

Sunday, June 2, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

「Water leading to eternal life」 Pastor Takaaki Inoue

Isaiah 58 : 6~11, John 4 : 7~15

① 【Jesus calls out to a woman who lives an immoral life】

Jesus came to the city of Samaria. There was a well dug by the old patriarch Jacob. Around noon, Jesus was tired of his journey and was sitting by the well. A woman came to fetch water. Fetching water is the work of the ladies and is usually done in the morning when it is cool. Everyone gathers around the well and talks about their families and daily events. But she did not want to get into that circle. That's because she lived an immoral life. I knew that if I walked in, I would be looked at with contempt and sarcasm. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews because they were a mixed race, but she was also despised by the same people. She had nowhere to belong, no one to share her joy with, no one to talk to about her concerns. She lived in seclusion and came to fetch water in the hottest hours of the day so as not to see anyone. However, there was a strange man in the well and called out to him.

Jesus asked the woman, "Give me some water." Because the well did not have a pail. Jesus knew what this woman was like. But instead of blaming, they say, "I need you, can you help me?" This is surprising. From these words of Jesus, we can see how God views us sinners. People try to make a difference between good people and bad people and eliminate bad people, but in the eyes of Jesus, no matter who you are, whether you are a Jew or a Samaritan, there is no difference. Because we are all sinners. Jesus needs sinners. There is no one who is not necessary to God. (I'm reminded of the phrase "gather breadcrumbs.") Christ, the Son of God, was on earth for 33 years and dwelt among sinners. But no one noticed that God was beside them. We have heard the saying, "God's eyes are too pure to see sin." He could not utter His wrath as He saw man commit sin with His eyes every day, He heard unclean words with His ears, and saw Man live a life that did not regard God as God.

Peter said, "Think of the patience of our Lord as salvation" (II Peter 3:15), and indeed the patience and humility of Christ are humbled. I often think that He will be with such sinners, and that He will not abandon such sinners. If we are to be saved, it is not because we are honorable, but because the Lord is merciful.

●Pastor Shozo Fujiki writes: "Sometimes I can be meek, compassionate, and patient with people, but I'm not confident when asked if I'm going to do that with anyone. After all, it depends on the person, and it cannot be done to anyone at any time. I don't think you can choose the other person, not be affected by

their reaction, accept them wholeheartedly, and be close to them. If you are a person who can do it, you will feel more than human. Isn't divinity not nobility or purity, but this "closeness"? If there is a place for God to dwell in the world of man, it is in the hearts of those who are close to him.

● Gregory of Nyssa in the 4th century wrote: "It is the nature of fire to go upward, and when fire takes its natural direction, no one wonders. But whoever sees the tongue of fire (the Holy Spirit) go down, ... You will see it as the most astonishing. In the same way, God's strength is not evidenced by the vastness of the heavens, the brilliance of the stars, the orderliness of the universe, or the providential dominion of all things, but rather by His coming down to our weaknesses.

I think the greatness of God is that He looked at us little things, bent down before us, made eye contact with us, and came down to us who are sinful. So why do we fear God? Do not have an image of God other than Christ. Then we fall into the devil's trap of fear.

② 【The well is deep】

The fact that this encounter took place at the well speaks of a certain truth. Since ancient times, the well has been a meeting place. Abraham's servant and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Moses and Chiphorah all met at the well and became husband and wife. Jesus wants to have an eternal relationship with this woman. But the lady says warily. "Why do you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, to give me water" (verse 9), because Jews and Samaritans do not intermingle. Jesus says to her: "If you knew the gift of God, and if you knew who it was who said, 'Give me water,' you would have asked him to give you living water" (v. 10). Because man does not ask Christ, Christ asks the opposite. This is our real sin. That is, that we seek salvation not in Christ, but in the world. The whole way of life is not toward Christ, but toward the world. Man has ceased to associate with God. They have forsaken God. Therefore, God descends to man and asks for a relationship with Him. This is also surprising. It means that God longs for fellowship with mankind. God wants to talk to you, but you won't turn around. They don't respond when you call them. "I have reached out all day long to the disobedient and rebellious people" (Romans 10:21, Isaiah 65:2) It is not you who seek God, but God who seeks you. The woman says to Jesus: "You have nothing to draw, and the well is deep. Are you greater than our father James? Jacob gave us this well, and he himself, and his children and his cattle, drank water from this well." (Verses 11~12) Is there better water than the water from Jacob's well? Where do you get all that water, she said. The phrase "the well is deep" sounds like it means "my anguish is deep."

③ [The water that leads to eternal life]

Jesus says: "Whoever drinks this water will also thirst, but whoever drinks the water that I give will never thirst. The water that I give you will become a fountain in you, and the water that leads to eternal life will spring up." (verse 14)

Here Jesus said that I am the new well. Jacob's well symbolizes the old law. The well of Christ symbolizes the gospel. From which well do you prefer to drink water? The law cannot give rest to man. It is manifested in the way she lived her six failed marriages. No matter who you identify with, you will not be satisfied. But those who live in union with Christ will be satisfied. The water that Christ gives is the "Holy Spirit" that He sends. The Holy Spirit comes with God's overflowing love and can fill a person completely. When the Holy Spirit enters, you become a well, and uncontrollable joy springs up. It wells up from the bottom of our stomachs and swallows up the resentment, anger, and fear in our hearts in an instant, filling us with love and peace. It fills us so much that we feel as if we are in heaven even though we are on earth.

● To be baptized is to become one with Christ. It is a marriage with Christ. He is the bridegroom and we are the bride. Imagine that. Jesus in a crown stands next to me and walks arm in arm with me. Walking is like I'm hanging. And what he has becomes my common property. We inherit eternal life, the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of God. You can never have them without Christ. There is an elderly woman who lives in Sharon Senri (a facility for the elderly) who always comes out to worship. She has a serious illness and has almost stopped her heart many times, but she comes back to life and returns to the facility. When we give out the sacrament, we really receive it as if it were a waste. After the service, she said, "I am so grateful to hear your story, and it has made my heart feel better." It is said. She understands God's grace. What a humble soul! Can a Christian who comes to church every week prepare such a soul?

Christ says to us: "Give me water to drink, and in return I will give you heavenly water," says the Lord. "Worship me, and I will give you an imperishable gift," the Lord descended to earth longing to associate with us, who were sinful. Let us follow in the footsteps of this Samaritan woman and have the courage to pray, "Give me that water."