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Lesson 1 – The Samaritan Woman ***The Gospel for Empty People***

Introduction: Have you ever been so thirsty that all you wanted was water? Not juice, milk, or soda, but just water? Have you ever wanted water so bad it didn't matter if it was spring water or city water, warm or cold, fresh tasting or metallic, or even if there were bonus surprises floating around in it? If you have, you know that when you are truly thirsty only water can quench your thirst.

Have you ever been spiritually thirsty? Have you ever felt empty, like you were missing something and you desperately wanted to feel full but couldn't no matter how hard you tried? Many people live their whole lives this way, looking for satisfaction and fulfillment in things that were never meant to play that role in their lives. The car is never nice enough; the house is never big enough; the relationship is never satisfying enough; the job is never good enough; the bank account is never full enough; and on and on it goes. So what is the solution for empty people?

Only Jesus can quench your thirst!

I. **Christ shows us the needs we all have (vv. 10-18).**

A. **We need fulfillment of our souls (vv. 10-15).**

Christ is using a physical metaphor to describe a spiritual reality. The picture is a fitting one, because we are all familiar with it, it expresses well the feeling, and it is appropriately intense. This is why Scripture uses this particular image over and over.

*As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. **Psalm 42:1-2a***

*“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. **Isaiah 55:1-2***

*On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. **John 7:37-39***

B. **We need forgiveness of our sins (vv. 16-18).**

Christ statement at first seems unrelated to their discussion. But this is very closely tied to the promise of all satisfying water that Christ had made, because Christ

is here pointing this woman to the real source of her problem, and the real source of every problem: sin.

Sin destroys our relationship with God, our relationship with others, and will ultimately destroy us in an eternity in hell if we will let it. Sin had destroyed this woman's life and left her empty and it will do the same for us if we let it. If we ever want to quench our spiritual thirst, we've got to stop sucking the salt of sin.

II. Christ exposes the distractions we all use (vv. 16-23).

A. We seek fulfillment in lesser things (vv. 16-18).

This woman had felt this emptiness of soul and had looked for solutions. Five husbands later, and she had no doubt all but given up hope that she would ever feel full. Yet she kept trying. There are many people who feel empty, looking for the next thrill, hoping that the next raise will be enough, or wishing that marriage or children or a promotion will be the answer.

The Old Testament describes this in scarily accurate terms: *Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*
Jeremiah 2:13-14

B. We focus on other issues to avoid conviction (vv. 19-23).

Sin is not just a disease; it's a disease that convinces you that you aren't even sick. Like cockroaches fleeing

into the dark corners of a room, our sin pushes us to look to legitimate but secondary issues rather than dealing with our real problem – our sin against God.

III. Christ points us to the answer we all need (vv. 24-26).

A. We need fellowship with God (v. 24).

Christ answer this woman's question, but more importantly He points her to the real source of her problem – a broken relationship with God.

It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.¹

“Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” - Augustine

B. We need Jesus Christ (vv. 25-26).

If fellowship with God is our greatest need and sin destroys our relationship with God, we need someone to do something about this sin. Christ here identifies Himself as the Messiah, the answer to all her problems, and all ours as well. Jesus brings true and lasting satisfaction, because Jesus can restore us to God, our greatest need. Which brings us back to where we began: ***Only Jesus can quench your thirst.***

¹ C.S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory”