

Beloved, the Word of God which we desire to preach unto you is found in the Gospel of John, chapter 4, verses 13 and 14:

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

This text speaks to us of: Jesus Christ as the Fountain of Life.

In this text He points us to:

1. The insufficiency of all things outside of Him.
“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.”
2. The complete satisfaction found through Him.
“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”
3. The glorious conformity unto Him.
“But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

This text mentions a fountain. We, Westerners, do not fully understand the value of a fountain or spring. People of the East understood very well how important it was to have a spring nearby. Think of how precious the wells were in the days of Abraham. The herdsmen of Abraham strove with the herdsmen of Lot over the possession of the wells. For whoever possessed a well possessed the land. Without water, no one can live. The significance of a fountain also appears in the history of Hagar and Ishmael.

Now the Lord Jesus uses the image of a fountain to reveal Himself in Scripture as the Fountain of Life. Without Jesus, the world perishes. Without Jesus, every person goes on toward destruction. Without water, there can be no life. Without Jesus, there can be no life either.

Christ presents Himself here as the Fountain of Life in the midst of a world that passes away. If you drink of the water of this world, you shall thirst again. The Lord Himself has said so. But whosoever drinketh of the water that He shall give shall never thirst. Such a one shall himself become a fountain. He shall begin to resemble Jesus and walk in a manner pleasing unto God and therein receive the beginning of eternal joy.

The Lord Jesus had departed from Judea unto Galilee. In Judea, the conflict was becoming fierce. The Pharisees saw that He made many disciples, and they became embittered against the Messiah. Because His hour had not yet come to enter the final conflict, He withdrew Himself for a time from the hostility of the Pharisees and elders in Judea and sought some rest in Galilee, where He had found most of His disciples.

Now there were three roads by which one could travel from Judea northward to Galilee. One could take the coastal road along the Mediterranean Sea. One could also first cross the Jordan River, travel northward through the region beyond Jordan, and then cross the Jordan again

into Galilee. This was what most Jews did. Some took the coastal road, but most crossed over the Jordan and then back again in order to reach Galilee.

But there was also a third way. This third way was the route through the land of the Samaritans. It was the shortest way. Yet the Jews did not take that route—at least, the true Jews who were strict in observing their ancestral commandments—they detested the land of the Samaritans. They much preferred the long detour, crossing the Jordan twice, rather than taking the direct route through Samaria to Galilee. For the Jews despised the Samaritans.

Samaritans were a mixed people. They had some Jewish blood in their veins and retained a partial adherence to the five books of Moses. They had once had a temple on Mount Gerizim, but it had been destroyed a hundred years earlier. Yet they still offered sacrifices on its ruins.

The Samaritans also had pagan ancestry. They were descendants of the remnants of the ten-tribe kingdom—mostly the poor of the land—who had intermixed with foreigners, often pagans.

The Samaritan religion was generally a mixture of Jewish and pagan elements. That is why they were so despised in the eyes of a true Jew. The Samaritans would say, “Abraham is also our father, and Jacob himself lived here. He dug a well and built an altar here. This is the city of our father Jacob. We are the children of Jacob.” But the Jews claimed exclusive rights. It was unthinkable to them that anyone could be saved outside Judaism. Only the Jews had a claim to the blessings of God’s covenant. Therefore, the Jews avoided travelling through the land of the Samaritans.

But Jesus did pass through it. When the disciples would later say to Him, “Eat something; Thou hast not eaten this morning,” He would answer, “I have food to eat that you do not know about. My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me.” He sacrifices everything to do the will of His Father. The Father’s will was to bring even the lost in the land of the Samaritans into the Kingdom. Everything else needed to serve that purpose. He no longer had a need for food or drink; His sole concern was to do the Father’s will, to bring lost sheep back into the fold—even if they were Samaritans.

Thus, He arrives at Sychar (or Sichem) at the hottest hour of the day. We know the place of Sychar from the days of Jacob. When Jacob returned from Paddan-Aram, he built an altar here. It was also here that the terrible event involving his daughter Dinah occurred, leading Simeon and Levi to destroy the entire city.

