

Youth Led Service
Dayspring Presbyterian Church, Edmonton
March 15, 2020

Prayer of Approach

Loving God, we come before you today with a deep thirst in our soul for your love.

You are the living water, the infinite Well that can quench us and give us the peace that we need.

When we feel like we are running on empty, when we can't find a remedy for our longing we come to you to drink deeply in your refreshing presence.

We spend our time searching for what is missing in our life, but the world often leaves us high and dry. Only you can nourish our heart and satisfy our soul.

Sometimes we feel that we don't deserve to taste your love, but we always find you with open arms and a warm embrace.

We come as people who are broken in so many different ways, to rest in your arms.

You soothe our parched soul. You wash away our grief and heal our heart's pain.

We come to the Well, to drink of the living water.

Amen

We listen for the voice of God

Scripture Reading

John 4:5-42 (The Voice translation 3 voices)

Narrator: In a small Samaritan town known as Sychar, Jesus and His entourage stopped to rest at the historic well that Jacob gave his son Joseph. It was about noon when Jesus found a spot to sit close to the well while the disciples ventured off to find provisions. From His vantage, He watched as a Samaritan woman

approached to draw some water. Unexpectedly He spoke to her:

Jesus: Would you draw water, and give Me a drink?

Woman: ⁹ I cannot believe that You, a Jew, would associate with me, a Samaritan woman; much less ask me to give You a drink.

Jesus: ¹⁰ You don't know the gift of God or who is asking you for a drink of this water from Jacob's well. Because if you did, you would have asked Him for something greater; and He would have given you the living water.

Woman: ¹¹ Sir, You sit by this deep well a thirsty man without a bucket in sight. Where does this living water come from? ¹² Are You claiming superiority to our father Jacob who labored long and hard to dig and maintain this well so that he could share clean water with his sons, grandchildren, and cattle?

Jesus: ¹³ Drink this water, and your thirst is quenched only for a moment. You must return to this well again and again. ¹⁴ I offer water that will become a wellspring within you that gives life throughout eternity. You will never be thirsty again.

Woman: ¹⁵ Please, Sir, give me some of this water, so I'll never be thirsty and never again have to make the trip to this well.

Jesus: ¹⁶ Then bring your husband to Me.

Woman: ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ I do not have a husband.

Jesus: Technically you are telling the truth. But you have had five husbands and are currently living with a man you are not married to.

Woman: ¹⁹ Sir, it is obvious to me that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped here on this mountain, but Your people say that Jerusalem is the only place for all to worship. Which is it?

Jesus: ²¹⁻²⁴ Woman, I tell you that neither is so. Believe this: a new day is coming—in fact, it's already here—when the importance will not be placed on the time and place of worship but on the truthful hearts of worshipers. You worship what you don't know while we worship what we do know, for God's salvation is coming through the Jews. The Father is spirit, and He is seeking followers whose worship is sourced in truth and deeply spiritual as well. Regardless of whether you are in Jerusalem or on this mountain, if you do not seek the Father, then you do not worship.

Woman: ²⁵ These mysteries will be made clear by He who is promised, the Anointed One. Jesus: ²⁶ The Anointed is speaking to you. I am the One you have been looking for.

Narrator: The disciples returned to Him and gathered around Him in amazement that He would openly break their customs by speaking to this woman, but none of them would ask Him what He was looking for or why He was speaking with her. ²⁸ The woman went back to the town, leaving her water pot behind. She stopped men and women on the streets and told them about what had happened.

Woman: ²⁹ I met a stranger who knew everything about me. Come and see for yourselves; can He be the Anointed One?

Narrator: A crowd came out of the city and approached Jesus. ³¹ During all of this, the disciples were urging Jesus to eat the food they gathered.

Jesus: ³² I have food to eat that you know nothing about.

Narrator: the disciples asked one another: ³³ "Is it possible someone else has brought Him food while we were away?"

Jesus: ³⁴ I receive My nourishment by serving the will of the Father who sent Me and completing His work. ³⁵ You have heard others say, "Be patient; we have four more months to wait until the crops are ready for the harvest." I

say, take a closer look and you will see that the fields are ripe and ready for the harvest. ³⁶ The harvester is collecting his pay, harvesting fruit ripe for eternal life. So even now, he and the sower are celebrating their fortune. ³⁷ The saying may be old, but it is true: "One person sows, and another reaps." ³⁸ I sent you to harvest where you have not labored; someone else took the time to plant and cultivate, and you feast on the fruit of their labor.

Narrator: Meanwhile, because one woman shared with her neighbors how Jesus exposed her past and present, the village of Sychar was transformed— many Samaritans heard and believed. ⁴⁰ The Samaritans approached Jesus and repeatedly invited Him to stay with them, so He lingered there for two days on their account. ⁴¹ With the words that came from His mouth, there were many more believing Samaritans. ⁴² They began their faith journey because of the testimony of the woman beside the well; but when they heard for themselves, they were convinced the One they were hearing was, and is, God's Anointed, the Messiah, sent to rescue the entire world.

Message: "Looking for the Water from a Deeper Well"

Water. We start reading about water in the very beginning of scripture: in the creation story, in Noah's ark, and also in the parting of the red sea...

In the New Testament we remember other instances where water is mentioned: during Jesus' baptism, the Samaritan woman at the well, when Jesus walks on water, and also at the washing of the disciple's feet.

Throughout scripture water symbolizes many things: it symbolizes Creation and order from chaos, it symbolizes baptism and rebirth, and finally... it symbolizes healing and renewal.

