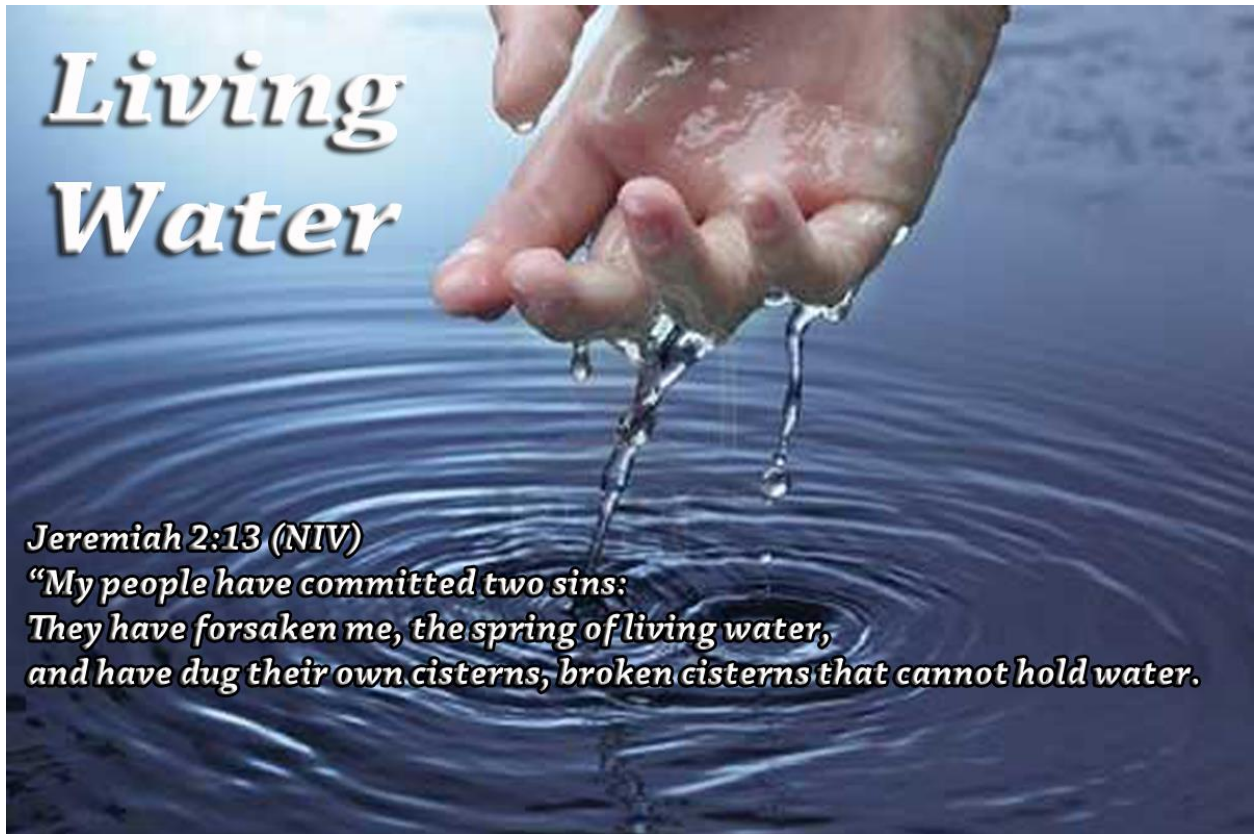


Spiritual Essentials



Jeremiah 2:13 (NIV)

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Special Music: Living Water – Kel Mitchell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vj1g3fHRdak>

We are currently focused on the Essentials for a Spiritual Life. Last week we talked about the five components necessary for our physical survival. They are :

Air

Water

Food

Shelter

And Rest.

We then talked about the Breath of God and how that breath not only was necessary to our creation but is also necessary on an ongoing basis to keep us focused and in sync with the Holy Spirit. Just as God breathed into man, just as Jesus breathed into the disciples, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to breathe into our lives on a regular basis.

Today, we are going spend time talking about Living Water and just what that means to us as Christians.

