

SERMON DoorsOpen Sunday Oct. 18th 2026
“Living Water” based on John 4:1-26

Rev. Nehemia N.

Water is essential for life. The human body is made up of approximately 50–60% water, and we need to drink enough water every day for our organs to function properly. Without water, we cannot survive for very long.

Yet, water is not only a source of life. Water also has the power to destroy. We have seen how floods and tsunamis can sweep away homes, destroy communities, and take lives. In the Hebrew Bible, we are familiar with the story of Noah, when the great flood covered the earth for forty days and forty nights.

So now, you can see how the same entity, water can affect lives differently. If I ask you one by one, you might have different answers for what you feel about water and what it meant for you. Some people I know enjoy listening to the sound of a water flowing in a river or rain falling from the sky. There is something soothing about the sound of water that helps us slow down, breathe, and find a moment of peace.

Now, to try to have the same perspective before we go further, I want you to think about a hot summer day when you have been working outside. Your hands are covered in dirt, your clothes are soaked with sweat, and your body feels exhausted. How wonderful it is to wash your hands, take a shower, or drink a cold glass of water!

In this sense, we all agree how water can be very refreshing and something we are thirsty or longing for. And today, I would like us to think about the “thirst” we carry inside our hearts?

The story in our Gospel today begins with Jesus travelling from Judea toward Galilee. On the way, he passes through Samaria and arrives at a town called Sychar. Tired from his journey, Jesus sits down beside Jacob's well. It is about noon, the hottest part of the day. Then a Samaritan woman comes to draw water. Jesus asks her to give him a drink.

At first, this seems like an ordinary encounter. A thirsty traveller needs water, and a woman has come to the well to draw it. However, the woman is surprised that Jesus speaks to her. As I probably already mentioned here couple times, Jews and Samaritans had a long history of hostility and religious disagreement. So, Jesus, a Jewish man speaking privately with a Samaritan woman is not supposed to happen. His request of her giving him a drink crosses boundaries that would normally keep them apart.

Yet Jesus does not allow those boundaries to prevent him from meeting her.

Also, notice where this encounter takes place. It does not happen in the temple, during a religious ceremony, or in a classroom where people gather to study Scripture. It happens beside a well, in the middle of an ordinary day.

Sometimes we imagine that we can encounter God only in special places or during special moments: in church on Sunday morning, during prayer, or while reading the Bible. Those moments and places certainly matter. But this story reminds us that God can meet us in the ordinary places of our lives. Maybe while we are working, caring for our families, visiting a friend, preparing a meal, or sitting quietly at home. Jesus comes to us where we are, even when we are tired, distracted, or uncertain.

After asking the woman for a drink, Jesus says something unexpected: *“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.”*

Now, Jesus is no longer talking simply about the water in Jacob's well. He is speaking about living water, a gift that reaches deeper than our physical needs. We all know what physical thirst feels like. When we are thirsty, our bodies tell us that something is missing. We need water, and we need it regularly. But there are other kinds of thirst that are harder to recognize.

We may thirst for love, hoping that someone will finally make us feel valued and accepted. We may thirst for success, believing that the next achievement will bring us lasting satisfaction. We may thirst for security, trying to control every detail of our lives because we are afraid of what tomorrow might bring. Or we may even thirst for recognition, wanting others to notice our contributions and appreciate what we do.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with wanting love, success, security, or appreciation. These are ordinary human desires. The problem arises when we expect them to satisfy every longing within us.

St. Augustine, one of the church fathers, expressed this human longing beautifully when he wrote, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” Augustine recognized that beneath our many desires lies a deeper longing for God. Perhaps this is what Jesus is addressing in the Samaritan woman's life. He sees beyond her immediate request for water and invites her to discover the deeper thirst of her soul.

The world might offer many things that can bring temporary happiness. But Jesus offers something deeper: a relationship with God that can sustain us through seasons of joy and sorrow, abundance and uncertainty, strength and weakness.

This does not mean that Christians will never feel lonely, discouraged, or afraid. Living water does not promise a life without hardship. Rather, it means that even in difficult seasons, we are not abandoned. God's grace continues to sustain us, and God's love remains a source of life.

Perhaps today you are thirsting for peace. Perhaps you are longing for hope, searching for meaning, or simply feeling tired from the journey of life. Or maybe you have been returning to the same well again and again, hoping to find satisfaction in something that cannot fully satisfy you. Hear again the promise of Jesus: *"The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."*

Jesus invites us to come to him, not because we have everything together, but because we need the life only he can give. He invites us to bring our questions, our burdens, our disappointments, and our deepest longings into his presence.

And as we receive his living water, may our lives become places where others encounter the refreshing grace of God. Because the living water Jesus offers also transforms not only our inner lives but also the way we live with others.

The encounter at the well reminds us that Jesus crosses boundaries that people have built. He speaks with someone his community might have avoided. He listens, teaches, and offers life. As followers of Christ, we are invited to do the same. We may not be able to solve every problem or satisfy every need, but we can offer a listening ear to someone who feels forgotten, companionship to someone who is lonely, and hospitality to someone who feels like an outsider.

We cannot become the source of living water ourselves. That source is Christ. But we can point others toward the One who gives life, allowing God's love to flow through our words, actions, and relationships.

So friends, as you are walking out of this church later today, may you remember that Jesus is the source of living water. When you feel tired, come to him. When you feel discouraged, come to him. When your heart is restless and you are searching for something to satisfy your deepest longing, come to him.

May we never become so busy looking for water in other wells that we forget the living water Jesus freely offers us. And as we receive this living water, may we also become people who bring refreshment to others: offering kindness to those who are weary, hope to those who are discouraged, and love to those who feel forgotten.

Amen.