Water... it ebbs and flows, waves and ripples: it is a living, moving thing. Sustaining life on earth, it cleanses us and makes us new. Throughout the message I invite you to take part in a visual experience on the screen,

where we will see an artistic and abstract representation of **Water**.

Like the woman at the well, we seem to be carrying one empty bucket after another empty bucket to the well... filling it up only to watch it leak away and then off we go, bucket in hand looking for another refill...

There is a longing in our lives that never seems to leave us.... I would almost say it's because We are thirsty people...

We thirst for meaning, hope, direction, love, peace, rest, quiet, and justice...

We thirst for prosperity, equality, confidence, trust, belonging, and safety...

We thirst for friends, intimacy, recognition, respect, a beginning, an ending, and to be wanted...

What are **you** longing for?

And **where** do you want to quench your thirst? I guess we all go all over the place ... don't we?

Let's explore together an example from scripture: The preacher of Ecclesiastes put ALL his considerable resources towards quenching his thirsty soul - he took trips, built fine mansions, and filled them up with rare works of art... wearied of that, he decided to change scenery and move to a place with more rural tranquility. He bought himself a little cabin in the woods, planted gardens, vineyards, drank wine, studied philosophy...

But then.... he took a step back and said, *I'm still thirsty* ... "all is weariness and everything under the sun is vanity... emptiness..."

We could presume that the woman at the well may also have been searching to quench that thirst... perhaps searching for water from a deeper well! It doesn't matter **where** you take your thirst, your thirst will not be quenched... not according to Jesus - "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again..." "But Lord, I can't get no satisfaction, and I still haven't found what I'm looking for!"

THEN Jesus adds, "whoever drinks the water I give her will never thirst again, indeed the water

I give will become in her a spring of leaping lively water welling up and overflowing to abundant life..."

The woman at the well recognized this as the best offer she'd had all day... and I think that in many ways **so should we!** I invite you to repeat after me: "Lord, give us some of this water"

But what does Jesus mean here? What is this water and where is the well from which it is drawn?

The Gospel message is that **Jesus himself is the deep well**, and the water he gives is the gift of God's unconditional love by which we are freed from our false dependencies and calls us home...

On Friday February 7th, the Dayspring youth and young adults paid a visit to our neighbors at the mustard seed in Downtown Edmonton.

Now, I will try to share a little bit of what took place at The Seed on that day...

We arrived at the mustard seed in three separate vehicles, to a crowded parking lot with people scattered all around us... it almost looked as if they had just been evacuated from the building we were about to enter! As we gathered in the parking lot in order to go inside the building as a group, we heard someone by the main entrance just yelling their lungs out in desperation and anger!

The security staff at the door tried to calm them down ... Meanwhile people joined in around them making the situation escalate by the second.

Right away, all I could see are the eyes of 7 youth turning straight towards me with a look that says "where are we" and "what are we doing here" - I kept my cool of course as the youth coordinator, and asked - sooo... who's got the butter?

One of the security staff approached me and asked "pop-corn group?" I nodded as we were told to follow them, they talked into a radio and said "they're here, we're taking them in through

the back door” - in a way – I’m not going to lie - I felt like we were celebrities ...

Once Inside we were greeted by my friend Jeremiah. One of the most selfless, caring, and genuine people I know.

We gathered up in an upstairs room, debriefed, and conversed about expectations and some advice for our night at the seed. As we made some popcorn and wrote some encouraging messages on paper lunch bags in an upstairs room overlooking the dining hall, we kept getting distracted by the laughter, conversation, and commotion coming from downstairs.

Some of us got so curious that Jeremiah decided to have half of us get forced out of our comfort zones and go downstairs. We lined up with our neighbours, got some food, joined the tables, introduced ourselves, and FINALLY began having some deep conversations with one another.

What began as, “*what do we say? and How do we approach them? And Will I be safe?*” Became: “*can I please go down again?! What can we do now?! They’re telling me about them so I’m telling them about me!*”

The faces of our youth went from a state of confusion and anxiety...to curiosity and excitement.

Here are some of the youth’s testimonies:

“the mustard seed was a great experience because it really shows how much everyone there has similar problems to us, it also reminded me that they are really wonderful people”

And another one:

“I was touched by their stories and their loving hearts. I was touched by their strong faith, and it made me realize how fortunate I am, and how I must use my blessings to help others”

And of course one of my favorites: “when can we come back?!?” “this is such an important thing for us to do!” and “I want to come back next week, even if it’s by myself!” -- mmm ok... there... we will plan to come as a group....

The youth began to come to terms with a very significant lesson: perhaps we are more similar than we are different. In that building we were not considering who is rich and who is poor, who is homeless and who is not, who is a regular and who is a visitor....

At the well ... Jesus wasn’t considering who is a Jew or a Samaritan...

In that building we were quenching each other’s thirst! - by conversing, by feeling like we belonged, by sharing love, by sharing our time, by sharing our words, by sharing popcorn and laughter, **by sharing with one another... that true and genuine source of living water...**

AMEN

Offering prayer

Loving and generous God,
help us to grow in faith and generosity,
in grace and discernment.
Teach us to give and not count the cost,
and to remember our neighbour in need.
in Christ's name we pray, AMEN.

Blessing

Go now from this service of worship
to the service of your neighbour,
refreshed by the living water that Jesus offers
to you.

Listen for the voices of the least of these;
search out the dry places and the thirsty souls,
and become for them a spring of living water.

And as you go,
may the blessings of the God of life,
the Christ of love,
and the Spirit of grace
be upon you... this day and forevermore.
Amen.