Several weeks ago, we talked about Josiah and how the high priest, Hilkiah, found the Book of the Covenant when they were cleaning up the temple. What we did not talk about was that Hilkiah had a son and the son's name was Jeremiah, also known as "The Weeping Prophet". Josiah began his reign when he was 8 years old, around 640 BC. Jeremiah was called to his prophetic ministry around

626 BC, or about 5 years before Josiah began the cleansing of the land and the temple. Josiah's father, King Amon, only ruled for 2 years before his cabinet assassinated him. Both Amon and Amon's father, Manasseh, were corrupt and evil to the core. It was Manasseh that had encouraged the diminishing of the temple and the active worship of Baal, Asherah and Moloch. Even Josiah's call to repentance and the cleansing of the land and the temple only for-stalled the inevitable. As soon as Josiah passed, the nation went right back to its idolatrous ways which led to the Babylonian captivity.

Why do we care? It was oh so long ago. What kind of relevance could it have on us as Christians? During this period of corruption, Jeremiah is preaching and prophesying telling the people of Judah that if they don't change their ways, destruction will come. Nobody liked hearing what Jeremiah had to say. He was always talking a about doom and gloom and everything he had to say fell on deaf ears. He was often persecuted and imprisoned for preaching against the worship of idols and false prophets.

I truly believe that Josiah must have given credence to what Jeremiah was saying and though we have no tangible proof that Josiah interacted with Jeremiah, Josiah seems to have taken the message to heart. He embraces what Jeremiah is preaching and it is only Josiah's dedication to changing the very heart of Judah back to the worship of God and away from idols that spares the kingdom of Judah during Josiah's reign.

It should also be noted that Jeremiah seems to have a heart for the Northern Kingdom, Israel, whose capital was Samaria. His preaching and language resemble that of the prophet Hosea. And when we think of Israel, we should think of Samaria, home to the Samaritans that we hear about in the New Testament.

So, we first hear about “Living Water” from Jeremiah. When Jesus is speaking to Samaritan woman at the well, he is referring to what Jeremiah originally spoke about. Jeremiah is preaching and declaring the words from God saying:

Jeremiah 2:13 - “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

And Jesus, when He is speaking with the woman at the well in John 4: 10-15, expounds on what Jeremiah had to say.

10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

11 “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?”

12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,

14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

15The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

When we look at what Jeremiah had to say about Living Water, he is explaining the travesty of God’s children in Judah as they turn their backs away from the Living Water that is the essence of God Himself and turn to water they themselves have created. In other words, they have made false gods to replace the one true God. They have created Gods that can never fill their needs; gods who will always leave them wanting. They have rejected the God of their ancestors; the God who led them out of Egypt and provided for them both in the wilderness and then in the promised land. The gods they created could provide them with nothing, but the God of Abraham and Isaac could provide them with life not only in the present but also throughout eternity. It is not water that has to be drawn to the surface but Living Water, readily available, plentiful and filling. Water that will allow the person who drinks it to never thirst again.

The well that the woman is drawing from in John was built by Jacob and it has continued to provide water to the surrounding area for almost 3000 years. But, we can see that the woman understands that there are limitations to the water in the well when she says **“Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”** She understands that this new source of water, this Living Water, will never stop providing for her.

What is the nature of Living Water? Let's look at four things.

- 1. Abundance - Here in Fort Stockton, we get our water from the aquifer. We have people that constantly monitor the aquifer to ensure that we continue to have the water that we need to survive. We understand the limits of our water source and appreciate those that bear the responsibility of making sure that water is always available. We know that we cannot take that water for granted and that conservation is necessary to ensure our continued use of the aquifer.**

But Living Water will never diminish. It will always be just as readily available as it was during the time of Jeremiah and during the time that Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well. We don't need to conserve it. In truth, we are encouraged to share it with others as much as possible. What God gives to us in abundance, we should give to others in abundance.

As Jesus told the woman, "but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Not only does the water forever quench our thirst for a relationship to God but it becomes a spring inside of us that we can share with others. Because we have abundance, we can give abundantly.

