Drink Deeply

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Date: 29 October 2023

Preacher: Steve Jeffrey

[0:00] Well, good morning everyone. Grab your Bibles, John chapter 4. Also there's St Paul's app. You'll see an outline for today's message and the title, Drink Deeply.

Okay, 1977. Some of us weren't born in those days, but a lot of us were. NASA launched two space probes, Voyager 1 and the other one called Voyager 2.
And it was the purpose of the space probes was to study the outer planets and the interstellar space beyond the sun. Both space probes are still circulating up there in the Netherlands somewhere.
Apparently Voyager 1 at the moment is approximately 24 billion kilometres from the Earth right now. 24 billion kilometres, give or take a few million, I think, in there somewhere.
But NASA knows where they are. Now, interesting, both space probes carried a gold-plated audiovisual disk in the event that either space probe was found by intelligent life forms out there.
[1:16] And so the disk carried photos of Earth, photos of life forms of Earth, a range of scientific information, spoken greetings from a whole heap of languages, a personal greeting from the United States President, Jimmy Carter, also the United Nations General Secretary, a bunch of sounds from the Earth that included sounds of whales, a baby crying, waves breaking on a shore, things like that, things that would want to keep you away from the place, really, probably.

Music. A collection of music from various cultures was also included and played, and still apparently being boomed out there into the universe somewhere.
And the music was interesting, what they included. 30 years after the launch of the space probes, one of the members of the project team reflected on the choice of music and said this, I thought of Beethoven's Cavatina from the string quartet, this great, beautiful, sad piece of music of which Beethoven had written in the margin the word sensucht, which is German for longing.
Part of what we wanted to capture in this Voyager project was the great longing that humans experience.
Longing. It's a word that captures the restlessness of the human heart. Even in our society, as formal religion recedes, thirst for spirituality grows.
[3:08] In fact, there is more spiritual longing in society now than there has been in the previous three decades. This spiritual longing that is there, restless in the human heart, is a thirst for purpose, of satisfaction, of contentment, fulfillment.

So if you've just joined us for the first time right now, or just tuning in after a little bit of a break, we are working our way through the early chapters of John's Gospel and discovering the abundant life that Jesus Christ offers.
Last week, we're in John chapter 3, as Jesus engages with a bloke called Nicodemus. Now, Nicodemus was one of the up-and-coming in society. Today, in John 4, a Samaritan woman, one of the down and the out in society.
And as the beginning of the chapter sees, Jesus is tired, he's hot, he's dusty from his journey, and he confronts this woman at a well and says, give me a drink, and he never gets it.
Instead, he offers her life-giving water. He offers deep satisfaction in life, living water for the thirsty, for the longing soul, for Nicodemus, and for the Samaritan woman, for you and for me, for all people.
[4:46] And to get the living water, there are four things we need to understand, and that's the outline in your Sir Paul's app this morning. Four things. Firstly, we need to understand the living water that he offers is a surprise. Verse 9, the woman is surprised that Jesus is talking to her.

And in verse 27, the disciples are surprised that he's talking with her. The surprise here is that Jesus reaches across social, cultural, religious barriers to engage with this woman.

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That's the surprise. The Samaritans and Jews were complete enemies. And at this time, the Jews regarded Samaritans as racial, inferior, and religious heretics.
They had no association at all. So at the beginning of the text, we see that Jesus says he has to go via this way. He didn't have to go that way. He chose to go this way.
He chose to be in Samaria. Jews in his day completely went around that area. Also, there's a gender issue here.
[5:54] Women had very low status across all the cultures of the first century. And so, and again, verse 28, the disciples were surprised he's talking with a woman in public.

But the big issue is not that she's just a Samaritan and that she's a woman, but that she's a particular Samaritan woman.
Every commentator mentions that what is weird here is that she is drawing water alone, which was a social activity for women in the first century.
This woman is a social outcast. In verse 6, we are told Jesus, we are told Jesus arrives at the well at noon.
The women gathered water at the beginning of the day and the end of the day. She is deliberately going to the well in the middle of the day to avoid all contact, even with her own people.
[7:10] She's an outcast. Not an introvert. She's an outcast. And Jesus reaches across every barrier that would be put up against them. The moral, the religious, the gender, the racial barriers, they mean nothing to him.

This is typical of Jesus. Why does he keep doing it? Because the living water that he offers is not based on merit.
It's based on grace. Doesn't matter who you are, what you've done, what your cultural roots are, what your worldview is, anyone at any time can meet him.
That's the first thing. The second thing we need to understand is that this living water that he offers is an offer of ultimate satisfaction. Living water comes to us by grace and what we receive is ultimate satisfaction.
Now, Central Australia, for those who have ever wandered out there, would discover that it's a very arid environment, which is why most of the population in this country, the vast majority, live on the coastal fringe, because at least we get access to water.
[8:23] Very few people in Australia have ever experienced desperate thirst. Desperate thirst. Life-threatening thirst.

