

## Go to the well...Life!

Isaiah 12:1-6

August 26, 2018

The buzzer to the church office door rang!

It was Monday afternoon, after office hours, I was the only one around.

I was working on this message series about going to the well for water.

At first I thought about ignoring whoever it was on the other side of the door, after all it was after hours and I was working on something important.

I got up and walked to the door. I peeked through the peep hole to see the face of someone I didn't recognize.

I opened the door and greeted the stranger.

He had a simple request: "Do you have a cup of water?"

His face was covered with drops of sweat. His voice was tired and parched.

He explained that he was feeling weak and dehydrated. Again he asked, "Do you have a cup of water?"

I told him we did and I would be right back.

I went to the church well and lowered the bucket into the well to draw up some cool water for this thirsty stranger. Actually, I went to the kitchen and opened the door of the refrigerator where we keep bottles of water.

I grabbed a bottle and took it to the stranger seeking water from our church's well.

He took the cool bottle of water and thanked me.

As he walked away I realized that this stranger, this angel, had been sent by God to test this pastor.

I went back to my office and sat in my chair for a while reflecting on what I had just experienced. I began to realize that this dehydrated stranger represented many who come to our church well. Many are weak, tired and dehydrated by life. They can be weak and thirsty not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually. It is not as easy to often see the fatigue and drops of sweat of the emotional and spiritual dehydrated.

Do those who come on our campus find someone willing to offer them a cup of water? Are we willing to get up from what we are doing to offer "a cup of water from the well?"

There is a sign on that refrigerator door where I grabbed the cool bottle of water that day for the dehydrated stranger that reads:

"Water in this refrigerator is NOT for your PERSONAL USE!  
Water in this refrigerator is for CHURCH USE ONLY!"

At first I was disturbed by this sign. I asked the reason for it and found out that there were some folks who were taking a lot of bottles of water home with them. The purpose of the water in the refrigerator is to be shared with folks who come to the church. It is for those who come on this campus tired, thirsty and needing to rehydrate their body!

Let's get personal! Lets go to the well and find out what we are to do with this well of life. The well we are going to is not as easy as going to the refrigerator for a cool bottle of water. We are going to an ancient well. Beginning today and going through the month of September we will go to different wells in the bible to see what we can draw from them.

Water is essential for life. Without water we cannot sustain life. God created our bodies to where 70% of who we are is water. If we do not stay hydrated our body will begin to shut down and die.

What is true physically is true spiritually!

We are to go to the well and draw water that will keep us alive.

In ancient times, the access to water was not as easy as we have it today. We are so spoiled with our access to clean, cool, fresh-tasting water. Go to the refrigerator and grab the bottle of water or push a button on the door and let the water flow.

We can go to a kitchen sink and turn the knob for water to flow from the faucet.

In ancient times, water was drawn from a well in the ground. Digging a well is hard work. Most wells were on average 20-40 feet deep! I don't know about you but I get tired digging a hole 2 feet deep. The well was dug until it tapped into an underground spring of water. Digging the well didn't make the water exist. The water was already there. Digging the well was tapping into the source of water.

Next was the building of a knee high wall built around the opening of the well. A stone was fashioned to fit over the opening of the well to keep people and animals from falling into the well when it was not in use. There was no faucet to turn to access the water. There was not even a hand pump to draw the water.

In order to get water a long rope and bucket were used. A well was the gathering place for a community. It was the task of the women to twice a day go to the well to draw enough water for her family's needs. I have asked one of the women of our community to demonstrate this task. (Bring her up and give her the rope and bucket...small 1 gallon and a 5 gallon and have her go up in the balcony.)

I want us to imagine that the balcony is ground level. Our water gatherer is on her way up there with her rope and buckets. She lowers the smaller bucket into the well. As the bucket hits the water she jerks the rope to cause the bucket to sink into the water. She then pulls the bucket up to the surface and dumps the water into a large container...approximately 5 gallons. She repeats the rope and bucket routine till she has filled her large container.

Water is heavy! A gallon of water, a bucket full of water, weighs 8.27 pounds. Pull five of those up from 40 feet. Fill your large 5 gallon container and carry 41.25 pounds of water home on your shoulder or on your head...Twice a day!

Going to the well was no easy task!

I guarantee you that I would have a greater appreciation for water if I had to do that twice a day.

In our scripture reading from Isaiah 12 we learn that God wanted His people who were living in a geographical desert as well as a dry and arid land spiritually to discover the well of life.

