



*Now he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.*

*<sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. <sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman*

*said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.<sup>[a]</sup>) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "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." <sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"*

*<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> 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."*

Israel is a very dry country and in the summer it can be so hot that all living things, at least at midday, have to flee to the shade and rest. At just such a time, when everything is at rest, a woman grabs her water jug, drinks the last drop from it and then leaves her house into the heat of the sun. She carefully looks around the corner to see if anyone is seeing her. She doesn't want to meet anyone. She knows how much bad talk about her is going around in the village. And she knows that gossip can be dangerous... It can even mean death. That's why she always goes to get water during the heat of the day. So that no one would see her... Maybe two hours later, everything in this village has changed. The woman who was so ashamed would be different. She would speak openly to people. She would bubble with vitality and excitement. What happened in those two hours? What changed this woman? And what changed in the village? Today we want to read this fascinating story. Everything revolves around three points:

- Firstly, it is about this Samaritan woman with her empty jug.
- Then it is about a conversation that quenches thirst.
- Thirdly, it is about the God who sits next to a well in need of water

First, let's take a closer look at this Samaritan woman with her empty jug. Her story is a modern story. Or, have our relationship crises that we have today simply always been the same? This woman has a catastrophic life story. From the conversation with Jesus it becomes clear that she was married five times, lost her husband five times: through separation? Through death? We don't know. In any event, you can say that she made a new start five times. She hoped. She wished to be safe. To have finally found someone who understands her. And then the same thing over and over again. The disappointments, the hurt. The relationship that dries out like the hard Israelite soil and then conversation, empathy and the last bit of love dries out like the hot israelite sand. It is a modern story that is presented to us here. We all know it. Regardless of

whether we are "single" or married...or perhaps even have been married several times...and regardless of what kind of relationship we are in. We humans experience the same thing over and over again. At the beginning, love seems so great that even death cannot overcome it. At the beginning, even opposites are attractive. But then the sun of everyday life comes and dries everything out. And no matter how much love is praised and valued in our media, it simply does not offer what it promises. Disappointments come; anger comes; and then the deep hurt, so that there is no other option but to flee. We humans cannot stand a broken relationship. Our world collapses and we have to flee. One person flees into work. This person wants work to replace whatever is missing in the relationship. Another flees into addiction. But the more you do these things, the thirstier you become. If you want to fill a broken relationship with substitute love, you trample the hard, dry earth until it becomes as hard as stone. Our hearts eventually become just like a hard stone that becomes like a red-hot oven at midday in Israel. Absolutely impermeable. It's a mess and you can't move forward. The things we do to get love back are like juice you drink on a hot day. The more you drink, the thirstier you get. Eventually, something has to burst. It can't go on like this. The woman in Samaria had 5 husbands. And the one she had wasn't really her husband either. And now she couldn't even dare to appear in public. What a mess!

And in this situation a conversation with Jesus follows. From the external thirst for water, a conversation develops between Jesus and the woman about the thirst for life. The conversation takes place on two different levels: Jesus promises the woman living water. At that time, that was the term used for spring water, for flowing, fresh water, as opposed to the stagnant water that was fetched from cisterns. It would be nice, the woman thinks, if there was such water that quenches thirst so that the need never arises to return to the well. . As listeners to this dialogue between Jesus and the woman, we realize that there is no such water. That cannot be the meaning here. Water that satisfies you for eternity must be something completely different.

"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again; But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst, but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

In the end, the giver of life and the recipient, Christ and the Christians, flow together here. Water is the connection between the giver of all life and us humans. A living stream is possible. From God to us humans and back to God. This stream simply takes us with it and carries us, even when it is no longer bearable. Jesus explains all this to the woman at the well. But he does more than that. He speaks to her directly in her distress. Jesus does not ask about guilt or the cause of her solitude. He actually only breaks open the hard earth by saying: I know your story, I know about your futile longing and searching here. I also know about your very special, tormenting thirst! Then the astonished answer: "You, the stranger, know? 'You are a prophet!' But the conversation continues. Jesus explains to the woman where he got his knowledge from. He explains to her where you can reach God in your time of need. Where you can worship him. So that he can also hear your deepest need. Before, there was the place Jerusalem, or Mount Sichern in Samaria. Now you can call on him anywhere "in spirit and in truth." That wasn't always possible - now it is. "Yes," says the woman, "we are waiting for someone who will show us all this," says the woman longingly. And then comes the great revelation of Jesus: "I am he," says Jesus, "the one who is speaking to you." And with that, the conversation ends, the woman has heard enough and has nothing more to say to him at the moment: she runs into the village. Her thirst is completely forgotten. She calls the people: "Come and see!" she calls into the city. And

the people come to Jesus. They ask him to stay. And he stays - and they hear him, and they pray. They no longer talk with each other. They also talk to God.

Are you very thirsty? Do you have great longing? And great need?

Let us now take a look at Jesus. When the woman runs back to the village, Jesus still hasn't had a sip of water. The story began with Jesus being tired and waiting next to the well so that someone would finally come by and give him a sip of water. Isn't that the strangest thing of all about this story. There sits Jesus, God's Son, and he needs a bucket with a rope, although he has authority over heaven and earth. The God of heaven and earth now needs something completely normal. Of course Jesus could order angels to bring him water to quench his thirst. He doesn't do it, because as the letter to the Philippians says in chapter 2: He did not see his divinity as a robbery. He did not want to be like God, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant and becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross... He also emptied himself to such an extent that he had to wait for a bucket of water. And while he was doing this, he even allowed this conversation with a tormented woman. And what was left at the end was an empty bucket of water and a whole city bubbling with enthusiasm for Jesus. The dry earth of hard hearts was broken through! The walls of broken relationships fell to the ground in one fell swoop. People could breathe a sigh of relief. They could come before God with their living thirst. They could drink. Not just a sip, or a cup now and then, but a bubbling spring that bubbles and goes hither and thither to bubble right into eternal life. I would like to have this bubbling spring. The spring is there. It is Jesus. The God who makes himself small for us. He is still there. He invites. Whoever finds Him is no longer thirsty.

"But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst, but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Amen