

Choose Living Water

Last week we started examining the differences between cultural Christianity and biblical Christianity. Remember the difference? “Culture-based Christianity adapts faith to align with popular social norms, prioritizing comfort and self-fulfillment, while Bible-based Christianity mandates adhering to Scripture even when it conflicts with societal values. Cultural Christians often prioritize good works and tradition, whereas biblical Christians focus on personal salvation through Jesus Christ.”

This morning is Mother’s Day, and I want us to look at what it means for us moms to really be biblical Christians instead of cultural Christians. To do that, I want us to think about a vital substance, water.

Jeremiah 2:13 (NLT) “For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me – the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!”

John 4:14 (NLT) – Jesus said, “Those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

The first verse we read this morning challenges us to think deeply. It says, “For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned Me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water.” To understand the force of that image, we need to pause for a moment, because we do not live in a land where people carve reservoirs out of rock in order to store water. But that was common in the land God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Much of Israel, especially in the hill country, the Negev, and the Galilee areas have only a thin layer of topsoil over soft limestone bedrock. Because the land receives only about 12 to 20 inches of rain each year, and that rainfall comes during a limited season, water shortages can become severe when the rains are late or below normal. So the people carved out large cisterns in the limestone to collect and store water for the dry times.

Just for reference, here in Copperas Cove we typically receive about 33 to 35 inches of rain each year, with much of it falling in the spring. And even though we are not currently in a major drought, Texans know well what it means to live with too little rain.

We no stranger to droughts. The most severe drought in modern Texas history lasted from 1949 to 1957. Another massive, widespread drought occurred from 2010 to 2015, with 2011 being the driest year on record.” (<https://waterdatafortexas.org/drought/overview>) For those of you who have lived in Texas for a while, it seems as though we are almost continually

experiencing drought conditions, they call it a persistent drought. And here in Copperas Cove, we can remember even last year the water restrictions levied on the residents.

Now when it's really hot outside, one of the things that our bodies crave is something to drink. Actually, we know that water is essential for hydration. However, sometimes, we drink liquids like iced tea that may satisfy for a little while but do not last because they really aren't replenishing the fluids in our cells and the bloodstream. In fact, some of those liquids may dehydrate us. And, if we aren't careful, we can get into a world of hurt pretty quickly.

The right answer for the whole issue of dehydration is good drinking water! There are certain needs in life that cannot be hidden for very long. Thirst is one of them. A person can continue for a time without many things but eventually thirst demands attention.

Scripture uses this physical reality to speak about something much deeper: the thirst of the human soul. In both the Old and New Testaments, we find a theme about the need for water, living water. Perhaps you are asking "what's living water", and I would tell you that it is water that is moving. It's not stagnant. And just as the land and our bodies need to be refreshed by the living water, so our souls need to be refreshed by our God. Yehovah declares that He is the "fountain of living water."

So, let's look at what was going on in the second chapter of Jeremiah where we found our first Scripture reading this morning. Jeremiah was a primary prophet who lived in Judah when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. God brought His case against His people, Israel, in the first portion of chapter two. There, God reminded the people of days that had past when Israel was holy to the LORD. Anyone who tried to go up against the people failed because God was on their side.

But something changed, and God built His case by asking the people what He had done wrong. Hadn't He always protected them? Hadn't He given them a wonderful land that produced all the food they needed. But God noted that even after He had done all this for the people, they started ignoring Him and actually turned to making and worshiping worthless idols. Then it's almost as though God was just thinking out loud when He said something similar to this, "has there ever been a people who traded their god for new gods?" And yet, Israel had done that very thing. God said that even the heavens are shocked that the people did such a horrible thing. And then we find the verse that we read this morning, "For my people have done two evil things: They

have abandoned me – the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!”

God described Himself as the fountain of living waters, the true source of life for His people. And the problem was that the people had not just disobeyed His teachings, but had actually turned from Him, the only One who could really satisfy them. No matter how much they ran after something to give themselves fulfillment, they only found that every source eventually ran dry. Is it possible that we, - despite having been so close in our relationship with God, - that we also have gotten so busy in life that we have turned and made other things more important in our lives than the God who loves us so much that He sent His only Son to die for our sins?

I read an article by Pastor Israel Pochtar this week that challenged my mind and my spirit. Let me share some of the thoughts with you this morning. I want us to see the Hebrew expression for “living water”, the words that Jeremiah used. In Hebrew, *mayim* means water, and *Chayim* means life or living. Together, the phrase describes flowing, fresh, life-giving water—not stagnant water sitting still, but water that moves, renews, and sustains life. Throughout the Old Testament, this becomes a picture of God Himself and the life that comes from Him.

