

How satisfied are you with life? I bet you in this room right now, none of you are fully satisfied. You may say you are, but in all of us as human beings we want more.

All of you will know by now my passion for Man City, and they have a manager Pep Guardiola, probably the best manager in the world at this time.

Anyway, Pep is never satisfied. His team win trophies, but he wants more. His team come back after being down 2 goals at half time against Spurs a few weeks ago to win 4-2, and yet it's not good enough. [Just watch this short clip from his interview.](#)

[VIDEO]

Now for some, they would say to Pep, what's the problem, you won the game. But the point is folks that Pep will never be satisfied with his team until he walks away with the ultimate prize and that's the Champions' League trophy. It's his nemesis and he will never be satisfied until it's his.

Now you might think that's a bit OTT, but all of us have the capacity to be unsatisfied.

You might say, "If I could get a reasonable pay increase then I will be truly satisfied", or "When I finally leave that job and get a new one, then I will be satisfied".

We try to tell ourselves that when certain things happen we will be happy and satisfied, but the facts are that we are kidding ourselves to think suddenly we will be content. Because the reality is that when we get that pay increase, we will start spending a little more, and within no time we will be wanting more.

Today we are going to look at where real, true satisfaction comes from. It can only be found in one place, in fact a person, and that is Jesus. We are going to look this morning at the familiar story of the woman at the well. So let's jump right in.

So what's the context of our story? Jesus is heading north, He's leaving Judea. He's been preaching, but it's all getting a bit dangerous there. The religious leaders are beginning to plot a way to eliminate him. He doesn't want to be pushed into something premature – he knows the timing of God is perfect, and so he leaves Judea and by necessity goes through Samaria. Verse 4 – he had to go through Samaria – that's somewhat interesting, because as a Jew he definitely didn't have to go through Samaria. They believe that the Samaritans were the complete dirt of the earth, they despised them, and so they would go any other route to avoid them. Jews just wouldn't go through Samaria, and yet those kinds of things didn't bother Jesus. He wasn't a racist. He didn't have any animosity. In fact as we see here, He knew He had an appointment with a woman by a well. It's a divine appointment. The Greek here literally says "he was having to go" - the Holy Spirit is drawing him to this situation.

And so the text goes on to say that he came to the town of Sychar. He's tired and weary from the walk and so he sits down at the well. And then a Samaritan woman comes up to the well in the middle of the day. It's customary for the women to come and get the water. But because of the strength of the sun, they usually went at dusk. But our passage says this event happened to be noon. Why is she coming at noon? Why doesn't she go when all the other women go, at dusk? The answer may be that everybody in town knew her and they knew the kind of woman she was, and she didn't want to get in the situation which she tried

to avoid most of the time, and that is the scorn that would be heaped upon her as someone who had multiple husbands and was currently living in adultery. But then again, Jesus doesn't do things accidentally – this has been planned by God.

I'm sure it all feels a bit tense - there's a slight unease here and to add to that - Jesus asks this woman to get him a drink. The Jews weren't even supposed to use the utensils of the Samaritans. If they shared such things then it would make that person ceremonially unclean, which is why then in verse 9 the woman was saying to Jesus – you're a Jew, don't you realise that I'm a Samaritan. Surely you know you can't ask me for a drink. And so Jesus says, "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."

Let's think about that reply for a second.

What's the gift of God that's mentioned by Jesus in verse 9? Well it's clear from his response that he knows she doesn't know. He says "If you knew the gift of God, you would know how important it would be to ask". Jesus seems very abrupt doesn't he? He's saying "You have no idea of what I'm offering you, but it's a gift that will truly sustain you once you embrace it". But think about who Jesus is here. The woman sees him as a Jew. And yet if she only could see that he is the God of Abraham whom the Samaritans worshipped, he is God in the flesh, he has been with the Father before the creation of the world. This is the person the woman is talking to.