At Sychar, the Lord Jesus sits by the well at the hottest part of the day. He is thirsty. He is hungry. He has walked for many hours along dusty paths under the scorching sun. Meanwhile, the disciples go into the city to buy food.

At that moment, a woman comes to draw water. This was unusual—a woman fetching water at the hottest part of the day. No one did that. Women usually drew water in the morning or evening, not at midday. But this woman did. She sees this Man sitting by the well, and He speaks to her. He has come there, yet He forgets His own hunger and thirst. In His life, there is a hunger and thirst not for bread and water, but for the souls of sinners—for lost souls.

Jesus is weary. He is hungry and thirsty. Yet His work, which the Father has given Him to accomplish, is above all else. He begins to evangelise here. He does not consider it beneath Him to set His feet in the land of the Samaritans and speak to a woman from Sychar.

Jesus has come to seek the lost. Oh, this is a truth we must continually be reminded of. For it is natural to our fleshly understanding and to our fleshly religion to think over and over again that we must first be filled, first have something, in order to partake of God's grace. That old temptation, which we inherited from Paradise, whispers: "If only I were like this, or had that, or hadn't done this, then maybe I could still be saved."

But to be saved as a sinner is a lesson that must be learned again and again. And when we experience God's fellowship, encounter Him, and hear His voice, it is the greatest wonder: that God continually receives us as sinners—that He demonstrates salvation to sinners.

Jesus asks the woman for a drink of water. In the East, it was not customary for a woman alone to be spoken to by a man. It was remarkable that Jesus did so in this case. The woman finds this very surprising. She says, "Hey, art Thou asking me for water? Thou art a Jew, and I am a Samaritan! Thou dost not want fellowship with us; Thou wants nothing to do with us. In Thy eyes, we are just dogs. Why, then, dost Thou ask me for water?" It's clear that she is sharp and outspoken.

The text goes on to say that she has had five husbands and is now living with a sixth, who is not her husband. Whether the first five were legally married, we do not know. It is not specified. In any case, there has been significant drama in her life. Suppose all five were lawful husbands, but each one died—this would still represent great hardship and sorrow in her life.

Now she is living with number six. But now comes—and I say this with holy reverence—number seven enters her life. I do not want to spiritualize excessively, but I thought just now: seven is the number of perfection. Until now, everything in her life had been incomplete. But now comes the great Man. He does not come to exploit her body. He does not come to corrupt her soul or body. He comes to save her!

This Man, the One in a thousand, the seventh Man, takes His place in her life by speaking to her. And just as she has listened to so many men before, she listens to this Man. He shows interest in her life, but in a completely different way than all the others.

When she asks, "Art Thou asking me for a drink? I am a Samaritan, and Thou art a Jew," the Lord replies: "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

The woman responds: "Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where dost Thou get that living water? Are Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock?"

Here, the woman is thinking on an earthly level. She says, "Thou hast no bucket or jar to lower into the well to draw water and drink. How, then, canst thou give me living water?" And she adds: "Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who dug this well?"

Then Jesus says what is recorded in our text: "*Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.*" This is literally true of the water from the well. But He adds: "Woman, that also applies to the waters of your life, from which you have drunk for so many years with all your men. Those waters cannot satisfy your heart."

This is true for this woman, but it is also true for each of us. “Everyone who drinks of this water...” I first think not even of the sinful waters, but of the lawful, ordinary waters that God has given us. For example, we go on holiday, we do something different from our daily routine, and that is allowed. In these hurried, pressured times, people need a moment to reflect, to experience the peace of nature, to restore strength for the work ahead. Everyone needs this in their own way.

Yet even when we enjoy the beauty of nature, perhaps good food and drink, and live peacefully for a few weeks, we are reminded that “everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.” Yes, for the eye is never fully satisfied by seeing. Our hearts are not truly filled. We are not made genuinely happy. Every day we count down: “Oh, only ten days left, now seven. Soon I must return to work.” That alone prevents complete enjoyment. And when we finally leave, we may say: “It was wonderful, we had a great time.” But then the reality of life returns: *“Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.”*

Secondly, consider also the sinful waters from which this woman had drunk in her life—all the experiences where she had given her body and soul. Drinking from that bitter, salty stream of earthly pleasure may give a brief sense of refreshment. There may be a fleeting joy in indulging in sin in various ways. But again, “everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.”

