

“The Woman at the Well, Part 2: Jesus Seeks, Jesus Sends”

John 4:1-42

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Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service

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We return to John’s Gospel this morning, taking a second look at the passage we considered last Lord’s Day, John chapter four, looking at verses one through forty-two. Last Lord’s Day we discussed the metaphorical nature of the world Christ has made, which comes up several times in this text. This morning we will focus in on the details of the conversations and actions in this passage. Please do listen carefully, for this is God’s Word for us this morning.

^{4:1} Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ² (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), ³ he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. ⁴ And he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 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.” ¹¹ The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?” ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” ¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever 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.” ¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” ¹⁷ The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” ¹⁹ The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” ²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵ The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” ²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” ³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” ³³ So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” ³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then

comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.³⁶ Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.³⁷ For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days.⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

This is the word of the Lord.

"All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever." [1 Peter 1:24-25]

Let's pray ...

Lord, we plead before you this morning,
to give us understanding according to your word.
Let our prayer come before you now,
and deliver us according to your promises.
Our lips this morning have poured out your praise,
because you teach us your statutes.
Our tongues have sung of your word,
because we know that all your commandments are right.
And so, as we attend now to your word,
grant us understanding and be at work in our hearts,
for Jesus's sake. Amen
[Based on Psalm 119:169-172]

As we dive into this passage again this morning, a pattern with two major themes emerges. What we see playing out here is that Jesus *seeks* sinners to save, and Jesus *sends* saved sinners for the salvation of others. Jesus *seeks* sinners to save. And then Jesus *sends* saved sinners for the salvation of others.

And it will be important for us to see that those are not just two separate themes in this passage, but they form a pattern. They are tied together in our text – they cannot be separated without deforming each piece.

So, we will look at both these themes this morning, one at a time: Jesus seeks us, and Jesus sends us.

The first thing we see is that Jesus seeks us – he seeks sinners to save.

And we see this best if we just walk through the words and actions of Jesus in this passage. And as this plays out in the details of his interactions, we see a number of elements involved in Jesus's seeking. So, what are they?

Well as we look at our text, *the first thing we see is that Jesus breaks through barriers to reach sinners*. We see this especially in verses seven through nine. Because there were actually a lot of

barriers in place between Jesus and this Samaritan woman, even if they are not apparent to us at first.

The Samaritans, were, in part, the descendants of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In the history of ancient Israel, while both the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom turned from God, the Northern Kingdom turned much faster and more decisively. Then, in the eighth century BC the Assyrians captured Samaria, the Northern Kingdom, and deported the more prominent Israelites from the land, while settling foreigners into the land who then intermarried with the lower-class Israelites who had not been exiled, but remained in Samaria. By the first century, the Jews, who were generally descendants of the Southern Kingdom, viewed the Samaritans as the descendants of political rebels (since they had rebelled against the king in Judah), as racial half-breeds, and as religiously tainted. [Carson, 216]

The barriers were substantial. That fact is reflected in the second half of verse nine. The ESV translates it that “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” but commentators note that the phrase there specifically says that the Jews did not use the same dishes that Samaritans used. [Carson, 281] The idea was that Jews viewed the Samaritans as so ritually or spiritually unclean that they felt that by sharing a dish with them could ritually contaminate themselves. [Carson, 217-218; Brown, 170]

Which is why it was so shocking that Jesus begins the conversation with the Samaritan woman by asking her for a drink. Because he was effectively asking to use her jug of water – her dish.

Jewish culture and history had put up a barrier between Jesus and a Samaritan – and the first thing Jesus does is crash through that barrier without a second thought.

A second barrier was that this particular Samaritan was a woman. The disciples’ shock over this comes up in verse twenty-seven. Some Jews at this time, though not all of them, held that it was a waste of time to try to have substantive conversations with a woman, or to try to teach her. [Carson, 227] Jesus again ploughs through that barrier and engages the woman in a substantive discussion.

A third barrier is that, she had a theology Jews would have found offensive. The Samaritans did not accept the entire Hebrew Scriptures and held to other theological views that Jewish teachers would have found deeply flawed, because, as Jesus himself says in verse twenty-two, they *were* deeply flawed. She had bad theology – heterodox theology, even. [Carson, 214-215, 216] But Jesus charges forward without blinking and engages her in a theological conversation.