Just this week in one of my devotions, I was reading John's vision of the glorified Jesus in the book of Revelation which is full of imagery. John offers a picture of Jesus with his hair as white as snow, his eyes like fire, his feet of bronze, and his face like the sun. And yet in our daily lives, we don't ever realise that this is the sheer glory of Jesus – he is the name above all other names, that at his name every knee will bow in heaven and earth. In the middle of struggles in life it can be difficult to see Christ clearly, and obviously this woman was holding many burdens in her mind to make her realise just who she was talking to. She doesn't realise what Jesus is able to give her. There is no one greater, no one more powerful, no one more loving, no one more satisfying than Jesus Christ our Lord. And so in order to understand how we can be truly satisfied we need to know Jesus. This was what the woman was missing.

And so therefore the response from her is probably tinged with sarcasm as she says "You don't have anything with you to draw from this deep well. Where will you get this living water?" She doesn't know where this living water even comes from! Does this man have another source of water? In fact has the sun gone to his head?

Could there possibly be water that is better than what comes from the well that Jacob dug and drunk from all those years ago? Is this man talking to her greater than Jacob? Well, the reality is that Jesus is greater, and the water that HE will provide is so much greater than even the water from Jacob's well, because the water from the well will satisfy initially – it will be cold in the heat of the sun, but soon she will need more. And so instead of rebuking her, Jesus responds with mercy, patience and blessing - "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

There's a place that we have stayed as a family on holidays in Italy which we really love. The apartment is on the side of a mountain, and the views are breathtaking. Anyway, each morning I would head down into the town to get bread and fruit for breakfast. The town is at the bottom of the mountain, a couple of miles drive. But when you come back to the apartment back up the hill, you have to park the car in the carpark and climb the next bit on foot. Even in the morning, the heat is so bad. I kind of get myself ready in the well ventilated car, and then I get out, and take on the challenge up the very steep slope. But usually half way up, I have to stop and open one of the bottles of water I've bought. By the time I walk into the apartment, I'm panting and sweating and generally feeling wrecked. The water sustains me for a little but it's never enough. Our bodies need it for life.

In fact it's not just us, animals need it also, and plants need it – it's essential. Who would have thought that the most basic of things becomes the most essential for humanity's survival. And so can you imagine Jesus sitting at the well, maybe in temperatures above 30 degrees. He knows the woman is coming out at the wrong time of the day. It's uncomfortably hot and actually dangerous, and so he's saying that he has something that will satisfy, but satisfy totally – his living water. He says that "whoever drinks the water [he] give[s] them will never thirst. Indeed, the water [he] give[s] them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life".

He's literally saying that they will not thirst into eternity.

It will bring healing to a hardened heart, it will cleanse every sin, it will satisfy the yearning for something greater in this world, and all we need to do is recognise our need of it, surrender our longings for things that we realise don't last and ask for it. Paul reflected on this in his 2nd letter to the Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 18 "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal"

We become so caught up and attached to the things that are in this world, everyone of us, and yet the time we have here is like a millisecond compared to our life in eternity, and yet we hold so preciously onto things in this life, don't we? Therefore we constantly need reminded to turn away from these things, stay connected to Jesus, ask him for the gift - and by his Holy Spirit, he will constantly renew us, revive us, cleanse us forevermore. Revelation 7:16 says of those who are cleansed by Jesus, 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst.' This is the sure promise that we have as followers of Jesus. It is such great amazing news! But it's all too easy to forget it. We feel satisfied getting through our to-do list, but then the reality kicks in the next day when we have a new to-do list.

How foolish and self-centred it is of me to think that I can satisfy my own needs and wants but not even referencing the one who is the life-giver, who is the source of our salvation and satisfaction. And I need to constantly repent of this. But the solution to this isn't to try harder, but to look to someone and ask him. Look to Jesus and remind ourselves of the life and satisfaction - the living water that he promises to give us.

And so as we recognise that nothing in this world comes anywhere close to what Jesus gives us, when we realise that our thirst is for more of him, then how this is expressed is in our worship.

Once again, the woman still doesn't quite get it. She's becoming clearer but not completely

clear. In verse 16 Jesus shows her that he knows everything about her – there is nothing hidden from him, and so she responds by giving him some recognition for once. He's no longer labelled as a stranger, but he's now considered as a prophet. She recognises for the first time that this man is being directed by God in some way. And so she opens up further to Jesus with a question – where do I go to worship? She knows that with her sins being exposed by this man, she needs to be in a new relationship with God, and that folks is a matter of worship. But she doesn't know where to go.

