

**John 4:1-34**  
**(Psalm 1:1-3; Revelation 22:1-2)**  
**“Living Water”**

## **Introduction**

This past week, most of us have been enthralled by the displays of athletic excellence at the Beijing Summer Olympics. At the center of it all has been the figure of Michael Phelps, the phenomenal young swimmer who has captured more gold medals than anyone else in the history of the games. The lesson imbedded in every background report that takes us behind the scenes into the life of a particular athlete is the total dedication, the discipline and devotion to achieving the dream of being among the best in a particular sport.

But for me the real challenge of these games is this: These young people have devoted their childhood and adolescence to pursuing an excellence that leads to a passing glory. They deserve our admiration and respect. Hopefully they are also building the character and tenacity to live the rest of their lives well. But we who dare to be known as followers of Jesus Christ have been invited to the greatest quest of all: a quest that leads at last to a glory that can never fade away. And I want to ask you this morning whether you are passionately pursuing that quest with anything like the devotion displayed by these wonderful young people.

Let me put it this way: Do you have a longing that you have never satisfied? A thirst you have never quenched? Do you sense that life is meant to be so much more than you have yet found it to be? Have you been drinking what this culture offers, and have come away more thirsty than before? If so, this story points the way to the living water you have been longing for all your life without even knowing it. It is a model of what it means to be on the greatest quest of all. It takes us behind the scenes of the only One who ever got it perfectly right, one who was always on mission, always showing us what it means to be doing the will of God. Note six ways that we see Jesus' love and compassion for broken people like you and me, as displayed in his encounter with the woman at the well.

## **Body**

- 1. Jesus was willing to go anywhere to find lost, broken people.**
- 2. Jesus was willing to meet with anyone in need of the water of life.**
- 3. Jesus was willing to make himself vulnerable to find common ground.**
- 4. Jesus was willing to press into this woman's life to reveal her need.**
- 5. Jesus was willing to answer questions honestly asked.**
- 6. Jesus was willing to make this woman's salvation his greatest joy.**

## **Conclusion**

Have you yet slaked your thirst at this fountain of living water? Then this promise is for you: “The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The promise is not of a well but of a spring. A well can be closed, filled, blocked. A spring can be muddied, but not blocked. In chapter 7 where Jesus again uses this picture of water flowing out of us, he explains that this is the Holy Spirit. This new life the Spirit brings is “welling up to eternal life.” It takes away the fear of life and of death. It satisfies our deepest longing for peace with God, for a life of meaning and significance. It flows through us to other thirsty people.

So are we willing – willing to go anywhere and meet with anyone, willing to make ourselves vulnerable and to press into painful and personal areas, willing to reveal Jesus as God’s answer to human need, and willing to make the salvation of others our greatest joy? That is the only quest that will finally matter when we reach life’s end, and behold the glory of the Lord.

© John M. Wood, all rights reserved