

You Will Never Be Thirsty Again

by John Piper

In this sermon, John Piper emphasizes that Jesus offers living water to satisfy our deepest spiritual thirst and demonstrates His gracious purposefulness, relational nature, and superiority over all earthly needs.

Duration: 46:15

Scripture: John 1:14, John 3:16, John 3:34, John 4:10, John 4:14, John 4:23

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Spiritual Thirst"

Description

This sermon focuses on the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, highlighting Jesus' gracious purposefulness, relational pursuit, and superior offer of eternal life. It emphasizes the need for individuals to recognize their spiritual thirst and accept Jesus as the ultimate satisfaction for their deepest needs, despite their woeful condition and initial misunderstandings.

Transcript

Let me add my welcome to those of you who are at the Mounds View campus and the downtown campus and the south campus. May the Lord, by His Spirit and through His Word, reveal His Son to you, and may that be the means of great grace coming into our lives. Father in Heaven, a fountain is open to us now in this text.

Everybody in this room is thirsty. Not everybody is drinking from that fountain and finding their thirst stilled there. So I ask that all of us on all these campuses under this Word would have taste buds granted for this living water, that we would drink to our soul's satisfaction, and that we would magnify Christ as superior over all other treasures.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. This story in John 4 about Jesus meeting with the woman, the Samaritan woman, at the well is filled with wonderful truth about Jesus.

And it has woeful truth about us. And the wonderful truth about Jesus is that He is perfectly suited to give hope to us in our woeful condition. And therefore, I don't want you to short circuit the wonders of Jesus by running away from descriptions in the Bible of your woeful condition.

Because the reason the Bible describes us as woeful as we are is so that the water that He gives and the salvation that He offers would taste as sweet as it really is. That's the main reason why we're described in the bleak conditions that we are. And we really are in a difficult position.

Ma'am, I have living water for you, but you don't have a bucket. That's us. That's us.

Now the wonderful truth that I want you to see about Jesus in verses 1 to 15 is, number one, His gracious purposefulness. That He's graciously purposeful. Number two, that He's graciously relational.

And number three, that He's graciously superior. Purposeful, relational, superior. And the reason I repeat the word graciously each time, as you might guess, is because of the load star of these messages found in chapter 1 verses 14 and 16.

We have seen His glory. Glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. And from that fullness, we have all received a pun.

That's the load star in the sky of John the Gospel writer. Every text is that. Including this one especially.

So the good news in this text about Jesus, the glory that is shining through this text is, He's graciously purposeful. He's graciously relational. And He's graciously superior.

And we're in big trouble, except for that. So that's where we're going. Let's go to the transition between chapter 3 and 4, and make it the way by which we begin to talk about His graciously purposeful.

Chapter 3 verse 34. Verse 34. For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. Now these are breathtaking words. They really are.

Jesus is sent by God. He speaks the words of God. He has the Spirit immeasurably from God, and always has, forever.

The Father loves Him. The Father has given all things into His hand. So Jesus is God-sent, God-loved, God-speaking, Spirit-permeated, all-authoritative, ruler of all things.

That's the way chapter 3 ends. Now chapter 4 begins, and we're told that He's in Judea, and He leaves, heading for Galilee, to the north, through Samaria. And the way John tells us that He gets ready to leave raises questions.

Let me read it to you. We'll see how the end of chapter 3 helps answer some of the questions about this departure from Judea. Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although it wasn't Jesus, it was disciples, He left Judea and departed for Galilee, and He had to pass through Samaria.

So, what's the reason for leaving Judea? The reason is because He knew that the Pharisees knew something. And what the Pharisees knew was that more people are following Jesus than are following John. They're starting to mount up behind Jesus, and they're fading away behind John, and knowing that the Pharisees knew that, He left.

Does that make sense? Doesn't to me. I can think of lots, lots of ways to explain that, and I'm not sure which one is right. I'll give you the four that I can think of, and I think they're all true, more or less.

When it says at the end of chapter 3 that He is from God, speaking the words of God, and permeated with God the Spirit, and all things have been given into His hand by God, I know He didn't leave out of fear. So, I'm excluding the thought that, oh, the Pharisees are getting really bent out of shape at my success, and they are probably going to try to do me in, so I've got to get out of here out of fear. That's not what's going on.