We walk around with these things everywhere. We, you know, I go to the tap and I can fill it up. It flows. The image of living water is much more vivid for this woman at the well and others in our world than it is for most of us.
But it's an important image. The human body is about 66% water. Muscles are 97% water. Blood is 83% water.
Our lungs are 90% water, which, you know, drowning. What's, I don't know what, I don't understand that. It's just adding a little bit more. I mean, and brains are 95% water, which is quite self-explanatory, really.
Survival guides speak about the rule of three. We can survive three minutes without oxygen, three days without water, three weeks without food, and tragically, probably only three hours without technology.
[9:43] We have a more immediate need for water than we do for food. We die of dehydration before starvation.

Because we are mostly water, to die from dehydration means that every part of our body cries out in searing pain.
torment every part of the body until death mercifully comes to us. And Jesus says to this woman at the well, I have something that your soul needs more than your body needs water.
Going to any other source to quench what your soul needs will only cause the thirst to go deeper, to endure longer.
So verse 13 is his promise. Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water that I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.
[11:06] Jesus here is promising a purpose, a love, a peace, a hope, a beauty that permanently wells up from within. You see, in Jesus we get a spiritual love and a peace and acceptance, a

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beauty that won't get lost, plugged up, dry out when things in life don't go the way that we want them to.

Friends, what Jesus is offering here, and I think this is crucial if you're someone who calls yourself a Christian, what Jesus is offering here is so much more than the forgiveness of sins.
It's not less than the forgiveness of sins, but it's so much more than the forgiveness of sins. So the third thing to understand is for most people it takes several steps before we experience and receive living water.
You might have noticed as Nick was reading out this is a long interaction between Jesus and this woman. Bit by bit Jesus moves her from spiritual indifference into spiritual life and vitality.
She turns up at the well not looking, not looking for it, though eventually telling everyone about it. I think most Christians will testify to a similar work of God in their lives.
[12:36] This woman is alone at the well because of the mistakes and the failures of her life. And it is moments like these that most people become open to the bigger questions of life.

They start to feel alone themselves for a variety of reasons, feel alone and open to the questions, open to a bit of soul searching and questioning. And Jesus then starts to push her intellectually.
Christianity is far more than simple intellectual questions about the meaning of life, but it's not less than that. You don't have a real encounter with Jesus unless you engage your brain, all 95% water of it.
But in verse 15, it's as far as she can get. The woman said to him, sir, give me this water so I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.
Jesus is talking about living water and she wants running water. She doesn't want to keep coming to the well. Jesus is talking about spiritual thirst, but she is still, on the real issue here, is her physical thirst.
[13:53] She wants to be the first person in Samaria with taps in the bungalow. She's with Jesus up to this point, but still she can't see her deep, deep spiritual thirst.

And that's when Jesus, who appears to change the subject, but doesn't, go get your husband. He's helping her to see you are deeply, deeply, spiritually dehydrated.
Verse 17, Jesus said, you are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is you have had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband.
She is deeply thirsty for acceptance, for significance, for security, for love. She is deeply, spiritually thirsty, but she is drinking from the well of relationships and approval, security and sex, and it will never satisfy.
It's like dying from thirst and deciding to drink diesel to satisfy it. It never will. this woman, like every single human being, is a person of faith.
[15:19] The question is, what is the direction of your faith? What are you trusting in for your security, for your acceptance, for your love, for your hope, for your beauty, for your satisfaction, for your purpose?

You see, becoming a Christian is simply transferring from one thing, even a good thing that God has given us, to the ultimate one. That's what it is.
It's a transfer of faith. In the Samaritan woman's case, it is a transfer from men, but it could be a multitude of things for us.
Sex, career, appearance, acceptance by friends, social networks, political causes, romance, money, wealth, control, comfort, happy children.
We will never drink deep from the living water Jesus offers until we see that where we are drinking from now has an inability to truly satisfy.
[16:27] Jesus is convicting this woman here. He's not condemning her. He's pointing out the false masters and the pretend saviors that will never satisfy.

So I've got to ask you, friends, just briefly, has Jesus been trying to get you alone over maybe the last year, two years, however long, even the last number of weeks, to get you alone to have a similar conversation with you?
That the deep dissatisfaction you have in life, the miserable experience you have waking up day by day is because you're trusting in pseudo-saviors. You're looking to the happiness of your children or your career or bank balance, whatever it might be, to find that deep satisfaction in life, to get you happy in life.

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Maybe Jesus is saying to you, go and get your children, go and get your marriage, go and get your career, your family, go and get your bank balance, your culture, your morality, your religion, your privacy, go and get them and bring them back here and put them beside me.
In its simplest form, Jesus is saying to this woman to transfer her faith from relationships with multiple men to relationship with him alone.
[17:53] He's the only one that can truly satisfy. How does he do that? Well, last point on your outline there. Jesus was scorched that we might receive living water.

