

CHILDREN'S SABBATH: How Full Is Your Bucket?

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John 4:11-15

The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' ¹³Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' ¹⁵The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

CONTEXT

Jesus meets the woman in Samaria, a region between Judea (in the south) and Galilee (in the north). Jews traveled *around* Samaria due to the long-standing cultural, ethnic, and religious animosity that existed. Jesus, surprisingly, travels right through Samaria, perhaps quite intentionally--not just

because it was the shortest route, but because it was where real healing and a new future needed to take shape. Jesus not only traveled through Samaria, but also come into contact with (and risked "contamination" from) a Samaritan. The range of "living water" is a phrase that operates on two levels (and thus creates confusion for the woman). It can mean "spring water." Or it can mean "water of life."

BIG IDEAS

In the book *How Full Is Your Bucket?* By Tom Rath and Don Clifton, there are 3 basic ideas:

1. Every person has an invisible bucket
2. Every person has an invisible dipper to fill or empty another person's bucket
3. Filling someone else's bucket mysteriously *also* fills our own

There are 5 strategies for bucket filling:

1. Eliminate bucket dipping
2. Shine a light on what is right
3. Give unexpected gifts
4. Make best friends
5. Rework the Golden Rule: do unto others as others would have you do unto them.

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REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. What do you think was going through the Samaritan woman's head when Jesus approached her and asked her for water? How might Jesus have helped her reimagine what is possible between Jews and Samaritans?
3. Name a time someone gave you an unexpected and wonderful gift? What was it? What difference did it make to you?
4. What is the "living water" that Jesus offers the woman? How might we drink from that "living water" and never thirst?
5. Jesus doesn't declare the sins of the Samaritans or the Jews. Instead he compassionately embodies a new future (and later paints a vision of that future). How might "shining a light on what is right" help in your relationships at home, school, work, or elsewhere?
6. Reflect on the Golden Rule "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Why might it be helpful to rework that as "do unto others as they would have you do unto them"? How might thinking in these terms make it better and easier to fill someone else's bucket?

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