Not, not the one into whom the Father has given all things. He is in charge of this situation. Nobody takes my life from me.

I lay it down of my own accord. So, if he's concerned about the Pharisees getting their back up about his success, he might be thinking, my time is not yet, so I'm moving, lest they capture me too early. I will decide when they capture me.

I will decide when I am killed. That's the sovereign Jesus of chapter 3, verse 35. So, that would be my first suggestion, namely that, perhaps, He saw trouble coming, and it wasn't time for trouble.

He's got lots to do, and lots to say. He'll do it in Galilee, maybe even in Samaria. This begins to get at what I'm talking about when I say, graciously purposeful.

He is not being driven out of Judea against his will. He is deciding to leave Judea by his own plan. I'm drawing that down from who he is in chapter 3, verses 35, 34.

Second, maybe that the Pharisees would turn the popularity of Jesus against John the Baptist, and begin to discredit John the Baptist, because John the Baptist is a huge embarrassment to the Pharisees. John the Baptist is calling everybody to repent. Pharisees repent and be baptized.

How embarrassing. You think we need to repent and be baptized. Yes, you are a brood of vipers.

This is embarrassing. And so if they can find any way to discredit John, like, oh look, they're all leaving John and following this new teacher, so we can now say to everybody his message was false. And Jesus didn't want that to happen.

So he's out of there. Maybe. Number three, could be that Jesus contemplated the deviousness of the Pharisees.

Maybe they were going to discredit both by saying, well look, the first one tells everybody that the second one is great, and they're all moving around, and there's no fixed point here, and so both of them are false. It is possible to turn things around in ways just aren't true, and so perhaps to avoid both parts of the movement being discredited, Jesus and John, Jesus just pulls back. Now the fourth one, the fourth suggestion of why he left when the Pharisees found out he was having more followers than John is supplementary and very important.

Namely, he said, I've got to go through Samaria. Do you think in verse 4 that the words had to mean a geographic constraint? Like there's no other way to get to Galilee than through Samaria. He had to go through Samaria to get to Galilee.

Well, he didn't. Could have gone through the Transjordan, gone by the sea, long way around, but lots of Jews did that because these Samaritans are unclean. You don't go through Samaria if you don't have to.

Well, what did he mean? I'm not sure that have to means this, but I'm suggesting to you have to meant, I've got an appointment. I gotta keep it. I feel warranted in saying that because of how much he knew about this woman.

I mean, he reads her heart totally. This is a totally sovereign moment in the life of Jesus in which he knows this woman's whole life, and why would we think he only knew it when he saw her? So, if any or all of those four suggestions of why he left when he heard that the Pharisees were knowing this, he is purposeful. Graciously purposeful.

He's not being jerked around by the Pharisees, and he's not being jerked around by geography. He's doing what he's doing because the Father has given all things into his hands. And it was gracious.

It was gracious that he he would keep the appointment of the cross when he designed to keep the appointment of the cross, and not earlier. It was gracious that he would not let John be unnecessarily discredited. It was gracious that he would preserve the unity of the two movements, and it was gracious that he would keep his divine appointment in Samaria.

And so that's my first point. His leaving, his leaving Judea and heading for Galilee through Samaria is graciously purposeful. Our Lord Jesus does not get jerked around.

One of the glorious things about having a sovereign Savior is that he is always multi-purposeful, and they're always gracious for those who trust him. If you're a believer, all of God's purposes for you are hopeful, helpful, designed for your good. We named four of them.

Actually, there are and there were thousands of purposes for going to Judea, for going to Galilee, through Samaria. Let's make sure you feel this now, because I'm going to apply it right to you. God is sovereign.

Your Savior is sovereign. He lays down his life when he pleases. Nobody takes my life from me.

He moves through the world at his own back, not anybody else's. And anytime he does anything, he's doing ten million things in that thing that you don't know about. You may know three, five, seven, and there are seven trillion things he is doing every time he does anything, which means we should be very slow to criticize him, as though the three that we see aren't sufficient to explain the deal.

