

JESUS GIVES LIVING WATER

John 4:1-26

Key verse 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."

Last week we learned how Nehemiah rejected all the inner and outer temptations of Satan. He did not stop the work of God so that the wall of Jerusalem could be completed in 52 days. Even the enemies recognized the work of God. Let us not be overwhelmed by fear in the midst of this Corona crisis, but trust in the Almighty God who holds everything in His hand and wants to do His work of spiritual revival in Europe. Today's text is about Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman. It was the encounter of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, with a lonely, thirsty and sad woman who was in great distress under her unsolved problem of sin. The Samaritan woman tried to achieve her happiness and life purpose in optimal conditions, and to have her lust and desires satisfied, just as the spirit of humanism urges us to do. Jesus addressed her with his humble, active love and awakened in her the spiritual desire for the living water that springs up into eternal life. In the end, Jesus helped her to come to him with her sin and to meet him personally as her Savior. This was Jesus' spiritual love for her that led to repentance. From that time on, when she gave her heart and love to Jesus and worshipped Him in spirit and truth, the thirst of her soul was completely satisfied, and she received heavenly peace and great joy in her soul. Today we learn how the thirst of our soul is satisfied and how we can lead a new life with the hope of God. God may open our spiritual eyes for His mighty work in the life of a Samaritan woman and fill each of you with heavenly joy and deep peace in your heart.

1. Will you give me a drink? (1-15)

Let's look at verse 1. It was the time when more and more people became aware of Jesus. The Pharisees had heard that Jesus already made disciples and baptized more than John. They were envious of Jesus and did not like the fact that he was so influential and worked as a wandering preacher without their permission. Jesus knew their political intentions. Therefore, he decided to leave Judea and go back to Galilee to avoid unnecessary confrontation with the Pharisees. Let us look at verse 4: "Now he had to go through Samaria". From Judea to Galilee, the direct route was actually through Samaria. But the Jews avoided the route through Samaria because they despised the Samaritans as a mixed race. When the Assyrians conquered Samaria in 720 B.C., they brought foreign peoples into the country and initiated many mixed marriages. Since then, the Jews avoided Samaria as if it was a virus-contaminated area. But Jesus had to travel through Samaria. Jesus had no prejudices or human barriers. His burning shepherd heart made him travel through Samaria because he wanted to meet a thirsty Samaritan woman and give her living water.

Let us look at verses 5 and 6: "So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour." The sixth hour for the Jews means that it was noon. Everything was quiet. A woman came alone to the well to draw water. It was unusual for a woman to come alone and to

draw water in the midday heat. Usually the women came together in the cool evening to the well and used the opportunity to exchange all the news with each other. But this woman came alone. Obviously, she was a lonely woman. Probably she had been despised and often hurt by the other women, so that she preferred to go to the well alone. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews. Within the Samaritan society women were despised. And among the women of this city this woman was the most despised. But the real reason for her isolation were not the other people. The worst thing was that she could not accept herself because of her sinful life.

Many people think that sin is harmless, that you can enjoy it and then just forget it. But this is not true. Sin and its consequences are very serious and leave deep wounds and relationship problems in the soul of a person. I know a man who had everything on the outside: a good place to study, loving parents and good friends. Nevertheless, he isolated himself more and more by retreating to his attic room, turning off the light and listening to Wagner music. While walking in the forest he avoided other people. The reason for all this was that he was deeply wounded on the inside by the sin of his selfish and godless life. The same experience was made by a hard-working man Peter and a zealous man Paul, who were very lonely and full of thirst in their soul and full of relationship problems and were agonizing under their unresolved sin problem. It was the same with the Samaritan woman. The wounds of sin in this woman's soul made her so insecure and suspicious that she did not want to meet anyone else. That's why she came to the well alone at noon.

Let us read verse 7: "When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" Why did Jesus speak to her? Being the Son of God, he saw her thirst problem. He could have ignored her like the others did. But Jesus was different. He didn't ignore her. He didn't despise her. In fact, he humbly asked her a favor: " Will you give me a drink?" This

request of Jesus is God's initiative out of his love for us sinful people. Jesus often takes the initiative and knocks at our heart's door to speak to us and to establish a relationship with us and help us. In Revelation 3:20 Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." But why did Jesus ask this woman for a favor? Did he want to drink something with her help? No, I guess not. Rather, he wanted to help her with her deep soul problem. The sinful life of this woman had closed her heart so tightly that she avoided other people. The problem of lust hardened her heart so much that she had many prejudices and a lot of mistrust in her heart and she could not talk about it with anyone.

Let us imagine that a psychiatrist would have spoken with the Samaritan woman. He would have told her that the roots of her problem must have been somewhere in her childhood. After that, he'd probably offer her some kind of therapy to treat her symptoms. But what she needed was not treatment of her symptoms, but healing of her deep soul wounds. Many people in our time might have advised her: "Don't let old-fashioned morals drive you crazy! Think of yourself first. No one has the right to forbid you what you want to do." But she didn't suffer because she broke human morals, but because she broke God's commandment. Her conscience told her that it was not right for her to have had several male relationships. She was tormented in her soul because her relationship with the eternal and living God had been broken because of her sin. But she herself did not know what the real reason for her sad soul was or how the thirst of her soul could be satisfied. She might have thought, "A nice, responsible man can certainly make me happy. The people in this village are stupid and only talk about me so carelessly. But I don't care."