A fourth barrier was that she had a moral life that everyone agreed was sinful. This woman had been divorced five times. Now – we do not know, and we are not told who was at fault for those divorces. It may have been her, or it may have been her husbands, or it may have varied from one to the next. God’s law would make distinctions on that ... though we should appreciate that her culture may not have. In any case though, neither Jews nor Samaritans approved of “common law” marriage – of cohabitation or sexual relationships outside the vows and covenant of marriage. [Carson, 221] Whether it came at the end of repeated sin on her part, or at the end of being repeatedly sinned against by others, or a combination of the two, this woman has now rejected God’s commands for marriage and sexual integrity. And she seems to be unrepentant in that sin. But Jesus does not avoid her. He does not ignore her. He plunges right into a conversation with her, breaking through the barrier of her public sin that would have stopped others from moving forward and approaching her.

A fifth and final barrier was a self-imposed barrier to keep others away because of her shame. This comes up in a few ways. First, it is commonly noted that noon, the sixth hour, which we read in verse six is when this all happened, was an odd time to come to draw water, because it was right in the heat of the day. The common practice was for women to come to draw water together early in the morning or later in the evening, in order to avoid the heat. [Carson, 217; Brown, 169]

A likely explanation for her coming out at noon is that this woman was avoiding the other women of her village. Because of the shame associated with her sin, she avoided others in order to avoid those feelings of shame. In other words, she had herself put up barriers to keep others away. But Jesus disregards her apparent desire to be alone and he initiates a conversation.

Under the category of self-imposed barriers, we might add her disparaging or even possibly mocking responses to Jesus in this conversation. Her question in verse nine (“How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?”) might have been shock as some assume [Carson, 218] ... but it might, as others have suggested, have been a mocking response, meant to encourage him to stop talking to her. [Brown, 177] In either case, her question in verse twelve as to whether Jesus is greater than Jacob was meant to be answered in the negative – in other words, she’s dismissing his claim [Carson, 220]. The Samaritan woman puts up verbal barriers between her and Jesus, and in each case, he ignores them and pushes forward in kind and respectful conversation. We should note that even his address of her as “woman” in verse twenty-one, while it sounds rude in English, was actually a respectful address in their context. [Brown, 172] She puts up verbal barriers, and Jesus disregards them and continues to seek her.

Again, and again we see here that Jesus breaks through barriers to seek sinners. It was true here in this case of the Samaritan woman ... and it is true for you and me as well. Though we don’t always believe it.

In what ways do you believe that there are barriers between you and Jesus that he would not cross? If you’re *not* a Christian, what are the barriers that you think would prevent you from knowing Christ? And if you *are* a Christian, what are the barriers that you think will keep Christ from really drawing close to you?

In what ways do you think that you are the wrong kind of person? That your background keeps you from really being close to Christ? That your education or intelligence keeps you from really knowing him? That you are the kind of person that Jesus wouldn’t waste time with? That your gender or race makes you less interesting or important to Jesus? In what ways have you believed that the way others have treated you in the past means that Jesus will be less interested in you too – because you are damaged ... because you have been told by others that you are worthless? Or in what ways do you believe that your own past sin forever disqualifies you from intimacy with God going forward?

Along with that, what barriers have you put up *yourself* to keep God away? Has your shame led you to avoid God or God’s people, or to try to keep them away through coldness, or mockery, or aloofness?

Each of us puts barriers between ourselves and Christ ... each of us believes that there already are barriers which Christ will not cross ... so what is it for you? Where do you see yourself in the Samaritan woman?

Some of you already feel like her. For others, you feel like you've convinced everyone around you that you're good ... but you live in constant fear that you'll be exposed as a fraud and that underneath it all you are just like this woman.

For others, you put up different barriers. A few weeks ago, we looked at Nicodemus, the respected Jewish leader who everyone looked up to ... but Jesus told him that he was in need too, and revealed that Nicodemus's self-righteousness was the barrier he had put up between himself and God. [Carson, 216]

What are your barriers?

In our passage this morning Jesus shows us how he responds to such barriers. He tells us that he will not let them keep him from seeking us. He casts them aside, he breaks through them, he cuts a hole and moves forward towards us. If you still believe Jesus will keep his distance from you for any of the reasons we've discussed, that he will not seek you out, then you have to say that the Apostle John is a liar, and that whatever God or Jesus you believe in, it is *not* the God or Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible is the Jesus who seeks both the Samaritan woman, and the self-righteous Pharisee. He seeks *you*. Do not slander him by pretending he doesn't.

So, the first thing we see in Jesus seeking sinners is that he breaks through barriers to reach them.

The second thing we see is that as Jesus seeks sinners, he makes himself vulnerable. By approaching this Samaritan woman Jesus opens himself up. First, he requests a drink, admitting his need to the woman. Second, he acts in a way that could lead his disciples to reject him, a real possibility we get a glimpse of in their confused response in verse twenty-seven. Third, he risked humiliation from the woman herself – which he may have received in some ways, in her initially derisive and possibly mocking responses to him.

