

The Water of Life

by J. Sidlow Baxter

The Holy Spirit is the living water that flows from the rock of Calvary, and He desires to fill us with Himself and use us for His purposes.

Duration: 43:08

Scripture: Exodus 17:1, Numbers 21:16-18

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of the well in the Book of Numbers. The well was the subject of a divine promise from God, who said He would provide water. The people of Israel prayed for the well to spring up, and when it did, they sang a song of praise. The leaders of Israel put in effort to dig the well, and the people were amazed and grateful for the provision of water. The speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's promises and being diligent in seeking His provision.

Transcript

The Bible study which I bring to you this morning will be of a comparatively simple nature. But the theme of it is unspeakably precious. As a vestibule to it, may I invite you to turn with me to the book of Numbers.

A way back in the Old Testament, please, to the book of Numbers, chapter 21. And I want to read the three verses, 16, 17, 18. Numbers 21, 16 to 18.

And from then they went to Beer. That is the well whereof Jehovah spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. It's rather interesting that the English translation is Beer, but it was a well of water.

Just a matter of translation, and that only. Then Israel sang this song, String up, O well, sing ye to it. The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, at the direction of the lawgiver, with their stave.

And from the wilderness they went to Matanah. Kindly listen to it once again. And from then they went to Beer.

That is the well whereof Jehovah spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, String up, O well, sing ye to it. The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, at the direction of the lawgiver, with their stave.

And from the wilderness they went to Matanah. Dear fellow believers, Our Lord Jesus has purchased many precious blessings for us by his death on Calvary. But the most precious and inclusive of all those blood-purchased gifts is the Holy Spirit.

What we Christian believers owe to the many-sided ministry of the Holy Spirit, tongues could never tell. There is no more engrossing or enriching study than to go through the Bible, picking out the names and types and emblems and other modes of reference which are used of the Holy Spirit and his gracious activity toward us, who are the heirs of salvation. May I remind you, he is the living water.

He is the refining fire. He is the anointing oil. He is also the refreshing view.

He is the brooding dove. He is also the heavenly wind. He is the seal of our redemption.

He is the earnest of our heavenly inheritance. He is our ever-abiding paraclete, comforter, strengthener. And indeed, he is nothing less than the divine atmosphere in which spiritually we live and move and have our being.

Before our conversion, he wrought within us to convict us and then to convince us and then to convert us. And since our conversion, he has perseveringly and graciously ministered within us, renewing, revealing, refining, reviving. Never was a truer thing written than that lovely verse which we have just sung.

And every virtue we possess and every victory won and every thought of holiness are his alone. Now, beloved friends, will you think I'm stretching imagination too far when I pleasantly insist that that well in the wilderness of which we have just read is a beautiful and arresting type of the Holy Spirit. Anyway, for a little time, I want you to think with me on this.

And I believe we shall find in it some very heartening lessons. I wonder if you happened to have noticed that in the wilderness wanderings of Israel there were three crises of thirst. Each one of them is full of important, typical meaning.

Each one of them is full of meaning for you and me this morning. Let me turn you to the first of these three thirst crises. Have you got your Bible with you? And can you see Exodus chapter 17? If you can't see very well, don't worry, I'll read it carefully.

Exodus 17, verse 1. And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin after their journeys according to the commandment of Jehovah. And they pitched in refugees, but there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses and said, Give us water to drink.

And Moses said to them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt Jehovah? But the people thirsted there for water. And the people murmured against Moses and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me. And Jehovah said to Moses, Go on before the people and take with thee of the elders of Israel and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river.

Take it in thine hand and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon Hebrew preposition better translated by within. I will stand before thee there within the rock in Horeb.

And thou shalt smite the rock and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of that place Massah and Meribah because of the chiding of the children of Israel and because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is the Lord among us or not? Well now in that incident as I believe most of you will know the type teaching is clear and we need linger over it only for two or three minutes.

There are seven clear points of type teaching here. One, that smitten rock is Christ. Two, the smiting is Calvary.

Three, Moses the law giver represents the law of God. The stroke of which fell upon Christ when he hung on Calvary as our voluntary and vicarious sin bearer. Four, Moses rod here as elsewhere is the symbol of the divine presence and power and it indicates that our blessed Savior was actually smitten of God for our sake.

Five, God's word, I will stand before thee there within the rock teaches us typically that God was in Christ reconciling us to himself. Six, the necessity that the rock be smitten typically indicates the necessity of the cross to release the water of life. Until the rock was smitten at Horeb the water remained pent up and the people's thirst remained unslaved.