Let's look at her reaction to Jesus' request in verse 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?"

The Samaritan woman immediately emphasized the gap between her and Jesus: she was a woman, he a man; she was a Samaritan woman, he a Jew. Her heart was on defense mode. Actually, the conversation ended here. But Jesus' humble request and his initiative had touched her heart and she wondered how he came to speak to her and even to ask something of her. "Who is this Jewish man?" she thought.

Jesus was not deterred by her negative reaction. Let us read verse 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." What is the gift of God? Actually, God wouldn't need to give anything to his creatures, to us humans. But God prepared his divine gift and gave man a divine gift for which he does not have to do anything but accept it. This gift of God is Jesus himself. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." God gave His only Son Jesus Christ as a gift for free, so that all who believe in Him may not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). The gift of God is the redemption from the power of sin. It is only by grace alone, through faith in Jesus' death on the cross, that this gift is given to us. The gift of God is eternal life in the Kingdom of God, which is kept for us in heaven through Jesus' resurrection. If the woman would recognize who Jesus is, she would ask him, and Jesus would give her living water. But her spiritual eyes were still closed. She spoke about Jesus not having a bucket to draw water and compared him to the ancestor Jacob.

It is a big problem of our time that so many people do not realize who Jesus is. Europe is a continent with a long Christian tradition. But over time, Christianity has been strongly influenced by the teachings of atheism and humanism, which put the human being at the centre. These heresies drive people to seek their happiness and goal of a fulfilled life in the optimal conditions and to satisfy their sinful desires. There is no salvation without really recognizing God or Jesus Christ.

When young people of our time hear about Jesus, most of them compare him to a politician, a philosopher or other religious founders. They do not try to recognize who Jesus really is. As long as they do not recognize Jesus, they remain in their agony of sin, which is expressed, for example, in loneliness, sadness and the meaninglessness of their lives. But when they recognize who Jesus really is, then they would ask him and he would give them the living water.

In the approximately 50-year long history of God through UBF in Europe, we find many devoted women who have dedicated their youth, their heart and their love to the work of God. The reason why they have served God so devotedly is that they have deeply recognized who Jesus really is. When they realized that Jesus is the Messiah who died for their sins and who gave them eternal life through the power of the resurrection, they came to know that Jesus is the Messiah. Then they received a new life, and they decided to give their whole lives to God's work of salvation out of gratitude.

Let us look at verses 13 and 14. Jesus knew that this woman was thirsty in her soul. How did he help her further? "Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." In John 7:38, Jesus says, "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

The water of this world can never satisfy our soul. If we try to quench our soul's thirst with the things of the world, then our soul just gets thirstier and thirstier and in the end we end up disappointed, empty and bitter. Many young people of our time spend a lot of time and money on their body, their appearance, on their career and on improving their external, human conditions. They regularly go to the gym, spend a lot of money on branded clothes or an expensive mobile phones or other things in order to be

recognized by others, to confirm themselves and to satisfy their sinful desires. On Instagram on the Internet, young women in particular show off their looks and hope that many young men will "like" their image and follow them as "followers". In this way they seek the love of men and their recognition instead of seeking it from God. But in their soul they are not really happy, but very thirsty and empty, even if they have many likes or followers. The reason for their dissatisfaction is that their inner sin problem is not solved. They are God's creatures and yet in their soul they long for Jesus or God, their Creator. But they repress and ignore this fundamental human desire. That is why they are sad, thirsty and dissatisfied in their souls like this Samaritan woman. What they really need is Jesus' living water. They need to know Him because only He can solve their sin problem and quench the thirst of their soul forever. In Jesus alone there is the living water that springs up into eternal life.

When the woman heard Jesus' words about the living water, she opened her heart more. Let us look at verse 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." Because the thirst of the soul had not been quenched in her life until now, she asked Jesus for the living water that Jesus told her about. Jesus' initiative and his words full of grace had opened her heart widely and awakened in her soul the desire for the living water. May God give each of you the spiritual desire to know Jesus and ask him: "Lord, give me this water."

2. I who speak to you am he! (16-26)

Up to this point, this incident at the well of Jacob resembles a beautiful encounter of the incarnate God with a lonely, sad woman who tormented herself under the power of her sin problem. Up to this point Jesus was full of grace. In the second part, Jesus reveals that He is also full of truth. Let us look at verse 16: "He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." Jesus here changed his attitude by telling her, "Go, call your husband and

come back." With this Jesus just touched the sore spot in her life. Why did Jesus do this? Nowadays people don't talk about their sin problem. It is considered a violation of privacy or human rights. But Jesus wanted to help the woman to recognize her sin and bring her sin problem to God. Outwardly, Jesus' words here seemed harsh and no longer merciful. But in reality, this is God's true love for her and for us sinners. It is spiritual love that aims to solve a person's sin problem. Her real problem was not that she did not find the right husband. Her problem was not the other people in the city either. Her problem was the sin within her. Her sin poisoned and tormented her day and night, so that her relationship with God and with people broke down. "Go, call your husband and come back." This was Jesus' divine voice and love, that she might know her sin and bring it to God. We humans are usually too proud to acknowledge our sin, let alone bring it to God. But Jesus wanted to help her in this. Jesus is full of grace. But Jesus is also full of truth. If we come to Jesus with our sin and ask Him for forgiveness, then our broken relationship with God will be restored and we will be filled with the deep peace of mind and heavenly joy in our soul.

