



REFLECTION

WATER IS THE GIFT OF GOD

Readings: Genesis 26:12-25 and John 4:10-15 (all quotations from *NIV*)

INTRODUCTION:

Water is vital for life, yet it is something we take for granted. Apart from the occasional hosepipe ban, there's no restriction on the amount of water we can use. In fact, most of us without water meters pay a flat rate for our water rather than for what we use. When you rely on how much rain falls, or how long the river runs for, the way you use water naturally changes quite dramatically.

**God's sweet grace is running water,
All fair, sparkling, running water,
Bubbling spring from rock or sod,
Goodly thing, the gift of God.**

(**'THE SACRAMENT OF WATER' BY JOHN OXENHAM**)

In Genesis 26 we read of Isaac living in a dry land where water was hard to find. Unfortunately when Isaac went to the wells that Abraham, his father, had made, he found them blocked up. Three things caused the blocking of the wells.

1/ V15 THE WELLS WERE BLOCKED BY JEALOUSY.

Jealousy is such a damaging thing. It destroys everything that is beautiful in a relationship. The Psalmist confesses in Psalm 73:2-5:

'As for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills.'

Jealousy can so easily eat away at our hearts and destroy us. If we are choked up with jealousy we miss the joy of living.

2/ V20 THE WELLS WERE BLOCKED UP BY QUARRELLING.

Why was there quarrelling? Because others claimed the well to be theirs. That's what quarrels are usually about. We quarrel for our rights or what we think are our rights. But this leads to broken relationships. When we hold on to our grievances we are destroyed and become bitter.

Let's remember Paul's words to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:24) *'The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.'*

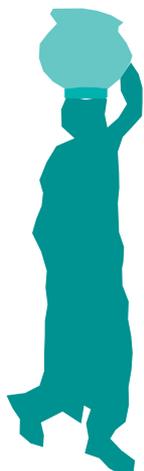
3/ V21 THE WELLS WERE BLOCKED UP BY ANGER.

In life we see that jealousy leads to quarrelling and quarrelling leads to anger. We read of Cain's anger with his brother, and that led to murder because of his jealousy.

However, the wonderful thing about Isaac was that he kept on trying. He refused to be discouraged or to retaliate. The third well he dug, the enemy left alone. *'The Lord has made room for us and we will thrive.'* Isaac recognised that **his success came from God**. His enemies also recognised that God was with him. It is with this same determination that we need to continue to fight to make sure everyone around the world has access to clean water.

Though water often features in Scripture – probably because much of Israel is a dry, thirsty land – it has a spiritual dimension too. Jewish religious language was full of the idea of the thirst of the soul which could only be quenched by the living water, the gift of God.

God's call through the prophet Isaiah (55:1) was *'Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters.'* The Psalmist (42:2) speaks of his soul being thirsty for the living God. Jeremiah (17:13) says that the Lord *'is the spring of living water'*.





When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well he offered her living water: 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water' (John 4:10).

Jesus makes clear to her the way she can have eternal life now.

1. **'If you knew the gift of God.'** A verse of Scripture most people know is John.3:16: *'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'* Jesus also said, *'Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst'* (John 4:14). Jesus is God's gift to mankind. He is the source of life. Do you **believe** that?
2. **'You would have asked.'** How important it is that we say what we want from God. He knows our need but he needs to know what we want. Have you noticed that when Jesus healed people he first asked, 'What do you want?' He knew the blind man wanted sight and the lame man wanted strong limbs, but he asked so that they would tell him clearly what their need was. We step on from **believing**... to **asking**... and so acknowledge our trust and our need.
3. **'He would have given you you living water.'** God is so willing to give us all we need. Our greatest need is life. Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10). Will you accept it?

Conclusion: When the woman met Jesus at the well she came to see herself as she was. When we meet Jesus we also see ourselves as we really are. Perhaps our lives are choked up, like the wells, with jealousy, quarrelling or anger. There are many things that can block our lives, and when Jesus comes to us we realise our own inadequacy. In the human heart there is a thirst, a barrenness which only Jesus can satisfy. All we have to do is, like this woman, say: *'Give me this water'* (v15). God in his wonderful love will come and quench your thirst. In the same way, we need to take action to help quench the physical thirst of all those around the world who still don't have access to clean water.

**Clear as crystal flows the river
From the throne of God above;
'Tis the water pure, of eternal life,
From the Fount of endless love.**

GEORGE F. ROOT