Without Jesus, there is no life. Without God, there is no peace. Sin makes us thirsty. Sin consumes our lives. Sin destroys everything in and around us. To sin is to die. We grow weary of sin. We become exhausted by sin. We grow hopeless and discouraged through sin.

Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again... I have compared it to salt water: the more you drink, the sicker you become, the more miserable, the more helpless. Sin does not bring happiness or joy. Whoever drinks of it will thirst again—and whoever continues drinking will enter eternal thirst.

This woman had long drunk from the waters of the world—from the waters of fleshly pleasure, from the lusts of life, from carnal indulgence. And now she comes to draw water while other women rest, avoiding their eyes.

But the miraculous thing: God does not despise sinners. Jesus speaks to her and says, “Woman, if you drink of this water, you will thirst again.” And when He asks her, “Call your husband,” she answers, “I have no husband.” Jesus says, “You are right. You have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.”

Then she bows before Him and asks, “Where should I pray? Where should we worship?” She feels the weight of her sinfulness and realises the need to seek God. The teaching of Jesus awakens in her heart the awareness that there is a God, and that this God must be worshipped and sought. Only this God can bring true happiness.

Ah, there is no one among us today who does not have this feeling in their heart. Perhaps you have not strayed as far as this woman, perhaps your life does not yet resemble hers—but deep within, you know: I am not truly happy. Life cannot go on like this forever.

Time and again, thirst returns—the thirst for more, the thirst to be richer, the thirst for greater power or status. Even if you were a king on a throne, even if you could rattle coins by the basketful, if there is one thing in life that does not go your way, it spoils all your joy. That is

the water of this world—the incompleteness, the imperfection of everything this life can offer.

But Jesus says: *“Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst.”* Jesus has water to give. And then He says: “That is the water I give; whoever drinks of it will never thirst.”

What is the water Jesus gives? In short, it is His Word. It is His grace. It is the speech of His blessed lips. It is living water. It is the Word of life. It is the stream of living water flowing from the mouth of the Lord when He first visited our first parents, Adam and Eve, who, after eating of the tree, were dying of thirst beneath the green trees.

Then the Life-giving Fountain was revealed from heaven. Then He brought a stream of living water into the hungry and thirsty souls of our first parents. He gave them His Word, delivered them from the dominion of sin, and promised them a Seed that would bring salvation. With that promise, they were sent into the world.

In this way, God continued to be the Life-giving Fountain for sinners. Have you ever heard His voice? Have you ever perceived the speech of God in your life—your sinful, helpless, hungry, and thirsty life? For I tell you, in the Name of our God, that Jesus is still sitting at Jacob’s well during this very service. Wherever sinners are, there is Jesus. He seeks conversation with you because He seeks your soul.

How often have you heard His voice? How often have you been in a position to confess that you have no peace, drinking from all the waters of this world? Have you ever sincerely confessed it to Him? He seeks such souls—those who hunger and thirst because, like that woman, they have drunk from the bitter waters of sin, living in imperfection and wrongdoing.

Then comes the great Seventh, the First, the Perfect One. And He says: *“I have water, I have life, I have fellowship—hidden fellowship. Whoever drinks of it, whoever seeks it, shall not perish. They will be saved in body and soul.”*

“Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him...”—it is necessary to drink it.

This woman received that water from Him. For He reveals her sins when He says, *“Woman, I know your life.”* When He grasps her in the midst of her chief sin—living with her unlawful husband—she replies: “That is true. Thou knowest the truth. Thou knowest everything. Thou art God’s Prophet. Where should I worship?”