Was the Samaritan woman very angry or very hurt when Jesus dealt with her sin problem? In verse 17, she said, "I have no husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 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." In fact, she had already had five men in a row and was now living with one more. But it was not her real husband. No one on Earth could be her true man. Even if she had had fifty men, Jesus would still have said to her, "You answered right: I have no husband" because he really understood her. Jesus' understanding from his shepherd heart did something great in her. Now her eyes began to open to the spiritual world. In verse 19, she says, "Lord, I see that you are a prophet." Then suddenly she started talking about worship. How could such a woman talk about worship? This could happen because she

too was a creature of God, created in the image of God. There was the life of God in her. But she herself knew about worship only in terms of the theological dispute between Jews and Samaritans about the place of worship. Jesus taught her that the place of worship was not important. At that time there were enough people who worshipped God formally, both in Jerusalem and on the mountain in Samaria. Then Jesus spoke about true worshipers. Jesus was about to establish this Samaritan woman as a true worshipper. Let's look at what Jesus said about true worship in verse 24: "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." – It is crucial what or whom we worship. Our object of worship must not be people or money, academic or professional success or career or other things, but only God, only Jesus. To worship God "in the Spirit" means to worship him by faith with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength (Deuteronomy 6:5). And to worship him "in truth" means to worship him according to the Word of God, that is, according to the will of God, not according to our own will.

The fundamental problem of the Samaritan woman was that she did not know to whom she should give her heart, or whom she should worship. Until then she had given her purity, her love and her heart to men. The men were her objects of worship, even though she realized that they were totally unsuitable simply because they are perishing sinners. Nevertheless, she took another man, then another one. Finally, she was dominated by her sinful desire for a man. How could she escape this vicious circle? The only way was through fellowship with Jesus to get to know the one who was worthy of all her worship.

Let us look at verse 25: "The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Here we see that this woman, however sinful her life was on the outside, in her heart was waiting for the Messiah. She was looking for the One who would love her absolutely, to whom she could

tell everything and who could quench her soul's thirst completely. Let us look at verse 26: "Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." Jesus revealed Himself to her as the Messiah, the Savior of men, as her true object of worship. He had visited her personally to help her and save her. How wonderful is this love of Jesus for us sinners. Jesus has this love for every person. When this Samaritan woman met Jesus as her Messiah through his spiritual love, she was transformed into a blessed woman and a witness of Jesus. Through her, her city and all Samaria could drink living water and receive God's abundant blessings (28-30; 39-42). She has become a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Thanks be to God for his initiative love and his spiritual love leading to repentance, with which he personally visits us sinners to solve our sin problem and to use us as his witnesses for other people in our city, our country and in our generation. May God bless our initiative through Bible study and spiritual love according to his word and use it so that many young people in Germany and Europe may also meet Jesus personally and thereby get the thirst of their soul quenched and be used as Bible teachers and blessings for their generation.

In my personal life I had also desperately tried to quench the inner thirst of my soul. I was looking for the recognition and love of a girl. I tried to be professionally successful by studying surveying, fashion design, training in textile retailing, a private business school and further training as a programmer. I often went to discos, took a short vacation in Paris or a painting course in France and did whatever I felt like doing. But my soul's thirst for contentment, happiness and a meaning for my life was not satisfied. One day I was allowed to experience Jesus' initiative love through Luke 5:8, where Peter fell down before Jesus and confessed: "Lord, go away from me! I am a sinful man." Jesus opened my spiritual eyes and helped me to recognize my life problem, namely my sin problem, and to come to Him so that I could be healed of it. The encounter with Jesus quenched my

soul thirst. Before that I was lonely, disappointed, disoriented and through many defeats in my life hopeless. But the encounter with Jesus gave my soul the deep peace with God and the living hope for eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus gave me his grace to establish a family of faith with a great and faithful woman of faith, Missionary Monika, and to have three children of faith. By working as a nurse for the elderly, he taught me to learn responsibility and cooperation. Above all, Jesus gave me a blessed life purpose as a shepherd and Bible teacher. Now God even uses me to let this living water flow to the young students on campus, starting with the Faculty of Philosophy in Bonn and continuing to the ends of the Earth.

Today we have learned that Jesus is the source of living water that springs into eternal life. He is the Messiah who solved our sin problem once and for all through His death on the cross and His resurrection. Jesus is full of grace and truth. Jesus alone is worthy of our worship. Let us accept his initiative and repentant love and drink living water that wells up into eternal life. As true worshippers of Jesus, let us worship him in spirit and in truth.