

## **Sermon Draft**

**Text: John 4:5–26**

**Sermon: “Give Me a Drink”**

Our text is an outstanding story of Jesus Christ’s love—overcoming ethnic and religious prejudice for the sake of a soul. What a Christ-like challenge for us, in opposition to the concept of exclusive homogenous, identical church growth! Jesus uses a chance meeting to speak of salvation to a Samaritan woman. Christ wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

We look to the past to identify who we are. Our heritage and genealogy, our family traditions, and the events of our own lives give us a picture of who we are and where we have come from, whether from a proud family dynasty with the picture of the patriarch and matriarch over the mantle, or from an embittered home where certain members of the family perhaps you are never mentioned. The self-perception of the family affects the self-perception of the individual.

In the TV series *Undercover Boss*, an executive or owner of some company goes “undercover” to see the real inner workings of his or her company. There’s something charming about the thought of a high-powered exec doing manual labor or entry-level work. We’re attracted to people who are willing to stoop down below their station.

Our Lord, however, does not just “stoop down” to do our work. He actually takes on our very flesh and blood and “*was made man,*” as we confess in the Creed. Wearied by his travels, this Lord asks the Samaritan woman for a drink of water (John 4:7). Even after he is lifted up (on the cross), Jesus never loses his humanity. It’s not simply a part of him; it is who he is. So, when Jesus comes to the woman at the well, he’s not going undercover to catch her in the act of doing something wrong. Rather, he’s come to lift her up—and to give her something she can get nowhere else: God in the flesh, for her.

The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well was proud of her town's history: its association with the 2,000-year-old well of Jacob, grandson of Abraham. She was quick to assert the claim of her Samaritan people, that they worshiped God on the correct mountain, Mount Gerizim, instead of Mount Zion in Jerusalem. She comes across as a proud representative of a pious people.

She was not, however, proud of her own life, of her past sins. She tried to slide past the question of who her husband was, how many husbands she had had, or whether the man she was living with now was indeed her husband. Whether in pride or shame, she was not prepared to hear the words of a present Messiah and Savior. But Jesus dealt with her in an evangelical manner, tactfully yet firmly, and later she began to recognize her need for him (vs 28–30).

We must recognize who we are in the present: sinners in need of living water from Jesus.

**Sinners:** It is understandable that the woman was reluctant to explain her life to a stranger. Jesus, however, wants her to open her life in honesty to God, who is Spirit and truth. To do this, Jesus had to confront her with her sin. When he did so, she did not deny what he said. Instead, his words prompted her to call her neighbors: “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”

Sinners who need living water: Jesus did not dredge up the woman’s past and present life in order to shame her. Rather, he was there to offer her a new life, living water, a life connected to him—which wells up to eternal life. She was a woman who needed a Savior. Jesus came to tell her she had a Savior, a Savior who had come for her and for all.

We have a certain future in Jesus.

**Peace:** When Jesus took a cup of water from this woman—a foreigner from the sect of the Samaritans, a sinner—he showed how far he would go to make peace with sinful men and women. There are no outcasts beyond his reach or outside his concern.

**Forgiveness:** In promising her the arrival of her Christ, her Savior, the anointed Messiah of the Jews, Jesus has once again committed himself to the road that will lead him to the cross. There he will pay for the woman's sins and for ours, and take them to death with him. Jesus himself would die as the outcast, the rejected Son of the Father, crucified outside the city as unclean—all for our sake. He took our uncleanness upon himself in order to wash us clean.

**Washed clean in Baptism:** In the waters of Holy Baptism, forgiveness is bestowed on us; our sins are washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). In Baptism, we receive the Spirit, whom Jesus promised would be the source of streams of living water within us, quenching our thirst (John 7:37–39). Through Baptism, those who formerly were considered unclean outcasts are made clean and incorporated into the new covenant people of God. The story of Cornelius—a Gentile like most of us—illustrates that well (Acts 10).

**Eternal life:** The lives of Cornelius, the Samaritans, and the many others who were touched by Jesus are like our own lives. They are lives to which a promise has come. That promise is not a dull, inert, lifeless thing. The promise of God, the promise of salvation won by God's Son, is a promise that comes to us with the full power of God's Spirit. The water that Jesus gives us wells up to life, an abundant life in Christ now, and eternal life that will last forever. Never again will we thirst (v 14; Revelation 21:6; 22:17)!

Recognizing our shameful past, we cast aside our pride and thank God for sending his Son to quench our thirst with waters that become a life-giving spring within us. Baptized as God's people, upon whom he has poured out his Spirit, our certain future is eternal life beside the *“river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God”* (Revelation 22:1).

Amen