We have God on our side. He sees the ripple effect going out from every bumping molecule forever. I love having a sovereign Savior.

He is infinitely wise. He bumps me. He's got a million reasons, and he may show me one or none, except the ones that are in the Bible, which he's already shown us.

And there's always six I can name, but that's another sermon. I can read that chapter in, let the nations be glad. That's the end of my first point.

He is graciously purposeful in leaving Judea and heading for Galilee through Samaria. Number two, he is graciously relational. The main relationship here is Jesus and this woman at the well, right? Nobody else rises to that in this text at all.

There are only two people here of any significance in verses 1 to 15. It's Jesus and this Samaritan woman at the well, and we're going to see next week how relentlessly relational he is. He will not let this woman go.

He knows that she had many husbands, five. He knows that the man she's living with is not her husband. That wasn't in today's text.

That's next time, but you need to know that. This is the woman he knows. He knows this woman, and he is seeking her worship.

Look at verse 23. He gets into this argument with her about worship, and he says, True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. What do you think he meant by that in regard to her? The Father is seeking, ma'am, He's seeking such people to worship Him.

Have you ever compared this text to the prodigal son, Luke 15? It's amazing how many similarities there are. Remember Jesus was eating with the tax collectors and sinners at the beginning of Luke 15. Who's that? Tax collectors and sinners.

What are sinners? That's that's her. Okay, that's her. Those harlots, prostitutes, tax collectors, people that are disreputable.

So Jesus is eating there, and the Pharisees are bent out of shape about that, and they say, Why is your teacher eating with sinners and tax collectors? And Jesus, hearing them, says, May I tell you three stories? And the third one is the prodigal son, which is about what? The Father seeking the Son, both the prodigal and the elder brother. That's the Pharisee. The Pharisee and the sinner.

That's what it's about. That's what we got. So he's, you see, the Father is seeking such to worship Him, ma'am.

Adulterous five times over. Living in adultery right now. The Father is seeking such, such to worship Him.

Now, this is graciously relational. He didn't have to do this. He did not have to go through Samaria.

He didn't have to stop at the well. He didn't have to ask for water. He did not have to engage.

How are you doing? You know, I'm, this text is often used as a basis for a sermon on evangelism. Be like Jesus. Come on, engage people.

Be like that. And, and I'm just so eager not to preach that sermon because we're the woman. We're the woman in this text.

We're not Jesus. We need Jesus. And if we got a hold of that, if we felt that to the bottom of our toes, we wouldn't need sermons on evangelism.

Okay. She says in verse 9, the basis of the relational problem with Samaritans and Jews. We've got to get this clear now.

Verse 9, the Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink from me, a woman of Samaria, for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans? Why is that? Let me read you Don Carson's historical explanation. So they have some handle on where did Samaria come from? It used to be a city like the capital of the Northern Kingdom, and now it's an area. What, what, who are they? Why is there such a problem? Here's what he says.

After the Assyrians captured Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, in 722, they deported all the Israelites of substance and settled that land with foreigners, Assyrians mainly, who intermarried with the surviving Israelites and adhered to some of their ancient religion. You read about that in 2nd Kings 17. After the exile of the Southern Kingdom, in Babylon, a couple hundred years later, after the exile, the Jews are returning, they return to their homeland.

They viewed the Samaritans not only as the children of political rebels, but as racial half-breeds, whose religion was tainted by various unacceptable elements. For example, they only believed in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. They rejected everything else as not inspired.

About 400 BC, the Samaritans erected a rival temple in Mount Gerizim, which is going to be relevant next time. So we got ethnic, racial, religious issues here between Jesus and this woman, between Jews and Samaritans. Jews disdain Samaritans.

They're ceremonially unclean, they're racially impure, they're religiously heretical, and therefore they are avoided. Now, to make you feel this, like you should, what Jesus is doing, I think it will be helpful for me to draw the analogy between this situation and my hometown 50 years ago in Greenville, South Carolina. Walgreens, Cresses, Woolworths, all had two water fountains.