Perhaps for you it is a little different; you know your own heart best. Maybe it is something like this woman’s situation—we are never too good for God’s awareness. Yet He knows it all. Then He seizes your heart. Then He also says today: *“I know your life. I know where you are held fast.”*

Oh, how blessed it is when God’s Word enters your life in this way, stirring a real need for Him. When you begin to ask: *“Lord, where can I find Thee? In Jerusalem?”*

Do you know what Jesus answers? He says: *“Woman, here, now, at this very moment! Now is the time when true worshipers will worship the Father—not on Gerizim, not in Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth. Woman, the time is now. I am the Life, given by the Father.”*

Christ says the same today. If there are people today who are convinced their lives are lost, who feel they have no support, who realise they are on the path to ruin, who see that they cannot stand before God as they are—if you feel exposed—do not cover your life with good intentions, for nothing will come of them.

You have already had so much: that woman had many men, you have many sins under countless circumstances. You will continue on this path unless you come to the place of prayer at His feet. Only He saves from sin. Only He leads us in the way of righteousness. Only He gives new life. That old life—you can patch it up, add to it, but you cannot renew it. It will always remain old life. Whether it is godly or godless sins, it remains a hopeless mess. Until you come at Jesus' feet, then you receive new life.

You must be with Jesus alone for new life. That new life, which He gives, and of which He says: *"Whoever drinks of the water that I give him shall never thirst,"*—that is the living water, the Word of God.

What came from His mouth struck this woman. She asks: *"Where should I worship?"* *"Here,"* says Jesus. And He says the same today. If in this service there is a sinner who asks: *"Lord, where should I go? Lord, where art Thou?"* Jesus says: *"Here, here at My feet you must be. The time has come for true worshipers to worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father seeks such people."*

Do you hear it? Oh, yes—it is not Christ alone. The Father seeks such people, too. The Father's kindly eyes are seeking you.

Do not think: *"Jesus may accept me, but would the Father? Would He reach out His arms to me? Could God really want me?"* That voice of Jesus is true, friendly, inviting, and sincere. And yes—God, the triune God, also wants such people.

Jesus says: *"Do not worry, for the Father also seeks such people."* Those who say: *"Lord, it is true, Thou have seen through my life. Thou are a Prophet of God. Thou knows my life is a mess."*

Then the Lord places the Word of life in the heart of this woman. He gives her His grace. And the woman drinks. Few words, a simple story of conversion. I have read many such stories, but here it says only that the woman replied: *"Lord, thou art right."*

Let me put it in my own words: *"Lord, thou art right. I have wasted my life; my whole life is in disorder, and nothing is good. But Thou art a Prophet. Thou canst show me the way. Thou knowest where I must go. Thou knowest where I must worship God."*

And the Lord answers: *"Here!"*

Then the woman does exactly that. She bows in awe before Jesus and honours Him as God's Prophet. That is the living Water. From that moment, eternal life begins within her. Those are the streams of the living Water.

Have you ever truly drunk in the Word of God like that? That Word of God, when you said: *"Lord, where should I go?"* And the Lord replied: *"Come to Me."* And when you immediately drank, when you truly believed, and said: *"Lord, Thy Word is true. If Thou wants me, even if others despise me, God will not despise me."* When you find peace in communion with God. When that Word of God gave you a moment of rest. When you

realised you could lie at the feet of the Lord. When you noticed that He did not reject you, then you found peace. That is eternal life! Jesus says: *"Whoever drinks of me shall never thirst again."*

Is that too much to say? For it turns out that those in whose hearts God pours the living water become hungry and thirsty, that those who are wretched and helpless are the ones who cry: *"If Thou dost not come, I will die of thirst."*

Beloved, you must distinguish between the great end Jesus refers to and the path that leads to that eternal end, to that boundless drinking from the fountain of living water. The Lord is speaking here of the ultimate end. He says, *"Whoever drinks of this water will have eternal life."*

The woman received eternal life and could no longer be lost. She received the living water, and it would continue to flow within her: she would become a fountain, springing up to eternal life.

