



The Gift of God

Text: John 4:7-14

High School Pastor Tyler Riley

1. Read John 4:1-14.
 - a. Who was Jesus talking to?
 - b. How do we know this woman was an outcast?
 - c. If you knew this woman's background, what would you have thought about her?
 - d. Would you have treated this woman as an outcast? Who are some of the outcasts in our culture?
 - e. What does Jesus' willingness to overcome any and all boundaries between the woman and himself say about how he looks at her? At you?
2. The woman had a "well" that she drew from for satisfaction over and over. What "well" are you drawing from seeking ultimate joy and satisfaction? How has it left you empty?
3. Read Jeremiah 2:13 and John 7:36-39
 - a. What do these verses add to your understanding of the identity of the living water that Jesus offers?
 - b. To whom is living water offered and how is it given?
 - c. What gets in the way of our access to living water?
4. Jesus offers us satisfying, soul-quenching, eternal life right now. What do you think a satisfied life looks like? How can we experience eternal life right now?
5. Who do you know who needs this living water?
 - a. What "well" are they drawing from?
 - b. How can you winsomely begin to speak into their lives and introduce them to the offer of living water?
 - c. What principles do you see from Jesus' interaction with the woman that might guide our potential conversations with others?

Challenge: Think of the person or persons you identified above. As a group, collectively pray over those names asking for God for opportunities to offer living water.

Prayer: Living Water (inspired by Exodus 17: 1-7)

In the dry wildernesses of our lives,
in the days of heat and thirst,
you offer us living water,

Thank you, gracious and generous God.

When we begin to doubt your presence,
and grumble that your love is unreliable,
you offer us living water,
Thank you, gracious and generous God.

When life's regrets and the bad choices we have made
leave us feeling excluded and unworthy,
you offer us living water,
Thank you, gracious and generous God.

When circumstances, or the inhumanity of others,
have left us alone and wounded,
you offer us living water,
Thank you, gracious and generous God.

We thank you and praise you, O God,
that however we may thirst,
whatever we may need to satisfy our souls,
you offer it freely and abundantly in Christ;
So we drink deep of the living water
and, as we draw from your wells,
we seek to pass the cup to others
who, like us, are thirsty for your grace.

Amen

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STUDY DEEPER

7 Reasons You Should Go on a Short-Term Mission Trip

Not everyone can pack up all their belongings and become career missionaries, but many of us can go on short-term mission trips. If you've never tried it, I encourage you to consider these benefits of taking the compassion of Jesus to another culture:

1. You will encounter God's heart. Our God is big and He cares about the nations. He's a global God. And His ultimate goal is to gather a family that represents "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). When you step into a foreign mission field, you will sense God's amazing compassion for another culture and you will begin to know Him as Lord of the harvest.

2. You will expand your limited perspective. Too many of us are stuck in spiritual ruts. Even pastors can get bored with the sameness of ministry in one community. Every now and then you need to step out of your comfort zone and allow God to stretch you. Experience how other Christians worship God with fervor. Discover how they plant churches and engage in evangelism. Recognize that the way we do ministry in the United States is not necessarily the only way. And expect to learn from the people you are going to minister to.

3. You will be become more grateful. I receive an attitude adjustment every time I go to another country—especially when I am with poorer Christians. Whether I am eating papayas and frijoles in Guatemala, sleeping on an uncomfortable bed in Uganda or riding in an all-night train in India, I come back from my trips with a renewed appreciation for life's little blessings—air conditioning, running water, nice roads and flush toilets. There's nothing like spending time with a family of seven in a house made of mud and straw to put your puny problems in perspective.

4. You will discover your spiritual family. When you minister alongside Christians in another country, you find that the Holy Spirit bonds us together supernaturally. In the community I visited this week in eastern Guatemala, there are people who have become like family members to me because of our spiritual connection. These relationships can last a lifetime. This is the same type of bond the apostle Paul felt with the people he met in Greece, Italy and Asia Minor during his travels.

5. You will build lasting partnerships. God gives us this strong bond so we will link arms and work for a common purpose across racial and cultural lines. I encourage churches to send teams to the same place annually to foster permanent relationships and effective projects. Expect God to link your church with a community overseas. Your connection to the same people over time can lead to the planting of a church, an orphanage, a shelter for women or a school.

6. You will overcome your fears. One woman on our team this week had never prayed at a church altar for people—and she felt totally inadequate because of her limited knowledge of Spanish. But when people streamed to the front of the church she swallowed her fears and did what her flesh didn't want to do. Instead of running like Jonah she poured her life out for the precious people we came to reach. I guarantee she will have more spiritual confidence when she gets back home. Sometimes you have to run to the front of the battle line to get new courage.

7. You will expand the kingdom of Jesus. The Great Commission was not a suggestion. Christ's kingdom cannot be built without bold, radical obedience to Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore..." Somebody has to GO. There's no way around it. To share the gospel with the whole world, we must be willing to pack our bags sometime and leave home.

Of course not everyone can hop on a plane and go to a foreign country for 10 days. Some people have health limitations or family pressures that make travel impractical. Don't feel guilty if you are in that category. Instead remember that those who can't go to the mission field physically can go through prayer or financial support. And the reward will be the same.

When David defeated the Amalekites, he gave the same reward to the warriors who stayed behind to watch the baggage as he gave to the frontline soldiers who wielded swords (see 1 Sam. 30:22-25).

So, whether you go virtually or in person, let's recognize the priority of missions. Let's encourage every Christian to discover their role in God's great plan to tell everyone about Jesus and His love.

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