Even so, Christ as teacher, as exemplar, as prophet, as ideal cannot save you and me from sin or slake the thirst of our soul. It must be Christ and him the crucified. Seven, the water is a type of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot doubt that of course in the light of John chapter 7 verse 37 in that last day, that great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried and said if any man thirsts, let him come unto me. The one believing upon me is the one drinking. Two participle clauses in the Greek.

The one believing on me is the one who is drinking. So believing is drinking. As the scripture has said out of him, the Christ there shall flow rivers of living water.

And then John adds this explanatory comment. This spake he of the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given inasmuch as Jesus was not yet glorified.

So beyond any fair adventure the water here is a type of the Holy Spirit. Now forgive my touch of repetitiveness but simply for the sake of helping your memories let me mention the seven points very quickly again. One, the rock is Christ.

We know that from 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and visit verse 4 where Paul categorically says that rock was Christ. All right. One, the rock was Christ.

Two, the smiting was Calvary. Three, Moses the lawgiver represents the stroke of God's law which was laid on Christ. Four, Moses rod, the symbol of the divine presence.

Five, God's word, I will stand before thee within the rock indicative that God was in Christ doing this big thing for us. And six, the necessity that the rock be smitten the necessity of Calvary. And seven, the water a beautiful type of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. Duncan and friends I presume that the primary purpose of this Pilate Convention is to bear witness to the deeper truth of the Bible concerning the Christian life that must always remain the primary purpose of this Pilate Convention if it is to fulfill what I believe was the original vision. And the more that Pilate can be

made known as a place where Christians can gather Christians of all denominations where they can gather and sit at the feet of the master with the open book and learn the deeper truths of the Christian life so, in my judgment the more will Pilate fulfill a great ministry and have the blessing of God upon it.

Don't you think the same? However, I was going to say dear Mr.

Duncan and friends we must always remain alive to this that commingling with the Lord's people here it is highly probable that there will always be some unconverted friend unconverted men and women older or younger unconverted youths or maidens and who knows there may be at least some unconverted friends with us this morning and you wonder why all the rest of us are so enthusiastic about the Lord Jesus and about this big business of salvation listen dear unconverted friends we are singing with joy for what we have found in Jesus and without any hypocrisy we will tell you inwardly we are weeping for you we wish that you knew him and this living water the Holy Spirit whom God gives us through Jesus He is the living water to slake your thirst to meet your deepest needs and to save your soul

forever and ever isn't that the truth dear Christians have you ever heard these words dear unconverted friends you're probably a church member or a tender and probably you've sung these words I'm praying that this morning for the first time you'll sing them with reality of meaning I heard the voice of Jesus say behold I freely give the living water thirsty one to down and drink and live I came to Jesus and I drank of that life giving stream my thirst was quenched my soul revived and now I live in him I think you'll have to excuse me again hallelujah and now for the second of these thirst crises will you kindly turn with me to Numbers chapter yes chapter 20 Numbers chapter 20 now the children of Israel even the whole congregation had come to the desert of Zin in the first month and the

people abode in Kadesh and Miriam died there and was buried there and there was no water for the congregation and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and the people showed with Moses and saying would God we had died when our brethren died before Jehovah and why have you brought up the congregation of Jehovah to this wilderness that we and our cattle should die there and wherefore have you made us to come up out of Egypt to bring us into this evil place this is no place of seed or figs or vines or pomegranate there is not even water to drink and Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and they fell upon their faces and the glory of Jehovah appeared to them and Jehovah said to Moses saying take

the rod and gather thou the assembly together thou and Aaron thy brethren and speak ye to the rock before their eyes and it shall give forth his water and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock so shalt thou give the congregation and their beasts drink and Moses took the rod from before Jehovah as he had commanded him and Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock but Moses said to them hear now ye rebels ye fetch ye water out of this rock and Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod he smote the rock twice and the water gushed out abundantly and the congregation drank and their beasts also but Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron because ye believe me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel therefore ye shall not bring this congregation

into the land which I have given them this is the water of Meribah because the children of Israel strove with Jehovah and he was sanctified in them now that second first crisis occurred some thirty to forty years later than the first it took place in the open country around Kadesh Moses was told simply to speak unto the rock before their eyes but he exasperatedly struck it twice now we can we can understand how awkward this next murmuring people yet he grievously erred in so disobeying God and because of his lapse as we

have just read he was debarred from captaining the host of Israel into the promised land once again we find strong tight teaching in the incident Christ the rock having been once smitten why? because in tight teaching a second smiting of the rock would have implied that

