

The Life

Part 9: Living Water

John 4:1-15

Launch

What's your favorite Super Bowl commercial of all time?

Explore

Read Jeremiah 2:13

What's the difference between a cistern and spring? What does God (through Jeremiah) actually mean in this verse?

Read John 4:7-15

Jesus offers the woman "living water," a reference to Jeremiah 2:13. Read the following explanation from Rick James:

Jesus didn't use the term "living water" poetically or mystically. Living water was another term for freshwater, the stuff you use to water plants and animals, grow crops, clean dishes —the stuff you drink to live. And, importantly, it stands in opposition, not to stagnant (dead) water, but to saltwater.

Saltwater looks and feels like fresh, or living, water, but if you drink it for any length of time, it kills you. A person could be stranded in the middle of the ocean floating atop a gazillion gallons of it and die of thirst. The more you drink saltwater, the thirstier you get. If there's a better picture for sin, please stop me at any point.

And so here we are again, back at the basic meaning of Jeremiah 2:13. It's not just that our souls need living water or we'll die of spiritual thirst; it's that we're dying of thirst because we drink from alternative wells, chugging down saltwater instead of fresh. What our souls thirst for is Christ, whom we experience by the Spirit.

Like the body, the soul can't go very long without water. And so everyone, most every day, gets thirsty, as experienced in innumerable forms: insecurity, unforgiveness, loneliness, hopelessness, emptiness, boredom, dissatisfaction, worry, anxiety, and so on. Our souls are constantly crying out for something to drink. So we drink.

But all temporal forms of refreshment (sex, drugs, success, fame, busyness, entertainment, travel, materialism) are, in the end, saltwater. In the moment, they taste and feel like water to the lips but they only succeed in making us thirstier. If we persist in drinking them, they are spiritually terminal.

But this isn't the worst tragedy. The greater tragedy by far is that those of us who have come to know Christ continue to drink the same saltwater that unbelievers drink, though perhaps in more socially acceptable forms.

Apply

How does Jesus provide “living water”? Why is this so important?

How have you tried to quench your own thirst? What forms of “saltwater” have you turned to? (Here’s a list to get you started: alcohol, shopping, money, sex, entertainment, politics.)

What difference has the Holy Spirit made in your life? How has he been your source of satisfaction?

Pray

Pray that you would walk in the Spirit, experiencing his joy, peace, and power.