

STREAMS OF LIVING WATER

READING

John 4:4-14

JOHN 4 & 7

- “Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” What does Jesus mean?
- Thankfully, this is one of the times that John explains really clearly, in the parallel passage in John 7. *On the last and greatest day of the feast of tabernacles, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.*
- This living water welling up to eternal life is the giving of the Holy Spirit.
 - Jesus’s words point not to a single event, as they do in John 3 (“whoever believes is not condemned”), but to an ongoing flowing and replenishing of life.
- Jesus is not speaking into a vacuum, but to a people with a history of God’s words to them. We’re going to draw on them to dig deeper into what this flowing and replenishing of life looks like.

ASIDE / INTERACTION

- Who were the great worshippers of the Old Testament? Which characters do we read of as really “knowing God”?
- Some of the greatest worship leaders of the OT – David and the sons of Korah – write of thirsting for God.
- In fact, in many places the Old Testament sets the scene for Jesus’s words: especially the Psalms and Isaiah.
 - It’s in their vocab to talk of being dry and needing refreshing.
 - Who here sometimes feels dry and in need of refreshing from God?

WHY DRINK WHAT DOES NOT SATISFY?

- MacDonald’s – fills me up, tastes great, but I feel rubbish afterwards.
- Thirsting for coffee when what I need is water.
- Isa 55 – it’s possible to labour for things that don’t satisfy:

*“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters;
and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.
Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.”*

- Only Christ satisfies! Don’t settle for anything less.
- There are dangerous things that take away our thirst – influence, self-importance, addictions, controlling behaviour.
- But there are also many good things that are designed to be a blessing in life, but not to satisfy our thirst for God. Good food and drink, the company of friends, those who are married – your sex life, those who work – the satisfaction of a job well done. But don’t allow those to slake your thirst to be with God, to know him!
- Jesus says that the living water he gives is the Holy Spirit – but remember that the Holy Spirit points to Christ.

WHY OVERFLOW WITH WHAT DOES NOT SATISFY?

Look at how the woman “overflows” when she first encounters Jesus:

- Suspicion
- Insecurity
- Criticism
- Hostility
- Possibly shame (drawing water at midday)

Look at how she overflows afterwards:

- Joy & excitement (leaves jar)
- Witness
- Fearlessness

TCSCAR – privilege – my job there was to overflow with eternal life, so my job was to “be full”

- How do we always have something good to give away?
- Caroline making meals for people – works because she keeps a full fridge!
- This is not about show and pretence – we will all have bad days because we’re fallible. But if we’re constantly running on empty, we need to seek refilling
 - Run on empty, fill up ahead of things vs run on full, restock after emptying
- This week – do an audit of your interactions with other people. Perhaps look at the last twenty emails you’ve sent, or the last twenty text messages. What did you talk about in your conversations on the phone or over the fence?
 - This is where the rubber hits the road – how are we overflowing, not in theory but in practice?

JESUS ASKS, JESUS OFFERS

- Jesus asks the woman at the well for a drink. She objects – why me? (chip on shoulder / unworthiness) – isn’t the well too deep?
- Jesus flips the question – why don’t you ask me? My water is forever bubbling up fresh.
 - She gets a taste of what it is to “well up to eternal life” – not just for herself, but for others.
 - If you discount yourself – if you’re “not worthy” – Jesus wants to flip that around. Is *he* able? Is *his water* good enough for you and others?
- Multiplicative effect of this “welling up” – filling one person, overflowing to many more. This is not trickle-down economics!

EZEKIEL’S RIVER

- **That’s the micro scale – how does this scale up?**
- Double vision: Ezekiel 47/Zec 14 & Revelation 22. Seems to point to the Church age (Ezekiel) and eternity (Revelation).
 - The river deepens and widens as it flows out from the temple – because the intent is to multiply as it goes.
 - The source is the Temple / the Throne.
 - The river goes far out into the world – this is a missional vision.
 - It brings life as it flows, even bringing life to the Dead Sea.
- Do you encounter any deserts in your life (no God)? Do you know any dead seas that need fresh water (stale rehashing of human brokenness)?
- If, as God’s people, we ask him to constantly fill us – not just once, but to go on filling us, this is the kind of effect we can have on the world.
- But not just on our own – we don’t just want one stream in a whole desert – we want a torrent, a river. This happens when we seek to overflow *together*. I want to tell you about my Home Group!

SUMMARY

- Don’t thirst for what doesn’t satisfy – thirst for God’s Holy Spirit!
- Don’t overflow with what doesn’t satisfy others – overflow with what God has poured into you!
- Don’t discount yourself on the basis of who you are – trust in the total sufficiency of the Holy Spirit in you.
- Overflow into the world, together with others, and see dead places brought to life.