the one smiting on Calvary was inadequate thereby contradicting the finality and abiding efficacy of the cross the presumption of Moses pathetic though it was became overruled to teach you and me typically that the law can never get you and me into the Canaan of sanctification and Miriam the prophetess who represents the prophets she died there she couldn't lead the people in and Aaron the priest died soon after he was prohibited from leading the people in if you and I are to enter what Paul calls the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ it can't be through the prophets just ethical teaching and it can't be through any kind of intermediate priesthood as represented by Aaron it must be Joshua and as you all know the Hebrew word Joshua is the equivalent of the Greek name Jesus

however I'm not going to go into all that that's all tight teaching which is implicit in this incident however the fact of all that when the water now flowed from the rock in Meribah it evidently gushed forth with remarkable copiousness the emphasis is upon that word abundantly the water gushed forth abundantly and it speaks typically of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out in baptismal fullness brothers and sisters of the rock there is a flowing forth of the living water to us from the smitten rock of Calvary when we come to know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour but there is a fullness of blessing when we come to know Him at Kadesh did you happen to know that the Hebrew word translated into English as Kadesh means consecration of all then we begin to know the fullness of the

blessing now for the third of these three thirst crises we are back at our text Numbers 21 verse 16 and from thence they went to Beer that is the well whereof Jehovah spake unto Moses gather the people together and I will give them water then Israel sang this song spring up oh well sing ye to it the princes digged the well and the nobles of the people digged it at the direction of the lawgiver with their stave and from the wilderness they went to Matanah now are you beginning to perceive what I hope you are it's this in the first first crisis the rock had to be smitten in the second thirst crisis the rock was not to be smitten in this third thirst crisis the rock is not even visible get the picture the people have journeyed to a place where parched land stretches around on every side

there is no oasis in sight but God says gather the people together and I will give them water gather but gather them where there is no rock in sight there is no well in sight but now God commands the leaders to bring out their pilgrim stave so they dig and are you listening wonder of wonders the people have you noticed that's the first time for 40 years they'd sung that the last time was when they came out of Egypt and they were on the right bank of the Red Sea then sang Israel and they never sang again it was grumble grumble murmur murmur murmur until God had to keep saying what a waste of murmuring I'll have to give them something to grumble about the fact is at long last they were beginning to understand they knew now it was as though God were saying do I need to demonstrate

each time with the rock before your eyes have you not yet learned that the water from that once smitten rock flows with you freshly in all your journeying all you have to do is to dig and sing in faith and sing again and the water is there as much as you need yes that was the lesson to Israel long ago and how it speaks to us at Philae this morning God is speaking through them to you and me and he's telling us the rock need not be smitten again Calvary is enough for our everlasting salvation he's also telling us that the risen Christ the living rock need not be visible to our physical senses although we cannot see him optically he is with us personally every minute that we live and he's telling us that that living water flows to you and me

evermore in Pentecostal fullness another paraclete

that he may abide with you forever O fellow pilgrims to the heavenly Zion don't you think this is a precious gladdening truth from that smitten rock of Calvary and the copious outgushing of Pentecost there flows to God's pilgrim people today this invisible stream of living water it is with us all the journey we can't always detect the river channel but it is there beneath our feet under the fiery sun and burning sands of the hottest desert all that you and I as Christian believers need to do is to dig with the staff of biblical promise free to meet all our needs I suspect that this is a cheering truth for some of us in this meeting this morning some of us may be pilgrimaging just now over the arid ground of long continuing trial others of us may be dragging through a dreary stretch of

physical weakness others of us may be encountering dry parched tracts of loneliness and others of us may be walking through the burning sands of fierce testings and others of us may be enduring a drab barren patch of disappointment after disappointment well I'm thinking sympathetically and I'm thinking cautiously but I'm speaking resolutely when I say dear brother, dear sister your parched ground is a garden I'm not just speaking hyperbolically I am a man who have known heavy burdens I've had my trials and my troubles and my heart breaking disappointments but I'm telling you what is true when I say your arid desert may become a fragrant garden did prayers we would die of spiritual dry rot God doesn't want just to keep changing your circumstances he wants to change you and when you're

living in this experience of the Holy Spirit oh what a delightful transformation well now somebody says I don't believe in the reality of this provision but tell me this how can I find this living water this joy and grace and heavenly refreshing springing up in my life well take a parting glance at the incident there are four things about that up springing well one, it was the subject of a divine promise God said I will give water two, Israel prayed spring up oh well three, it was the cause of a song then Israel sang and Israel wouldn't have sung if Israel hadn't believed in the promise and four, it was the object of effort they pulled out their staves and started to dig very well dear Christian brother if you are not into this deeper sweeter, richer fuller experience of the Holy Spirit

there's the fourfold formula for you to observe it was the subject of a promise very well take your Bible and make sure that God has promised this fullness of the Spirit then when you're convinced that it is a scriptural promise make it a matter of prayer tell the Lord Jesus that in so far as you know how you yield yourself spirit, mind, body past, present, future all you are or can become all you have or may have in the totality of your humanhood and then pray Savior I'm utterly yours please now fill me with the Holy Spirit and He will as I said the other morning we needn't beg claim wrestle or do anything I often hear people say claim the fullness of the Spirit but I won't criticise that there is a place no doubt for claiming but I would emphasise this before ever you start claiming

He's claiming you and your claim will never be honoured until His claim upon you has been honoured when once He's really got us then the Lord never leaves an empty vessel when He's really got us He really fills us look it works like this one what I give to Him He takes two what He takes He cleanses three what He cleanses He fills and four what He fills He uses and then start singing believe that He honours His word and sing sing the song of simple hearted faith and then number four the object of effort take your staves and start digging by which I simply mean from that point onwards keep digging here that's where the living water springs from keep your staff in your hand and become habitually a digger in the word listen to this little ditty there's a rainbow shining somewhere just beside

your pilgrim way there's a stream of living water to refresh your heart today when your life is full of trials till you know not what to do learn again the hidden flowing of the Saviour's grace to you there's a blessing smiling somewhere when the days with darkness frown there's a heavenly plan unfolding through the cares that weigh you down for when troubles are permitted God would prove His grace anew trust yourself upon His promise prove afresh His love to you let me close with a reminiscence er let's see a way back in 1950 my precious Ethel and I were in Australia and er er we took a long train journey from Adelaide right over to Perth on the west and we stayed somewhere roughly midway during that three days and three nights journey and we went to visit a mission station among the

aborigines of the Nullarbar plain all the all the station there was was a rough sign which said OLDEA O O L D E A there wasn't a building just the sign OLDEA and we got out and there were there were Mr.

Harry Green the missionary and about thirty little frisky aborigine girls and boys under a big truck Harry and my Ethel sat at the front he in the driver's seat and she next to him but he put me in the truck with these twenty or thirty wriggling squirming laughing shouting dark skin little aborigine ex well I couldn't speak their language and they knew only a bit of mine but I wanted to get on good terms with them so I gave them to understand I had a peculiar nose that cracked and soon they were they were all wondering at my cracking nose and then I put my hand on the side of the truck and scratched my head and by the time we'd got right into the middle of nowhere we'd struck up a friendship everything was alright but I'm telling you about it for this reason the next morning when we

wakened up I looked out of our window it was a very rough shack where we were staying but I looked out of the window and to my amazement I saw a ring of beautiful weeping willows and I said lovey look here and we stood and we looked how on earth did those weeping willows get there there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of square miles of desert desert desert with nothing but arid ground and scrubby grove you couldn't think of a drearier landscape north south east west but there were those weeping willows I don't know much about botany but I did happen to know that of all trees the weeping willow is the thirstiest and I was puzzled to know how they could survive in that barren desert so of course I asked Harry Green I strolled out after breakfast and stood with him and I said Harry

Harry how come how did those weeping willows get here and how do they keep alive oh he said that's very easily answered he called one of the boys they were digging a place for a foundation for some new wooden building and in the boys language he told him to dig another 18 inches down so he went another 18 inches or two feet down and then I heard bubble and then I saw the water bubble bubble bubble bubble and Harry said you see you didn't know underneath this vast desert there is a great subterranean sea or lake nobody knows how big it is and he said these weeping willows they've simply put their roots right through the upper aridity and they've put themselves in touch with an inexhaustible supply I say don't you think that's a grand illustration oh but it's more than that brothers and

sisters if we'll just put our roots deep enough there's the water from the one smitten rock an inexhaustible supply well that's my message and we're over in good time I think I'm going to suggest I can't see you very well in this light I'm going to suggest and I hope I shall have your immediate response don't you think it would be good to spend about five minutes getting quietly down before God in prayer and asking him to do this lovely transformation in many of ourselves this morning don't you don't you think that you and I should renew our vow of utter surrender and don't you think some of us who've never reached that point hitherto this morning in the gaiety theatre should get right down at his dear feet and give him everything so I'm going to ask that all of us quietly reverently

earnestly bow in prayer and we'll spend some moments putting this thing right with our master listen brethren our living saviour is in this theatre this minute he loves you he wants you he wants to fill you

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