

Jesus, Dave Thomas, and Steve Jobs John 4:5-42
Saint Marks UMC, Charleston, WV – Third Sunday of Lent (March 27) 2011

⁵So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. ⁸(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus 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.' ¹¹The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' ¹³Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' ¹⁵The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

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

²⁷Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' ²⁸Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' ³⁰They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' ³²But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' ³³So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' ³⁴Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. ³⁶The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

³⁹Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They 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 truly the Saviour of the world.'

To any reader of Biblical stories about the patriarchs (of which we are reminded by the reference to this being Jacob's well) then we have a good idea that if a Jewish man sits down by a well, an interesting encounter with a woman is not far away. (e.g. Abraham's oldest servant – Genesis 24:11 ff.; Isaac – Genesis 29:2 ff.)

What fascinates me in this story is that it begins when Jesus asks for a drink, but when people allow him to give them a drink *he is the one who gets a drink*. The poet spiritualist Rumi said it like this:

"Not only the thirsty seek water, the water as well seeks the thirsty."

Jesus is living water looking for someone who is thirsty.

The interaction begins with something similar to last week's exhausting conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, that seemed to go nowhere. If you remember, Nicodemus seemed unable to get beyond the literal, and Jesus was talking about something symbolical.

The Samaritan woman starts down that same path, but then she begins to catch on – something different is going on here. And, before the whole incident is over, she has become an evangelist, who leads the whole town of Samaritans to come and discover the Messiah on their own.

Near the end of the incident we see the disciples come along – just a little bit too early to have missed the whole thing. And **they want to talk about eating**. It seems that very often, when things are getting interesting, they want to go to Wendy's for a bite to eat.

- At another place, in a boat, Jesus is warning about the “yeast of the Pharisees” and they want to go to Wendy's.
- On more than one occasion, the disciples want to order carry out for the crowd, and Jesus tells them they have all they need right there.

The disciples seem to have a “**let's go buy something**” mentality – as if the only resources for dealing with life's problems, situations, and challenges lies in what they can go buy.

Jesus is over and over again trying to get the disciples to see that **they already have what they need**. Right there, in **front to their face**, or, right there – **inside them**.

I keep reading, hearing, and seeing that there is very much like the frustration of many in this time which they call “ post-modern.” People are

beginning to understand that there is something more than just material goods. People are beginning to learn that there never is “enough” to satisfy their hunger and thirst for meaning, for satisfaction.

That’s good, but what is amazing is how it seems that so many others are cashing in on this. [Steve Jobs – the founder and once again CEO of Apple](#) is the other [poster child of the sermon title](#), simply for the reference to [the hopes](#) people are investing in the digital world for finding satisfaction.

Much of what is being substituted for trying to satisfy hunger today is DIGITAL instead of SPIRITUAL.

For example, FROM BENNY HINN:

- How to Overcome Religious Spirits -- [Digital Download Price: \\$5.00](#)
- Healing All -- [Digital Download Price: \\$10.00](#)
- Gifts of the Spirit -- [Digital Download Price: \\$15.00](#)
- Foundations of the Holy Spirit in the Old Covenant -- [Digital Download Price: \\$15.00](#)
- The Eternal Compassion & Mercy of the Lord -- [Digital Download Price: \\$10.00](#)

Or, this is one of my absolute favorites:

From Live Science Web page [and No, I will not tell you the web address, although you can Google it:]

You Pay, Computer Prays For You

www.livescience.com/search.html?cx=partner-pub-1894578950532504%3Aqaei7k190hg&cof=FORID%3A10&ie=ISO-8859-1&sa=&q=pay+for+prayer

“Information Age Prayer is a site that charges you a monthly fee to say prayers for you. A typical charge is \$4.95 per month to say three prayers specified by you each day.

“We use state of the art text to speech synthesizers to voice each prayer at a volume and speed equivalent to

typical person praying," the company states. "Each prayer is voiced individually, with the name of the subscriber displayed on screen."

"Prices, however, are dictated by the length of the prayer. As noted in the Information Age Prayer FAQ, "A discounted prayer will cost less than other prayers of similar length."

But, I leave it too much exotic and not personal, if I mention just these. I've heard that there are some "Christians" today who spend more time on Facebook that EITHER prayer, reading their Bible, or worshipping

There is much in this life that can fill our time, become our passion, or be the object of our expenditures – all of which fails to satisfy the hungry heart.

We can chase after the material goods, and *no one needs to make you feel guilty for it*. The problem is that some day we all find out that, in the end, feeding those appetites never ends. We never get enough to be satisfied.

The living water that Jesus has to offer us will fill us up, with something that satisfies for life.

BUT, WE EACH HAVE TO FIND THAT OUT FOR OURSELF. The woman at the well was wise enough to know not to try to impose her discovery on the others in her town. Instead, she only make the introduction, and said, **"Come and see."**

So, too, we.

Or, we can **chase after the non-material things of cyberspace** – pretending to find fulfillment in cyber-addictions. I knew a pastor who once was unable to be passed by the District Committee on Ministry on to the Conference Board, because of the pastor’s lack of relationship skills. The pastor came back to the District Committee, after having taken a course on the internet on improving interpersonal relationship skills.

We can chase after **cyber-reality** – or **any other form of search for meaning**. But, in the end, Jesus said, **“I AM the way, the truth, and the life.”** And **“God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.”**

Each Sunday, when the **prayer of dedication** is given over the **offering**, I usually include some part of that prayer about the use of the gifts for the upbuilding of God’s Kingdom, **both** through the Church **and** in the building generous hearts. We don’t grow until we learn how to be generous. ***We are never satisfied until*** we drink of the ***water seeking the thirsty person***

We don’t begin to worship God in Spirit and in Truth, until we learn to trust God to take care of us ... more than we trust material possessions to provide our security.

Last week, we learned that **Nicodemus went away scratching his head**, but **later on came to understand what it was about**.

Today, we learned that the **woman at the well came disbelieving**, but was **very much changed after a very real encounter with Jesus**.

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, that if anyone is in Jesus Christ, that person is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) – not remodeled, not touched up, but new.

Where are you in your journey? Are you still like the disciples, looking for something to buy, looking for something outside yourself to make your inside feel alright?

Or, have you noticed that something more is required, and you're not quite sure of where to look for it? There is literally almost no end to the creative ways that people will pander pseudo-spirituality, that will amaze and intrigue for a short while, but (like the consumer mentality) will always leave you looking for "buying" something else.

All I can do is to invite you to **COME AND SEE.** Come and trust in **Jesus** to take you to where you have never been before, and to hold you like you've never been held before.

He alone can provide what you need. Are you ready yet to move beyond "going through the motions" and practice becoming new?

"Come and see."

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
AMEN.