This is true: the Lord willed it this way. He could have willed it otherwise. But He willed it so that they would reach that eternal fountain by a path through the wilderness, a path of hunger and thirst, a path of cross, struggle, and toil. Yet even so, what the Lord gives us here on earth is worth living for eternity. I do not want to miss my hunger and thirst, my sorrow and concern, my longing for God. I do not want to trade my thirst for the living water for all the treasures of the world. How much less my full satisfaction! I do not want to exchange my tears and sadness, my mourning and humbling before God, for the riches of the world.

Is that not already proof that the living water is within us? Have we not already tasted some of salvation in our weeping to God? In the sorrow that brings unrepentant hearts to salvation? In the sweet crying for God's communion?

Has He not become precious to your souls, especially in His absence? When you hunger and thirst for that one Man—the seventh Man, the perfect Man? The Man who will never be unfaithful, who will never abandon you, but who will remain the same forever and ever?

The Lord says: *"But the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life."*

It is great to be allowed to sit at the Source. Then we do not have to go to draw water constantly. But the Lord Jesus gives an even greater blessing. He says, *"Whoever drinks of this water will become a fountain himself. Not only does he sit at the Source, but he himself becomes a source. Whoever drinks of this water will also, like Me, spread blessing around him."*

Yes, we see that in this woman. She quickly leaves the well.

Oh, how wonderful it is when we may do that in our own lives as well! That we can see so much good from God, that for a moment we can leave the dusters and vacuum cleaner in the closet. That for a moment, we can refrain from our earthly labours and simply humble ourselves before God in solitude. That we can be alone with God for a little while. That we can leave our water jars behind and let the world with all its desires pass by for a moment. And that we say: *"Lord, all this earthly work must also be done, but it is necessary in my life that the higher, the better, the enduring, the eternal, occupies my soul first. Lord, who do I*

have in heaven besides thee? Without Thee, nothing pleases me on earth either. I will seek Thee with longing until I find Thee, for Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee."

Oh, that longing in the absence can be so strong for a people who do not dare to say they are God's people. For the poor, for the helpless, for the defeated. Yet they still say: *"I will seek Thee until I find Thee. I will rise before dawn, even if I am still in the night, and with singing I will delight my God!"*

Yes, that is how their hearts go out. And then they forget the water jar. They then say to the inhabitants of Sychar: *"Come, we have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote. Is this not the Messiah?"*

Now we will first sing Psalter 94:1-6

And then the inhabitants of Sychar came to Jesus in great numbers. But how is it that so many people followed this woman to Jesus? While it so often happens that countless sermons are preached, yet the fruits are unseen; that many people invite others or point them toward Christ, and still so many remain unconverted?

Do you know why that is?

Ah, this woman understood a holy art. She did not say to the man with whom she lived—her unlawful partner— *"Husband, you should also go to Jesus."*

We often do that. We say: *"You must do this or that. You should not do this or that."*

But this woman did not say that. She said, *"Come!"* She reasoned from Jesus. She kept Jesus in her thoughts, even while she was in Sychar, and she said, *"Come!"* She did not say: *"Go."*

In raising our children, we often say: *"You must do this, and you must do that."* We direct them, rather than draw them.

You may ask: *"Is that really a difference?"* Yes, it is a great difference. Because we can be so far from Jesus that we no longer see Him ourselves. Then we say: *"You must do this and that, and not do this or that."* And in doing so, we are more of Moses than of Jesus. Even if we point toward Jesus, we are still immersed in the law. Religion then becomes a series of duties and events. That can be managed—but no power flows from it. Others see nothing of it in our lives.

But if we stand close to Jesus and live with Him, then we say: *"Come! Come too! I have found Him; now it can be for you as well! Come, He has even accepted me, who had wasted and ruined my life. Come, here is the Prophet. Here is the Saviour. Come, behold Him as gold. His treasure houses are full of salvation, and the river of God still flows with water!"*

Do you understand the difference? Ah, when we stand close to Jesus, we ourselves become a source. Then we begin to reveal it in our lives, just as this woman did. We feel the power of the cleansing water. The refreshing power. The life-giving power. The grace-bestowing power. The power that takes away sin. That is the power of God's Word. The power of Christ's blood. Oh, it is a sweet life—so in fellowship with the Lord.