And so what he says next to the woman reveals to her that when she recognises the God who satisfies everything that she will ever need, then where she worships will soon be completely irrelevant.

You see it doesn't matter where we worship, or the exact form of worship, but it matters WHO and HOW we worship. And so what does that look like – well it isn't just about an hour on a Sunday morning but about our whole entire lives. It's about seeing the amazing generosity of the gift of God, about knowing him, and about falling down on our knees in awe and wonder at his greatness and saying, "Lord, please give me this life-giving water always"

It is inevitable that as we worship Jesus, as we fix our eyes and focus on him, as we realise the truth about him, as we realise over the last few weeks that he is a God who save us, he is a God who provides for us, and he is a God who satisfies us always, then our focus on other things – whether possessions or even struggles that we face will become more out of focus and grow irrelevant. It simply cannot wait until a Sunday.

On Friday I was with a man in hospital who is currently dealing with tumours in his body. At present those tumours are preventing chemo from commencing. And yet as I came into his room, his face was full of the joy of the Lord, and having chatted, I read scripture and prayed with him, but what was most remarkable was that all the time his arms were in the air calling out the name of Jesus. Now would that be a normal response for someone who is seriously ill. Is it natural? Would he not be longing to get the treatment starting soon. Folks, it wasn't his focus – really it wasn't. His desire was to focus on what the Lord can only provide for him – to satisfy his soul. You see the response is to lay ourselves down before him in worship. Worship, by the way, is not music. Worship is loving God. Worship is honouring God. Worship is knowing God for who He is, adoring Him, obeying Him, proclaiming Him as a way of life. So when we comment on the worship not being good, then that reflects on our hearts and not on someone else's performance.

Wherever we are, whether in a hospital ward, in the car, or here right now, whether day or night, he is with us by his Spirit. But along the way our worship will become distracted by the burdens, the weight, the stresses that we all face at times. Or we will revert back to things that we think will satisfy us. And therefore we will be tempted to think that it's only when those things are addressed, then we will be satisfied, or when those things are sorted then I can turn to Jesus and worship him. Worship comes as a result of knowing that irrespective of our circumstances, God is always always faithful – he is all we need.

So folks today are you thirsty in your life – have you spent years and years trying to find that next thing that will make you happy and satisfied? Ask the one who is the Messiah, our saviour - Jesus Christ and he will give us his Living Water, his Spirit; quenching our thirst, satisfying our hearts' longings, cleansing our sins, and giving us life eternal. Let's pray.

Lord God, thank you for the promise that you will satisfy, and thank you for your ultimate gift of Jesus, giving us life eternal, giving us a spring of water that will well up into eternal life. Help us to be satisfied in you and you alone, let us not look to worldly things to satisfy, but help us keep looking to Jesus and knowing you deeper. Help us to worship you with all aspects of our lives, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Small group discussion questions

1. Can you remember a time when you've felt completely and utterly satisfied?
2. Do you find it remarkable the fact that Jesus was tired? How can this be comforting or reassuring?
3. Samaritans were hated by the Jews because long before in their history, some Jews intermarried with Gentiles (non-Jews). This group of half-Jews became known as Samaritans. They wanted full rights to the temple and claimed the same God, but the 'pure-bred' Jews despised them. Besides these racial prejudices, what prejudices did Jesus have to overcome in order to help this woman?
4. Jesus talks quite a bit about "living water" in the first part of this chapter. Living water is literally a description of running water as opposed to still water, as would be found in a well. What do you think that Jesus is trying to get at in verses 10-15 by talking about "living water"? You may also want to read John 1:17-18; 1:32-34; and 7:37-39.
5. Blaise Pascal, a French philosopher and mathematician, once said that we all have a God-shaped vacuum in our hearts that can only be filled by God. People try to fill this vacuum with all kinds of things, but they always end up just as dissatisfied. What does this woman try to fill it with?
6. How does knowing who Jesus is give us satisfaction? Are we ever at risk of taking Jesus for granted? What patterns in your life can you recognise that could cause you to take your eyes off Jesus?
7. How would you describe the life of the Samaritan woman after her conversation with Jesus (v 26 onward)? What did she do? How had she changed?
8. Consider privately to yourself what Jesus would say to you if he walked up and saw you today.