Those things might seem small ... but they point us to a bigger vulnerability. They are, in a sense, previews and preludes to Jesus's ultimate vulnerability. They are practice rounds before his true humiliation. They point us forward to what Christ would be willing to humble himself to in order to seek and save sinners. He would expose himself to total humiliation and mockery in his arrest, trial, torture, and crucifixion. He would be beaten, mocked, whipped, stripped publicly, and then nailed to a cross to be derided. In his crucifixion, Jesus made himself completely vulnerable in order to seek and save sinners.

It is important for us to remember that the Christ who seeks us is not cold and aloof. He has made himself vulnerable in order to save us. He experienced humiliation, torture, and death in order to seek *you*. We are prone to forget that ... but we must keep it in mind if we are to respond rightly.

As Jesus seeks sinners, he makes himself vulnerable.

Third, as Jesus seeks sinners, he identifies their deepest longings.

We see that in the way Jesus approaches the Samaritan woman. He begins by talking of thirst, and then he quickly shifts from physical thirst to spiritual thirst, as he looks to the thirst in her soul that she is trying to fill with a man. Her repeated marriages and her current relationship indicate that she continues to try to quench the thirst of her soul with a man. And as Jesus seeks her, he turns her attention to this longing in her heart that has not yet been met.

Augustine famously said, speaking to the Lord “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” [Augustine, I.i.1] What Augustine is saying is that we were made to find rest for our souls in God, and to the extent we do not have rest, we are not resting in him.

And so, to the non-Christian he is saying that your internal restlessness is because you are seeking rest from what cannot give you rest, and you must come to God if you’re ever going to find true rest.

And to the Christian he is saying that to the extent you are still restless in your soul, to *that* extent, you have not fully rested in Christ, and spiritual growth for you will mean learning to rest in him more and more.

The call of Jesus in our text, and of Augustine in this quote, is for you to strive more and more to find your rest in God and to drink of his living water, because only he can quench your thirst.

But before you can do that, you need to *acknowledge* the thirst, the restlessness that lies behind your actions – behind your sin. Do you see it? Identify where it is most at work in your life.

As Jesus seeks sinners, he identifies their deepest longings. That’s the third thing we see.

Fourth, as Jesus seeks sinners, he offers them what they most need. We see this in verses ten through fifteen. It’s only a real relationship with God, received through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit – what Jesus here calls “living water” – that will meet our deepest need. We need to be forgiven of our sin. We need to have peace with God. We need to have the comfort, power, and protection of a real relationship with God, our Maker and Father. Only *there* do we find the rest our souls long for, as Augustine says – because God has made us for relationship with himself. And so, what we most need, in order to experience peace with God, and the joy of fellowship with him, is the right relationship with God that only comes through Christ’s gospel, and faith in his death, resurrection, and current reign on our behalf. In *that* Jesus offers the Samaritan woman and us what we most need.

Fifth, and finally, as Jesus seeks sinners, he calls them to faithful obedience, to instruction, and to worship.

We see this in verses sixteen through nineteen. There Jesus identifies this woman’s sin – her ongoing and unrepentant breaking of God’s law regarding sex. [Carson, 221] And she understood that by identifying it, Jesus was calling her to repent – to turn from her sin and obey God’s calling for her life. Her calling him a prophet in verse nineteen was not only an acknowledgement that he had supernatural knowledge about her life – it was also a recognition that he was calling her to return to faithfulness to God’s commands. We need to remember that in the Bible a prophet’s primary role is to call God’s people back to covenant faithfulness to God. The special revelation they receive is often a means to that end. And so, the Samaritan woman realized that Jesus was calling her to repent – he was calling her to obedience.

And Jesus does the same thing for us. Non-Christians should know that Jesus seeks you as you are ... but if you come to him, he loves you too much to allow you to *stay* as you are. He will call you to live as he designed you to live. He will call you to obedience to his commandments.

And Christians need to remember that Jesus continues to do this throughout the Christian life – that the entire Christian life is one of repentance [Luther]. If you have not been called to repent

lately, it's probably *not* because you've arrived at perfection ... it's probably because you're ignoring Jesus.

Jesus calls us to obedience. He also calls us to instruction. He does that for the Samaritan woman in verse twenty-two. He basically tells her to her face that she does not know as much as she thinks she knows when it comes to God, and she needs to turn to others who could teach her.