The prophet Isaiah compared the life from God's well of salvation as a well from which the most refreshing, life hydrating waters could be drawn. After many years of not going to this well, of turning their backs on God, the nation of Judah, the people were destined to exile. God allowed foreign nations to conquer the nation scattering the people. However, Isaiah said that a remnant would return to their homeland and go to the well to draw the water of life. (Isaiah 11:11-12)

Isaiah 12 is a song of praise! The people were praising God for His faithfulness to provide the well of life. Isaiah encouraged the people to go to the well. He encouraged them to go to the well and drink of the water to refresh their lives.

We can go to that well and discover what the people discovered when they drew water from the well of life.

They drew the water and tasted the **grace** of God! (vs. 1) God withdrew His anger and offered grace. Grace is getting what you don't deserve. Grace wins every time when God's people draw water from His well of life.

They also tasted the rehydrating water of **trust**. (vs. 2) They discovered that when they placed their trust in God they didn't have to fear the enemy anymore. Salvation! The taste of trust gave to them a renewed hope.

When they drew up their bucket from the well of life they pulled up a bucket overflowing with **joy**. To the Jews, this verse had great significance in one of their annual feasts. Each fall, at the Feast of Tabernacles, the people would gather in Jerusalem to remember what life was like for their ancestors who came out of Egypt and lived for forty years in the wilderness. Part of the annual rituals involved a daily procession of priests to the pool of Siloam where they would fill a golden pitcher with water and take it back to the temple grounds.

And don't think that this was some somber occasion. It was a time of great joy, music and dancing by even the most solemn people. It was said that "he that never saw the rejoicing of the place of drawing of water, never saw any rejoicing in his life." (John Gill)

As the priests made their way back to the temple, they would sing from Isaiah 12:3, "***With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of Salvation***". The water would be poured out on the pavement, partly as an act of repentance (JFB), partly as a kind of plea to God for rain (Gill), and also because the Jews believed this had something to do with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Gill).

The feast would last eight days, with the same ritual taking place each day. It's on the last day of the feast in AD 32 that something significant happened:

***"On the final and climatic day of the Feast, Jesus took his stand. He cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Rivers of living water will brim and spill out of the depths of anyone who believes in me this way.'"***

***John 7:37 Message bible***

After tasting the joy of salvation the people then tasted the challenge to go and share this water with others. The well was not to be just for their personal use...it was to be shared and celebrated with others.

We come to this well of life. We go to the well and draw the water of life. Our lives are rehydrated with grace, trust, strength over the enemy, and joy. We are to share with others this well of living water. We are to bring people to Jesus who is the living water. We who have tasted of the living water from the well of life are to make it known to others who are tired and dehydrated in life.

Our journey in life is filled with many "hot and humid days" that bring us to a point of weakness and dehydration. Dry places of fear, restlessness, lust, uncertainty, addictions, wanting what others have, trusting in systems or things that will eventually dry up. So much stress and worry in life that often cause us to turn our backs on God. Our lives become like a dry and humid desert. We thirst for water. God's intention is not to let us become sick and die from dehydration.

He calls us to go to the well and taste the sweetness of life through Jesus. God desires us to come and draw the water from the well of life and experience the grace, trust, strength and joy His living water gives to our thirsty souls.

Water is essential to life.

This is true rather we are referring to natural water or spiritual water.

When water is scarce there is great joy to find a well.

If the modern church is to recover its lost refreshing and restoring of faith then we need to go to the well of life. We are to rehydrate our spiritual strength with the water of salvation...the water of life. We don't create the water. The water is already there. We are to access it through prayer. Just like a bucket lowered into the unseen realm of the well to retrieve water, our prayers go to the the unseen and retrieve what we have spoken and bring it to the surface of our daily lives.

This water is not just for personal use...it is to be shared with all. We are to encourage people to come with us as we go to the well of life. Jesus continues to take his stand and offer anyone who is thirsty to draw water, life-restoring water, from Him.

When someone pushes the call button on your life what will you do? Stay in your office and ignore them, after all you are doing important work. Or will you get up and open the door of your life to that thirsty stranger, family member, friend and offer them a bottle of life? It's not easy work but we are challenged to share this well of life, of life-giving water in Jesus.

There is not a day that will go by that we don't go to the well of water in our physical lives. I want to challenge us that each time we get a drink of water we will spiritually go to the well of life and give thanks.

As long as you get water keep going back to that well.

The well of life will never run dry. His grace, strength, hope and joy will replenish your thirsty life.

Go to the well throughout the day and let the living water rehydrate your soul!