And the sign over one said white, and the sign over the other said colored. Can you imagine anything better designed to demean? What do you say to the child who asks, why daddy? But why are there two fountains? You can hardly imagine building your entire plumbing system around this. Well, in Sychar of Samaria, there's only one fountain, and the sign over it is colored.

Samaritan. Verse 6 says, Jacob's well was there, so Jesus, wearied as he was from the journey, was sitting beside the well. Literally, he was sitting on the well.

It was about the sixth hour, which means noon. A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give me a drink.

For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Now, notice what he did. First, he went through Samaria to keep an appointment.

Second, he sent his disciples to buy food, presumably food made by unclean Samaritans. And he sent all of them so he could be alone. He didn't have to send all of them.

Doesn't take that many to carry food. He sat on the well, fully conspicuous and unavoidable, and he asked a woman who was unclean, impure, heretical, and disreputable, a Samaritan, not for permission to drink from the well, but to drink from her bucket. You give me a drink.

So he's standing beside the fountain mark colored, watching a black woman in 1959 fill her water bottle. For all to see, everybody in Woolworth's is watching. And then when it's full, and she's kind of, what are you doing? He says, Can I have a drink from your water bottle? And she says in verse 9, Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Now, that's a very loose translation. Sunkra'amay means used together. Used together.

She's talking about her bucket. Jews don't have common use of things with Samaritans. There are separate fountains.

You can't be asking me for this. It isn't done. Jesus is pursuing an unacceptable relationship, graciously.

He's pressing in on a relationship graciously. He means to have her in heaven. He means to have her.

Everything is intentional here. It's not just happening. This is design.

God sent not the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. I'm not coming here to condemn you. I'm not breaking all these taboos to condemn you.

He broke centuries-old taboos. He sought to be alone in Samaria. He sat on the well.

He spoke and did not remain silent. He spoke to a Samaritan. He spoke to a woman.

He spoke to an adulteress. He asked for a drink from her water bottle. This is in-your-face gracious relationship pursuit.

We have seen his glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. And from his fullness, from his fullness, we have all received.

We. We. We, critical, bitter, angry, fearful, lustful, unrelational, we have all received grace upon grace.

You may be here in this room. You may be the one who built the fountains 50 years ago. That's me.

Or you may be the one who tried to shoot the Jews last week in the Holocaust Museum. Wait! Supremacy. Or you may be the one who's been forced to drink from the other fountain all your life.

In either case, at this moment, in this room, at this moment, in this room, God's pursuing you graciously. That's why you're here. You're here.

You thought you came for a concert. Guess what? He might drop dead before I'm done. And you would not have come in vain because God, at this moment, has his hand extended to you and he's pushing in on you, racist or abused.

He's pushing in on you. He will have you. He will not give up.

I pray he will not give up. He didn't give up on her. Oh my, she dodged and she dodged.

And he would not give up on her. We'll be back, Lord willing, next week and watch him pursue. So that's my second point.

Graciously relational. He will blast through everything. Finally, Jesus is graciously superior.

Graciously superior. So he's got nothing more to say about Jews and Samaritans. He's done.

That's over. Not a word shows up of that again. He has shattered that thing with his life.

So he's done with that and he's moving on to more important things. Eternal life. Verse 10.

Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water. Woman, may God open your eyes. You're talking to the Son of God.

I'm carrying within myself the gift of God and I will give you water that lives forever. Verse 11. The woman said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep.

Where do you get this living water? She doesn't see. She is just like Nicodemus. Nicodemus, you must be born again.

I have living water for you. You're dead. You need life.

I'll pour it into you. Where is there a womb big enough for me to get into? That's that's Nicodemus. Woman, I've got life for you.

I've got water for you that will spring up and give you everlasting life. Sir, you don't have a bucket. This is exactly the same.

There is a pattern in this gospel. This is what I meant when I said woeful things about us. We laugh.

It is so tragic. Have you ever sat across the table with someone you love and shared the gospel with them? And there is the blankest, most horrible insensitivity. You want to scream, can't you see what you're doing to your life? They don't see it.

So this is us. Nicodemus is us. The woman at the well is us.

Where's the womb? Where's the bucket? That's us. I just want to get out of here and go watch a game. That's that's her.