That is a counter-cultural message for us today. It is a deeply held belief in our culture that no one should claim to have more knowledge of spiritual truth than others have – that all spiritual claims are equally valid.

Jesus sinks a knife into that claim.

You cannot become a Christian ... and you cannot grow as a Christian ... unless you accept Jesus's call here and admit that there are others who know more about God than you do, and that you need to seek to receive instruction from them. That is what Jesus tells her in verse twenty-two.

Jesus calls us to obedience, he calls us to receive instruction, and he calls us to worship. That is discussed in verses twenty through twenty-six. Jesus calls the Samaritan woman to worship God in the revelation of truth he gives, and in the power of the Holy Spirit who gives life. *Worship* is central to growing and being anchored in the Christian life.

If you're a Christian, that means that you must see *this* – what we are doing here this morning – as an essential piece of your Christian life – something without which you will *not* grow in your faith and, you will *instead* risk becoming uprooted.

If you're not a Christian, it means that *this* is one of the key places where you can see what Christianity is all about. Talk to Christian friends, ask questions, read books ... but come *here* as well and *see* the worship that is at the center of who we are.

As Jesus seeks sinners, he calls them to faithful obedience, to instruction, and to worship.

How does Jesus seek sinners – sinners like the Samaritan woman, sinners like you and me? He breaks through barriers to reach them. He makes himself vulnerable to connect to them. He identifies their deepest longing. He offers them what they most need. And he calls them to faithful obedience, instruction, and worship.

If you are here this morning – whether a Christian or a non-Christian, whether well-respected or filled with shame, whether your faith is warm or cold right now, if you can hear my voice and the word of the Lord this morning, then Jesus is seeking you in all these ways.

Honestly identify the ways you are resisting him, the lies you are believing about him. And open your eyes to who Jesus is in this text, and the fact that he approaches you just as he did this Samaritan woman.

Jesus seeks sinners to save. He is seeking you. Believe him. And respond in faith and obedience.

That is the first piece of the pattern of our text. Jesus seeks sinners to save.

The second thing we see is that Jesus *sends* saved sinners for the salvation of others. Jesus *sends* saved sinners for the salvation of others.

That is where the second half of the text shifts. In verse thirty-one through thirty-eight Jesus teaches the disciples about what it means to be sent out, to reach others with the gospel, and in verses twenty-eight through thirty and thirty-nine and following we see the Samaritan woman actually *doing* what Jesus is talking about – going out as a sinner who has encountered Christ, and bringing others to know him as well.

We often struggle with *how* to do that, even if we know as Christians that we should. But our text gives us a snapshot of that as well. And a key piece is that Christ's followers are to follow the same pattern that Christ does – the same pattern we have been speaking about so far.

So first, as we seek out sinners to bring them to the knowledge of Christ, we are to break through barriers just as Jesus did for us. And that's what the Samaritan woman does in verses twenty-eight through twenty-nine. We noted a minute ago that she was something of an outcast in her community – but now she breaks through that barrier to tell them about Jesus. Which challenges us to ask what kind of social barriers or self-imposed barriers keep *us* from sharing Christ with those *we* know.

Second, we too are to make ourselves vulnerable as we seek to share Christ with other sinners. Did you notice that the evidence she gives them of Jesus's status is how much he knew about her? If anyone asks her what exactly it was that he knew about her (and I assume someone probably did), then the answer would have been that he knew all about her sin and public shame. That would be the answer. Sharing what she did made her vulnerable – but she did it anyway.

What vulnerabilities scare you away from sharing your faith with others? And what would it look like to move forward anyway?

Along with that, we should note that you don't need to have it all together to share with others – even if that makes you feel vulnerable. The Samaritan woman has not yet sorted out her life. Jesus himself, in a way, begins the conversation by admitting a need and asking for help – he is thirsty. You and I don't need to put up a perfect front before pointing others to the truth – in part because our imperfection and need for grace is one of the things we are trying to point people to!

Third, we have to be willing to identify their deepest longings. The Samaritans already longed for the Messiah, as can be seen in the Samaritan woman's appeal in verse twenty-nine. For most people we encounter, we will need to start back with the thirsts of their soul and the restlessness of their hearts, as Jesus does earlier on.

But unlike Jesus, we are not prophets. And that means we usually need more time to get to know someone. Lacking Jesus's divine knowledge, we cannot be so arrogant as to tell someone how the longings and the restlessness of their heart show themselves unless we really know them. And without helping them recognize their spiritual thirst, it is usually futile to offer someone living water.