In one final attempt to get Jesus off her case, she says to him in verse 19, which is an apparent distraction on her behalf to stop talking about her personal life, she says, Sir, I can see that you're a prophet.
Our ancestors worshipped on the mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. She wants to divert Jesus to talk about a great present theological issue. Let's talk about those who have never heard Jesus or something like that. Let's just distract it from me and talk about an issue, an abstract issue. Where should we worship? Who has the truth? Where do we go to get God? Do the Jews have it right? Do the Samaritans have it right? And this is Jesus' reply. Woman, believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
[19:08] A time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. Jesus says to her in response, it's not that temple and it's not that temple.

But notice he doesn't say you don't need a temple. He says a time, literally the word means the hour is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth.
Now John told us last week that every time the word hour is used in John's Gospel it is referring to Jesus' death on the cross.
Jesus is saying to this woman that you still need a temple and you will still need a sacrifice for sin so that the living water can come to everyone but that he himself will be that temple.
His hour will come and I will be that temple and I will be that sacrifice. I will be both the gathering point and the means of reconciliation with God.
[20:26] At the beginning of this passage Jesus walks up to this woman at the well and says I'm thirsty give me a drink. He doesn't get it.

I mean how rude he doesn't get it. In Mark's Gospel Jesus describes his mission for all of humanity as drinking from the cup drinking from the cup of God's judgment for our rejection of God.
He's talking about his death by crucifixion. He must die that we might live. He must drink of that cup so that we might be satisfied.
And on the way to the place of crucifixion some well-meaning people offered Jesus a drink a mixture of wine and myrrh and he didn't drink from it.
Why? A mixture of wine and myrrh is a sedative. It's to dull the pain and he says I must experience it in all its fullness.
[21:36] this pain will not be diverted from me. And there's one other place in John's Gospel where Jesus says I am thirsty.

It's in John 19 verse 28 when his hour finally arrived he's on the cross and he cries out I am thirsty. the guards give him a bitter drink of wine vinegar.
Why? It was designed in Roman crucifixion to prolong your life so that you might suffer more.
Jesus was meaning something much deeper when he cries out I thirst. thirst. This is the big thirst the real thirst the deep thirst.
Interesting on the cross they put it to his lips and when he tasted it he died. Declaring to all the Roman world to everyone this is my death to die.
[22:54] You're not in control of this process. The hot sun that dehydrates us is nothing compared to the white hot wrath of God that came onto Jesus as he died as a substitute for humanity seeking satisfaction and meaning and purpose in life in everything and everywhere but the God who made them.

On the cross Jesus quotes from Psalm 22 my God my God why have you forsaken me? Psalm 22 was on his mind as he suffered for our sake on the cross and later in Psalm a little bit later in Psalm 22 we read this I am poured out like water my heart has turned to wax it has melted within me my mouth is dried up like a pot shirt and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth you lay me in the

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dust of death.
both physically and spiritually Jesus suffered deep deep spiritual thirst he died of thirst so that we can have living water deep satisfaction of living he died in torment so that we can have the cool water of favour of God and so Jesus is the gathering point for all people to find God and experience ultimate satisfaction in life doesn't matter your culture your merits your sin your record your race and gender Jesus offers you life and life forever and that is the hope of every Christian because I mean I don't know if you read it recently but the same John who wrote this gospel wrote Revelation and at the very end of the Bible he gives us a picture of what heaven is going to be like and he says this in Revelation 21 to the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life chapter 22 describes heaven as the place where a river of the water of life as clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God and the
Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city on each side of the tree of life bearing twelve crops of fruit yielding its fruit every month and the leaves of the trees of the healing of the nations the water of life that brings satisfaction every moment place of abundance that's the hope that's the hope of the Christian and so friends what does it look like to receive this living water this Samaritan woman shows us what it looks like she's not commanded to do anything by Jesus at this point she just responds to the free gift of God she calls people to see Jesus for themselves she delights in repentance come and see the person who has shown me every bad thing I've ever done she hides nothing she goes to the people who have been avoiding her and that she's been avoiding and she cries for them to come and see their
Messiah it's like she's got a totally new self image here she even loves the people who have rejected her and she leaves her water pot behind symbolic of saying Jesus is more important than this water now maybe you've been listening now and you still don't think you need living water just like this woman at the beginning maybe that's the stage of the step you're up to what harm is there in asking Jesus for the living water even if you don't know what it is or are convinced that you don't need it what harm is there I did that about 33 years ago now God if you are real and you are the answer make it clear to me make it clear I prayed that prayer in 1991 or frustratingly called it out in 1991 became a
[27:27] Christian in 1993 two years later he answered it for the Christian here how many of us have tasted the living water but it's yet to be a spring welling up in our lives you don't sense that deep satisfaction in life you know Jesus should mean everything to you but you're still trying to get love purpose identity satisfaction in other things and it's one of the main reasons if not the main reasons why you are up and down spiritually and in your experiences of life you're pursuing other things you're drinking from other wells and Jesus says stop it what is your next step to treasure Jesus and you're who are who are who

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