

The Power of Living Water  
John Ch 4 v 1-30

This is probably the first passage from the Bible that came to mind when you heard this year's theme.

I am sure we are all familiar with the story in John Ch 4 and all that lies behind it regarding the tension between the Samaritans and Jews and yet here is Jesus discussing deep truths and offering *living water* to a Samaritan and a woman at that! Initially she doesn't understand what is going on and takes the discussion at face value. In Jesus' day living water was fresh running water coming from an underground spring and not a well such as the one they were sitting by. This well had been man-made, probably dating back to the time of Jacob and provided stagnant water from a cistern or pool.

In London there is a company called Living Water. It supplies bottled water and water coolers to organisations in the Greater London area. They use water either from the main supply or bottle fresh, underground, spring water from the Wenlock area. They boast that they "proudly serve 5,637 satisfied customers" and that they offer seven FREE services including FREE delivery, a 7 day FREE trial and FREE installation. The words FREE and SATISFIED were the ones that caught my eye.

Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that would satisfy her thirst, not just for the next hour or next day but water that would mean that she would never be thirsty again. It would SATISFY her thirst for ever, becoming a spring of life giving water within. Did the woman have to pay for this water? Were there any strings attached? No it was FREE. Not just for a 7 day trial period but for ever. During the ensuing dialogue between the two of them, the Samaritan woman realises the deep significance of what Jesus has said to her and she rushes off to share her new-found knowledge with others. So excited is she, that she even leaves her water jar by the well. The reason for being there in the first place is immediately overridden by her latest experience. Her first instinct is to share her discovery. Don't forget she was an outcast, a woman with a dubious life style, probably ashamed of herself. Drawing water from a distant well outside the village showed that. But all that doesn't matter to Jesus. He goes beyond that and sees in her potential for doing good.

It is the same with us. God sees the good in us not the bad. He forgives us for past demeanours and sees the potential in us all. He encourages us to use the gifts he has given us. He encourages us to share his love with others. He encourages us to accept and distribute this *living water* to 5,637 customers, yes, but to even more so that everyone may be SATISFIED and may know of his love for the whole world. This living water is FREE to us just as it was to the Samaritan woman.

At the end of their encounter the woman realising the full significance of Jesus offer says "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not thirst again." Oh that we may ask the same.

For Discussion

1. This story shows the human side of Jesus. It shows the warmth of his sympathy and that he easily breaks down barriers. Do we find this easy to do in today's society?
2. I never buy bottled water in this country. Tap water is good enough. What are your views on this?