

2 SPIRITUALLY THIRSTY

John 4:4-26, 39-42

Introduction

The Sahara Desert is the largest desert in the world, filling much of northern Africa, nearly 3 million square miles. The nomadic people living in the area are continuously searching for food, water and better living conditions. In recent years, modern technology has discovered that there are actually large underground lakes hidden deep beneath the desert floor. How sad to think of people starving and dying of thirst, while those underground lakes and rivers remain untapped. Could you be spiritually thirsty while the abundance of God's Word is within your reach, gathering dust on your bookshelf?

Jesus came to a woman who was seeking to quench a thirst that only He could satisfy.

I. Thirsty For True Righteousness

A. Drinking at the wrong well

Everyone is thirsty. Jesus didn't condemn the woman's thirst. He just directed her to the water that truly satisfies. Illustration: If a thirsty person believed that eating salty potato chips would satisfy their thirst, they would consume the whole bag with anticipation that they would no longer be thirsty. Moments after they consumed the last chip, they would be thirsty again and begin looking for another bag of salty potato chips. But if someone were to give them a drink of cool fresh water, they would discover true satisfaction. Addictive patterns begin when people try to satisfy a real emotional need by human means rather than finding God's means of satisfying real needs. The woman at the well tried to find security and identity in serial human relationships, rather than a true relationship with God.

B. Settling for stagnant water

Like the woman who had five husbands and the one she was now with was not her husband, the results of thirsty living are devastating to our life and culture.

Pornography is tripping up Christ-following men. Fifty-three percent of men who attend church occasionally consume pornography.¹ Overall, the largest consumers of Internet porn are men between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four (forty-six percent).²

Unmarried Christians are living together. A significant minority of self-identified born-again Christians, particularly those under 35, has cohabited (and don't see anything wrong with this behavior).

¹ Family Safe Media, adapted from "Pornography Statistics." http://www.familysafemedia.com/pornography_statistics.html ² Ibid.

Marriages are failing among believers. In fact, divorce rates among Christians are statistically identical to those of non-Christians (thirty-two versus thirty-three percent respectively).³

Adults are leaving Christian churches. Twenty-eight percent of American adults have left the church in which they were raised in favor of another religion—or no religion at all.⁴ Some, of course, attempt to keep the faith but reject church.

A growing number of men are lukewarm. Current research shows that a significantly larger number of adult males are more likely than women to claim no religious affiliation. Nearly one in five claim no formal religious affiliation, compared with roughly one in eight women.⁵

A significant number of young adults have left the Christian church. Among Americans ages eighteen to twenty-nine, one in four say they are not currently affiliated with any particular faith.⁶

II. Thirsty For True Worship

A. Worshiping in Spirit—*the person of Jesus Christ*

With all the differences within the Christian faith, we often find ourselves participating in the proverbial ‘circular firing squad’ of believers. The woman found in meeting Jesus that she no longer could fall back on the easy excuse that even believers could not agree where they should worship. Therefore, she could excuse her lack of worship by the confusion she saw among the worshippers. He confirmed to her that her responsibility was to worship the Father as a person, a Spirit, not hide behind the controversies of the non-essentials of the faith.

B. Worshiping in Truth—*the revelation of Jesus Christ*

Discovering Jesus in the Bible must become our goal. He is the one who defines Truth for us. In practical terms, we look to God to say what is true through the revelation of Truth through Jesus. Through Him, we know that God loves us, values us, wants us, enables us, and saves us. Truth is what God says it is. We have value because He says we do. We are wanted by Him because He says we are. We are enabled because He says we are. We are saved through faith in Him because He says we are. Engaging the Bible regularly is soaking in reality and truth. Then the false in this will be more obvious and clearly less satisfying.

III. Thirsty For True Satisfaction

A. Someone really knows me (John 4:39-42)

This woman’s testimony to her neighbors, “He told me everything I ever did,” may sound uncomfortable to many. What if someone could read your thoughts and knew your darkest secrets? Would that be as comforting to you as it was to this woman? What if He knew it all and still loved me? Engaging the Bible means discovering that we are continually exposed by its truths, yet God still loves us and wants a real relationship with the real me.

B. Someone really makes Himself known (John 4: 26)

When the woman said that she was confident that the Messiah was coming, Jesus revealed himself to her: “I who speak to you am he.” This is God’s unique distinction from the many gods of this world. He seeks to reveal Himself to us. He does not wish to be a mysterious force, playing hide

³ The Barna Group, Ltd., “New Marriage and Divorce Rates Released,” © 2009, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released> ⁴ The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “Report 1: Religious Affiliation,” © 2010, <http://www.religions.pewforum.org/reports.html> ⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid.

and seek with desperate followers. He is the one who is always making Himself known to all who will receive Him.

Conclusion

Our nation's growing ignorance of basic Bible teachings scored some laughs one night on NBC's *Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. As the silver-haired host circulated through his audience, he sought responses to statements like, "Name one of the Ten Commandments." "God helps those who help themselves," someone ventured. With raised eyebrows Leno said, "Name one of the apostles." *No one could*. Finally, he asked the crowd to identify each member of the Beatles. The correct answers rolled off dozens of tongues: "George, Paul, John, and Ringo," people shouted. While we chuckle at this story, are we any better off than this audience if we neglect knowing God through His Word?