This is an important reminder to us. When talking to non-Christians it can be tempting begin by trying to convince them that they are theologically wrong or morally in need of forgiveness. But often, as here, we need to *begin* by helping them to recognize that they are thirsty. *Then* they might hear us speak of living water.

Fourth, we offer them what they most need – we offer Jesus Christ, who by the Holy Spirit can give them peace with God the Father. We recognize that the most important thing we have to offer is not doctrine or ethics or experiences – the most important thing we have to offer is a person – is really three persons: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And every other good thing will flow from that.

Fifth and finally, we call them to faithful obedience, instruction, and worship. We cannot shy away from any of these things for those who want to know Christ. We need to lovingly point out where their lives are out of accord with God's law, and offer to help them live as he calls his people to live. We cannot flatter people, but must help them see that they have much to learn about God, and that God will use other people to help them learn how he has revealed himself in the Scriptures. We cannot leave them off on their own, but must make sure they are incorporated into a worshipping body where their faith can be rooted and grow.

Our goal, in all these ways, is to bring them to Jesus, just as the Samaritan woman does in verse thirty-nine. And our joy should be when others are able to say to us, just as they said to her, that they no longer believe just because of our words, but they now believe because they have personally encountered the Savior of the world.

Now ... we should note that the timeline on that looks different in different cases. Some sow, others reap. Often sowing is going on in the lives of some, while reaping is going on in the lives of others. In extraordinary times the sowing and the reaping seems to happen at the same moment in the same person. Most other times there is a delay before the harvest. You often do not know where you are in the process for someone whom God is drawing to himself. Sometimes we are called to patient sowing and we do not ourselves see the harvest. But your call is not to know what God's timeline is for someone else – your calling is to be faithful in the specific role you have to play in their life and their knowledge of Christ.

If you are a Christian, then most of what I've said this morning regarding Christ sending us out is probably not new to you.

Which leads to the question: If we know what we are to do, why don't we do it?

There are likely several reasons.

But one lies in the fact that for most of us, we only go out to seek others for Christ to the extent that we understand and believe that *we have been sought by Christ ourselves*. It's only when that reality is foundational in our hearts that we will go out as Christ has sent us.

It's only to the extent that we appreciate the barriers that Christ has broken through in seeking *us* that we will break through barriers to seek *others*.

It's only to the extent that we see and appreciate the vulnerability that Christ assumed to seek *us* that we will assume the vulnerability necessary to seek *others*.

It's only to the extent that we have let *our* deepest needs and longings be met in Christ that we will be motivated to urge *others* to find their deepest needs and longings met in Christ.

And it's only to the extent that we see the blessings of obedience, instruction, and worship in *our own lives* that we will feel the burden to share those blessings with *others*.

These two themes: Jesus saving us, and Jesus sending us, are linked together in this text because they *must* go together. The first must lead to the second. And the second depends on the first. We start with the gospel's work in our lives and then we bring it to others. We receive living water ourselves, and then we bring it to others.

John chapter four is not the only place where that picture of living water shows up in the Bible.

In Genesis two we read that a river flowed out from the garden sanctuary in Eden and brought water to the four corners of the land around it.

In Ezekiel 47, Ezekiel describes a vision of the Temple. And he tells us how in that vision, water flows from the Temple, and as it goes out it gets wider and deeper, and it brings life to the trees and the sea creatures that it reaches.

In Revelation 22, the Apostle John receives a vision of the "river of the water of life", which "flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb," and through the middle of the city of God, where God's people dwell. And from there the river of the water of life nurtures the trees of life that yield fruit and whose leaves, we read, bring healing to the nations.

Again, and again, and again, when living water shows up in the Bible, it begins with God and is received in the context of worship: the garden sanctuary of Genesis, the temple sanctuary of Ezekiel, the city sanctuary of Revelation. In worship, living water flows to God's people. And from God's people that living water then flows out to the corners of the earth – it flows out to bring healing to the nations. [Leithart, 23-26]

What does that mean for us?

First, be here in worship because it is from God's presence in worship that this living water emerges.

Second, receive that living water while you are here. As we worship God, as we receive his grace, as we praise his name, as we hear from his word and eat at his table, receive God's help in finding your satisfaction in *his* living water, rather than in the false waters offered by the world that never satisfy.

Then third, having come to worship, having been satisfied more by God's living water, go out and let that that living water flow through you and into the world around you.

We may not always see it, but God is at work, healing and discipling the nations. The water that brings life flows from his sanctuary, it fills his people, and it flows from them to the nations.

Take your place in what God is doing in his world.

Ask Jesus, and he *will* give you living water.

Amen.

This sermon draws on material from:

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