She senses there's some kind of claim to superiority here. Because she says in verse 12, Are you greater? Are you superior? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock. So that's the question to you.

Is Jesus greater than Jacob? What do you think? Why is he? He is. That's an easy one. He is.

Why? And Jesus answers like this. Jesus said to her, after verse 12, Jesus said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But everyone who drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.

The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Yes, ma'am. I am superior to Jacob.

My gift is superior to Jacob's gift. My water is superior to Jacob's water. My well is superior to Jacob's well.

And my sons and my daughters are superior because they never die. So don't miss the five things he says about the water. Number one, verse 10, it is the gift of God.

If you knew the gift of God. Number two, it's living water. Next in verse 10, he would have given you living water.

Three, if you drink it, you'll never thirst again. Verse 14, whoever drinks of this water I will give him will never be thirsty again. That's a troubling statement.

Does he mean I never feel any longings after I believe? No longings, no aching of soul. I don't think so. And the reason I don't think so is because of the next one.

Number four, this water is unusual. This is water like you've never seen. This water becomes a well, a spring.

So when you drink it, it doesn't just slake this momentary thirst. It does what? It becomes, it transmutes into a well. Leaping, literal word, leaping.

Why would you want it to do that if you had no thirsts? No, when it says we'll never thirst again, it means we'll never have to go anywhere else thirsty again, because this well never stops giving what you need. You never have to go to sex again, never have to go to booze again, never have to go to drugs again, food again, wife, husband, job, vacations, internet again. None of your idols, they are falling to the ground because there's a well in here.

Not just a drink. This, this is the kind of water that when you drink it the first time, that is when you reach out and embrace Jesus as your superior water, treasure, life, it produces a well, which in chapter 7 is called the Holy Spirit. Number five, this water gives eternal life.

End of verse 14, a spring of water welling up to eternal life. So, yes, ma'am, I am superior to Jacob. Are you superior to Jacob? He gave us this well.

Are you superior? Yes, ma'am. I am superior to Jacob. I am not arrogantly superior, I am graciously superior.

My superiority is your salvation. You must decrease and I must increase. I have the water of life.

You have thirst. You need what I have in order to live. If you will drink, if you will believe me as your superior thirst satisfier, then you will be satisfied forever.

How does she do with that? Verse 15, the woman said to him, oh sir, give me this water, and then she blows it, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water. This bucket is heavy. I don't like having to come out here every day to get water for my house.

So, yeah, I'm interested in your living water that bubbles up. Yeah. Some people become Christians like that.

She's not converted. She's dead. She's dead.

She doesn't get it. She's blind. She's gonna take it and use it for her old self.

She just doesn't want to come and carry the bucket. So if you can, if you can lift my bucket, my health, wealth, and prosperity needs, if you can make godliness a means of gain, if you can peddle the Word of God, I'll take it. I'll go to church every Sunday for that.

I'll join and be dead and perish. So, we must now wait a week. Actually, you shouldn't wait a week, because if Fernando Ortega might die before this concert, you might die before next week.

And that's no joke. I'm getting on a plane at 225 tomorrow afternoon. Go to California, ask your prayers to speak tomorrow night.

What do planes do? They strew bodies 50 miles across the coast of Brazil. That's what they do. Naked bodies.

That's what planes do. Meteors kill boys. Churches blow up.

You might not make it back next week. And so I simply close by saying right now is the day of salvation. Right now God is speaking.

This story is in the Bible and in my mouth. And you're here so that you would know God saying, I'm pursuing people to worship me. I'm after this five-fold harlot, adulterous, Samaritan, unclean, heretical, half-breed.

I want her. I will have her. And if he wants her, why wouldn't he want you? This is gracious.

Gracious purposefulness and gracious relationships and gracious superiority offered to you freely to meet every need that you will ever have forever and ever. Let's pray. Gracious Father in heaven, we ask it week after week for the sake of your glory and our joy that you would open the eyes of the blind, raise the dead, satisfy the thirsty with yourself.

Oh God, we cannot make this happen. Only you can make it happen. And so we ask that you would do it in Jesus great and powerful and superior and gracious name.

Amen.

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