She counted on Him, not on the people, like the inhabitants of Sychar, for they were as corrupt as that woman. My heart and your heart are also so corrupt. But I invite you to come

into the refuge of the Almighty, Jesus Christ. I may speak His Word. I call to you: “Come, for He freely grants grace to sinners.” He says that eternal life will become a fountain of water in you, springing up to everlasting life. Once a person has seen God in Christ, they cannot remain silent about Him. It will become a fountain in them, springing up into everlasting life.

The inhabitants of Sychar said to Jesus: “*Master, stay with us.*” And He heard their prayer. He remained for two days. During those two days, many came to Him. Many were converted to Him in just two days.

O, sinners, how many days has Jesus already been in your midst? How many days has He already stood here, in the midst of this congregation? How many years has He already stooped down to reveal to you the treasures of His salvation? He was only two days in Sychar, and yet a great multitude of Samaritans allowed themselves to be saved through Him.

Come, He is calling you too! Do not let the precious time of grace slip by. It is such a wonderful time in which we live—not because of our circumstances, but because it is the time of grace. It is the acceptable time, the day of salvation. Do not let it pass. For after two days, Jesus departed...

I do not know when Jesus will depart from us. But this I do know: if we keep closing our hearts to Him, a time will indeed come when He will leave us. Luther said, “*The Gospel is like a rain cloud; when it has rained enough, it moves on.*”

So it is with the Fountain of Life in a person’s life. As long as the drops still fall, as long as the Word of God is still brought to you, do not harden your heart. Instead, bow like the Samaritan woman at the feet of the Lord and pray: “*Lord, show me Thy ways, the paths Thou wouldst have me walk.*” Then He will say: “*Here is your place, at this moment, in this very spot. Bow at My feet, and I will give you the water of life, and it will become in you a fountain, springing up into everlasting life.*”

O, I know well: here we remain, a corrupt fountain—not because of what He gives, but because of what we are. Here we remain, people of sin. Here we carry our old, corrupted nature, that bitter source of all manner of sins.

Yet that cleansing water—the Word of God, the Word of His grace—will still have dominion. It will already be made manifest here on earth. Even if faith is not always lively, it will not be destroyed. Christ will ensure that.

If you find yourself in the struggle of life, thirsty and thinking of turning away because you fear you will again drink the bitter waters of sin, cling to this word of Jesus. Hold fast with all the strength of your wavering soul and say: “*Lord Jesus, Thou hast said: It will become in me a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life.*”

O, He has His eye on these people: the hungry, the thirsty, the miserable, and the helpless. To them, He shows His grace. He still does this. He always does it anew. He did it for the Samaritan woman, and He does it now for the poor in spirit.

Come, how is it with your soul? How does your life stand in relation to that Saviour, that Fountain of Life, that stream of God’s righteousness? Do you still drink from the salty and bitter waters of your own selves, from the cravings of life, the deathliness of life, the lust of

life? Life passes so swiftly. You will thirst again. O, that is certain. That is the refrain of every day. The refrain of every week and every year: *“you will thirst again.”*

But whoever drinks of this water will become a spring, a well of water gushing up into everlasting life.

Yes, that happens in moments when the fear of God rules in your hearts. When that bitter spring of sin is temporarily closed off. When, through the living water, your soul begins to come alive, you start to speak well—well of God, well of Christ. Then you judge yourselves rightly. You no longer consider yourselves better than that woman.

But then, from Him, you also begin to proclaim the Gospel. Then you all become evangelists.

Then the woman went to her townspeople and said, *“Come and see!”* And so we do as well. Then we say, *“Come, man, come, woman, come, children, let us together meet the Lord of Israel, the Rock of our salvation, with honour and with sacred song!”*

Something radiates from that, you see. You can be certain of that. That work will not go unblest. For Jesus has promised: *“Whoever drinks of this water will become a fountain of water, springing up to eternal life.”*

And what is that eternal life?

It is always being with Jesus!

Amen.