- 2. Satisfying – The Living Water meets our needs. It is guaranteed to quench our thirst. Have you ever noticed that when you physically exert yourself**

and you try to drink something other than water, it is less than satisfying? You may feel refreshed at first but five minutes later, you are needing more! The American Heart association recommends that when you exercise, you should drink plenty of water. To enhance that water, you can add juice which also provides carbohydrates to replenish what you lost while exercising. But the main thing that your body is screaming for is water to keep you hydrated.

Living Water needs no additives. It has everything that you need to rehydrate spiritually. This is why Jeremiah was so depressed that the people of Judah had turned away from the perfect source of water for their spiritual needs and chosen an inadequate substitute that they had created themselves. He knew that the choices that they had made would leave them thirsty and longing for more. There was no sustenance to their choice. It was like running a marathon and expecting a soft drink satisfy. It simply doesn't have the ingredients that your body needs and you are left wanting, if not sick. But during that same marathon, stations are set up to give water to the runners knowing that the water will keep the runners hydrated, replenishing what they have lost through exertion and perspiration. Just like Living Water it is readily available meets their needs and if they don't replenish they will falter.

3. Refreshing – It would be easy to stop with the word satisfying but that sounds like this Living Water just meets our needs. I don't remember a lot about what life was like on Okinawa when I was a child. After all, we returned to the states when I was five years old. But there are some things that I remember; fragments that have stayed with me all these years. One

such fragment of those memories was of my dad. He had a small red lawnmower to keep our yard cut on the base at Kadena Air Force Base. Cutting that yard with that little lawnmower was a major workout for my dad. I remember him shirtless, walking back and forth, taking his time and doing it right. My dad was like that. But what I remember just as vividly is that at about the halfway through the job, my mom would come out of the house and head towards my dad with a tall glass of lemonade. He would stop his mower, take the glass, thank my mother and then proceed to drink the entire glass of lemonade. He would hand the glass back to my mom and she would return the house. He would then restart the mower and finish the job. Now, my mom could probably have brought him just a glass of water and he would have been grateful. But the lemonade was more than satisfying, it was refreshing. It was a step above meeting my dad's needs and it did two things.

- a. It gave my dad an added burst of energy not only because it was cool and had nutrients, but also because it tasted good.
- b. The second thing that it did was that it let my dad know how much my mom loved and cared for him. It gave him purpose and a boost to do all that was necessary to get the job done.

Living Water is refreshing. It not only has everything we need to satisfy our spiritual needs, but it also tastes good. It goes beyond satisfying. It is Refreshing; refreshing to our bodies, refreshing to our souls. It lifts us beyond satisfaction to joy. And in that joy, we see just how very much God loves us. This empowers and encourages us to do what we need to do to get the job done, not for our glory, but for His.

4. Free - **Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.**

That's correct. It cost you nothing. It is a free gift from God. This abundant, satisfying, refreshing gift from the creator of the universe is absolutely free. You can't buy it. You can't earn it. You can't barter for it. But just as God spoke through Jeremiah, He is sorely disappointed when we choose to buy into the empty lie that we can create something more satisfying than what the Creator of the Universe offers us freely. This wasn't just true in the time of Jeremiah. It has been an ongoing issue since the beginning of time. More often than not, we as a people have rejected the fact that we are made in God's image and we try to create a God made in our image. It gives us a sense of control; control over our fate and our lives while we kneel to a hollow god of greed, self-reliance, gluttony and self-gratitude. We make these false gods to work under our purview and they become a reflection of our image. But in truth, it is still a singular relationship with an object.

Our relationship with God is actually a three-way relationship; a relationship that discounts no one. The relationship involves our Heavenly Father filling our lives so that we can in turn fill the lives of those around us. That is an attribute to the nature of Living Water. It continually fills us so that we can fill others. And no matter how much we fill others, the well within us never will run dry because it is constantly being fed by our Creator.

So, this week, I encourage you to dwell on the nature of the Living Water that God has placed inside you. Reflect on the fact that it is Abundant, Satisfying, Refreshing and Free. Then take that water to the world. Just as Jesus shared with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, share the everlasting and ever-present spirit of God, the water of life, with those around you. I promise you as Jesus promised you, you will not run dry.

Amen

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