her to what He was offering her, something far more beneficial than just convenience. Himself!
- Susi told us that she needs to be thirsty for God, but sometimes she's not.
- She loses her focus much too often, much too quickly.
- We need to drink more water to be healthy and stop drinking so much other junk.
- Sometimes water seems boring.
- But the junk we substitute for water has disappointing consequences.
- We often look for substitutes that distract us from God to quench our thirst.
- Things that make us happy, but in reality it doesn't do anything for us.
- God has to constantly remind us to return to our first love.
- Remember when you first fell in love? We have a friend who recently became a brand new grandpa.
- Somehow, no matter the topic, he always seems to come around and talk about his grandson. He is in love!
- God wants us to have that deep thirst and love for him.
- Maybe you are like Susi, you just don't feel like you have that thirst you should have?
- Here is something she learned about drinking water.
- She has a big mason jar on her desk at work, and she fills it up every morning. Her goal is to finish it before she leaves at 2.

- What Susi learned is that the more she drinks, the thirstier she is for water.
- How do you learn to drink more water?
- Drink more water, and you will want to drink more water.

- How do I want to spend more time with God? Spend more time with God.
- This principle works with all sorts of things: Exercise, eating right.
- If you want to be thirsty, drink more water.
- If you want to thirst more for God, spend more time with God.

19) “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20) Our ancestors worshiped 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.

- The Samaritan Woman poses a very astute question to Jesus, “Where am I supposed to worship, receive this living water?”
- Do I have to go to Jerusalem to find the living water to quench my thirst?

23) Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

- Jesus tells her that anyone worshipping in spirit and truth will be able to worship anytime.
- God comes to us.
- The Holy Spirit lives in us.
- Jesus came to this earth to meet us where we are.

- Like we talked about earlier, living water flows, it moves.
- We are the church of God, and like living water, we can’t just wait for people to come to us, but we must go to them.

- Wherever God has placed us, we move and flow to share the love of God with those we come in contact with.
- We take the life of God to wherever we go, to work, to school.
- People will encounter the living God not because they go where we go, but because we take Him with us wherever we go.

Qualities of living water:

3. Living Water reveals Jesus.

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.”

- 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 ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”
 30) They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

39) Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.”

- Why did this woman believe this was the Messiah?
- Great theological insight? No.
- She got to know Jesus very well? No, their conversation was very brief.
- The reason she believed was because Jesus knew her story (verse 28, 39).
- She found somebody who knew her past, her present, and offered her forgiveness and hope for the future.

- Jesus knew her story!
- What was her response to this knowledge?
- She dropped her jar and ran to share, to evangelize to those in her town.
- Did this woman have all her theology right? No.
- Was she trained in scriptures? No.

- She simply shared how her thirst was quenched_ “He knew my story.”
- She barely knew Jesus, but she knew Jesus knew her, which was far more important.

Epic Story:

- Camp Curriculum just posted a video called: Epic Story.
- This encourages campers that their story matters, that Jesus knows us. He knows our story.
- We all can be comforted and encouraged by the fact that Jesus knows us, and he offers us Himself.

A true story:

- On a recent Friday afternoon, a school nearby where the Albrecht’s live put on a yearly carnival for both students and former students.
- After it was all over, the teachers and staff were cleaning up when police cars came on the scene.
- Susi with her daughter and two dogs went over to the school to find out what was going on.
- One of the teachers told Susi that as they were cleaning up, they heard screams coming from a home very close to them.
- A 10 year old girl came running out of the house and told the teachers that a boyfriend of her mother’s came into their home brandishing a gun.

- Her 14 year old brother was wrestling with him trying to take the gun away.
- She was terrified that both her brother and mother would be shot by this man. Susi and others tried to comfort her.

- Ultimately, everything turned out OK – the man, relinquished his hostages and surrendered to the police.
- Afterwards, the 10 year old girl was very distraught that what had just happened would be talked about by everyone and that she would be ridiculed and scorned in school because of this.
- Susi became very emotionally involved with the little girls' anxieties and fears.

Video of Tim Maguire:

- Tim Maguire is GCI National Director in South Africa.
- He was involved in a project called Mission in Mozambique.
- How ironic that in a land that has been ravaged by terrible floods, people struggle to find drinkable water!
- Tim does not need to convince people to drink the clean water.
- As he brings the clean water, people see the result and want to drink.
- Tim also brought water purification systems to be installed in the villages.

Concluding comments:

Let's review the three qualities of living water:

- Living water revives our lives.
- Living Water restores our focus.
- Living Water reveals Jesus.
- We just celebrated the holy week, Good Friday and Easter.
- On the cross Jesus said: "I am thirsty."
- How remarkable, the one who is the Living Water is thirsty. For us!
- Jesus did not die in defeat, as a victim, overpowered.
- No, he died and rose as a Victor, a Hero, He brought power.
- Jesus brought us power. The power of love. The power of grace. The power of forgiveness. The power of redemption.

Let's close with these words of Jesus:

John 7:37, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! 38) For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'"