This theme is continued by other prophets. Zechariah 14:8 spoke about a future day when “living waters shall flow from Jerusalem.” The verse says, “On that day life-giving waters will flow from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean, flowing continuously in both summer and winter.” Even in the Old Testament, *Mayim Chayim* carried the hope of renewal, restoration, and the presence of God flowing outward to the world. In Isaiah 55:1, the LORD cries out, “Is anyone thirsty? Come to the waters and drink – even if you have no money.”

When we come to the New Testament, Jesus takes this familiar biblical image and applies it directly to Himself. In John 4, Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well and told her: “Those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.” This was not simply a conversation about physical water. Jesus was speaking of the deepest thirst within the human heart—the longing for forgiveness, peace, purpose, and reconciliation with God.

The woman had spent years searching for fulfillment in different places, yet her soul remained thirsty. Yeshua gently revealed that what she truly needed could only be found in Him.

Later, in John 7:37–38, Yeshua declares: “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in Me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” This is the fulfillment of *Mayim Chayim*, living water.

Jesus does not only give temporary relief. He gives life that continues to flow. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s presence becomes like a living stream within the believer—renewing, cleansing, strengthening, and bringing life even in dry seasons.

For Jesus-followers today, this is deeply practical. There are many things that people turn to in order to satisfy spiritual thirst: success, comfort, approval, entertainment, control, or distraction – zoning out (simply distracting ourselves so that we aren’t so overwhelmed by the things occurring in our lives and in our world). And every one of us has tried at least one of these things to satisfy the spiritual thirst. And we’ve thought that we could go along with the social norms and be happy. We’ve thought that we needed to prioritize our comfort and/or self-fulfillment. We’ve run crazy, trying to keep up with the newest things. We may have even tried to do a bunch of good things to outweigh the bad things. We’ve tried just making sure that we have kept the right traditions. But in the dark of night, we have felt empty and dry. For none of those things can satisfy very long. The satisfaction just leaks out because the cisterns we built are broken.

The great preacher, MacClaren reminds us that even working very hard to make cisterns (creating circumstances which might hold delights), we still cannot get the water that should be in them. To even have water in them, God would have to provide it. But the reality is that God is the Fountain of living water, water that runs continually instead of having to be stored in cisterns that break and lose the water. Also realize that many times, when we are trying to fill our own cisterns, the desire for something to satisfy actually increases while the power to satisfy decreases. For instance, we may think that running to parties and the excitement that could be there is so great that we want to go to more parties. However, it doesn’t take long for us to realize that even though we are going to more parties, we are enjoying them less and less. We want more and more but we get less and less satisfaction. And eventually, every earthly source runs dry. Only God can satisfy the deepest places of the soul.

Then Jeremiah points something else out. He points out that their cisterns, the holes they carved in the rock to contain water, those cisterns were actually cracked. When a cistern is cracked, the water drains out and the cistern is unable to serve its purpose.

Is it possible that we have done the same things that God accused the Israelites of doing? Have we gotten cold in our dedication to the only God of creation? And in our getting cold, have we then run to other shiny things that we thought would give us the refreshing and hope that we can find only in God? Have we turned our focus instead to legitimate alternatives such as our children or perhaps our jobs or even entertainment – just looking for something that will excite us, refreshen us, or give us hope for another day?

Today, we must realize that the only place where we can really be refreshed, strengthened, and given hope for our lives and the lives of those we love, is in our God, Yehovah and His Son, Jesus the Messiah. Everything else will eventually dry up and drain us of the thrill of living. Everything else will ultimately be found to be a cistern that is cracked, losing everything that we hold dear. Our challenge today is to be intentional Biblical Christian moms and dads who hold on to God no matter what the world does and no matter what our friends do. We cannot afford to be without the Fountain of living water, the Fountain that never runs dry.

Sometimes we do not realize how thirsty we are until life becomes difficult. I think that is especially true of us moms in our group today. Our lives sometimes run on high until we are completely exhausted. And, if we don't watch out, when we are exhausted, everything that we know won't satisfy seems to look too good to pass up. Yet often those very moments are where Jesus meets us most personally when we turn to Him. He still invites people to come and drink.

Mayim Chayim reminds us that faith is not meant to become dry, mechanical, or empty. God invites us into ongoing relationship with Him—a continual source of living water that refreshes the heart again and again.

Who would turn from a fountain of clear, flowing water to lick a few drops from a broken cistern? It sounds crazy, but how often do we turn to our own devices for comfort or joy, rather than the lasting joy we can find in a relationship with God?

(<https://www.katrinadhamel.com/post/water-in-israel-jerusalem-and-the-pool-of-siloam>)

Maybe it's time that we pray, "Lord, refresh my heart again," or, "Teach me to drink deeply from Your presence instead of searching everywhere else." God does not offer stale religion. Through Jesus, He offers living water. And wherever His living water flows, life begins to grow again.