

11th April 2021 6 pm Healing and Refreshing: Living Water

Led by Ann Gibbons. Meditation and prayers by Lynda Howells

Reading by Gill Palmer

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Introduction

[Ann Gibbons:]

Hello, and welcome to this Healing and Refreshing service from St. John's Church Kenilworth, Sundays at 6pm. We shall be remembering Prince Philip, the Queen and the Royal Family in our prayers later in this service. I'm Ann, and with Lynda we will be leading you through this time together. And we also have Gill with us this evening, who will be reading a version of the encounter of Jesus with the woman at the well. Our theme tonight is 'Living Waters'. And Lynda will be opening up this story more in her meditation. We have some lovely songs to sing, so be in good voice. Shall we pray together before we begin?

Lord, we thank you for each person watching this service now or at a later time. We ask that You will come alongside us all, whether we need healing, refreshing, or simply need to be in Your presence. Amen.

We thirst in many ways: physical thirst, thirst for knowledge, thirst for knowing Jesus more, thirst to do His will for ourselves and for others, thirst for healing and refreshment of mind, body and soul, and more. Isaiah 58 verse 11 says,

The LORD will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.

And in John chapter 7 verses 37 and 38, Jesus said,

‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.’

Our first hymn is *It Is A Thing Most Wonderful*. And then Gill will read to us.

Reading

[Gill:]

Hello. I shall be reading from *Dashed Dreams and Diamonds*, a book by Patricia Clemens Repikoff, [chapter entitled] *The Woman At The Well*.

[Sadly this book is copyright © 1998 by Repikoff, Patricia Clemens
It can be ordered using ISBN 978-1-55635-983-5

Those with Amazon accounts can read the chapter via this URL:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Dashed-Dreams-Diamonds-Patricia-2008-09-08/dp/B01FIYZHWI#reader_B01FIYZHWI

In short, it is prose poetry with tons of alliteration – Gill mastered the tongue-twisters with aplomb.

The text describes a woman "born with a dust storm twisting in her soul." As she grows up she tries to find truth, but is put off by teachers and rabbis, marked as unclean. Then she meets Jesus. She "sizes Him up" and tells Him to "Stay away!" You know the story. When she listens to Him, "Life ripped wide open within me, spewing showers of dreams and hopes long forgotten." She dances full of joy, and says "Come and see... come, let us drink deeply all the days of our lives!"]

We're now going to sing our next hymn, *Living Waters*, and this will be followed by Lynda's meditation.

Meditation: Come to Me and Drink

[Lynda:]

When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, as usual He ignored protocol. Firstly, she was a woman with a dodgy reputation, and secondly, a Samaritan. This woman had a fairly comfortable life materially, but it is relationships which are important, and she had gradually been starved of love and friendship. Communicational relationships are a two-way process of giving and receiving, which wasn't happening for her. And maybe this is an important lesson for us to not take friendship and family for granted.

This woman knew her Old Testament scriptures, by the way she spoke to Jesus. Was it desperation which caused her to leave her husband? Maybe frustration, emptiness, or loneliness, to live as she was. The well was a physical constant in her life: she knew it would always be there, and in some strange way, it represented the promise of more to her.

Jesus is a constant in our life. He's always there for us, to meet our needs and to refresh us.

It took courage for the Samaritan woman to face up to her life, and what was happening: the desperation, the bleakness of being judged, cast out, separated from family and friends. Whilst we all need human love and friendship, it is only Jesus who can bring fulfilment to us, and meet our needs as only He knows. Because with the best will in the world, we make mistakes, and we let each other down at times.

But after meeting with Jesus, the woman was challenged to face up to what her life had been and what had become. But she was given hope for the future: a promise of new life in Jesus, courage to face the challenges of her past, and to move on.

Jesus offered this woman a spring of water, welling up to eternal life. He asked her for a drink and look what she received in return.

Jesus said, "The water I shall give will be like a spring welling up to eternal life."¹

Can you relate your thirst to your life situation?

Imagine yourself in a one-to-one chat with Jesus. What would you want to ask Him? What healing for? Help with advice? Anything.

Drink in the "water of life" which is Jesus. Taste the clarity and freshness of the presence of God in your life, the life of Jesus, given to bring you life.

1 John 14:14

So think for a moment what it feels like when you are thirsty. Your lips are dry, your mouth feels awful. You can feel physically helpless. You have no strength. You cannot think straight. Our spiritual lives can suffer from dehydration as well. But we have Jesus, who is always with us, ready to refresh us in body, mind and spirit. You only have to ask Him. And His living water never runs out. He speaks to us in so many ways: through our thoughts, through other people, even dreams, and His Holy Bible.

Jesus is offering us this refreshment, this water. So come, come for refreshment. Come to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit afresh.

"Be still and know that I am God."²

Sit for a moment with your hands on your laps, palms facing upwards, to receive afresh the gift of living water. Let the Holy Spirit flood you with God's life-giving water, cleansing and refreshing you, your faces tingling with the feeling of being washed in living water.

Receive the promise of new life. Confess your sins to Father God, your need of Him in your life. And accept His forgiveness for the past, and receive afresh the living waters promised by Jesus.

So in your own time, you may like to wash your hands as a symbol of cleansing. And drink some water for refreshment of body, mind and spirit.

Remember, the life of Jesus was poured out to bring us life. His love for each one of us is the most precious gift we will ever receive.

Look at the garden: when the plants are dying for water, their leaves drooping, no strength, looking lifeless, then the rain comes, the plants drink in the fresh reviving rain, and they're transformed back into life.

Jesus calls us to come to Him to drink this water of life, for Him to bless us and transform us. Will you accept His invitation?

Amen.

We're now going to have a time of reflection.

Meditation Video

[music with pictures of a waterfall, followed by the song As the Deer Pants for the Water, based on Psalm 42]

Prayers

[Lynda:]

As I usually say, normally in our Healing and Refreshing services in church, Ann and I offer to pray with anyone in need of personal prayer. And as this cannot happen at the moment, there will be an opportunity for you in this prayer time to ask your Heavenly Father for help for whatever you need, just tell Him one-to-one what is on your mind.

We come into God's presence now. And He says, "Be still and know that I am God. I am here for you, to listen to you and be with you always."

Father God, we bring our prayers to You now, our worries and our fears, and also to say thank You.

So just sit and be. Relax. This time is for you to be with your Heavenly Father.

We pray for our country as we start to come out of lockdown caused by the pandemic. We pray for our government to be guided by the scientific and medical experts on the way forward, and to act always with openness, honesty and integrity for the good of all.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father God, we bring before You now all those known to us who are suffering in any way: please bless them with Your peace, Your comfort and Your hope. We pray for all who are mourning the death of someone they love. Oh Lord, be close to them in their grief, that they may be comforted.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank You for Your freedom to be able to worship You, Lord, in safety. And we pray for Christians all over the world who have to follow You in secret, for fear of persecution and even death. May Your love for them be a reality in their lives, bringing them courage and hope.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

And as our country begins to gain some freedom, we pray for people to be sensible and follow the advice given, to be able to live and work together, both in our workplaces, socialising and family life in a safe way, thinking of each other's needs before our own.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the life of Prince Philip, for his commitment to serve our country alongside the Queen, for the legacy he has left, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. We pray for the Queen and the Royal Family at this sad time, that they will be comforted as they mourn the death of Prince Philip. And Lord, we do pray that when Harry comes back to this country to be with his family, that there will be healing, there will be reconciliation and love for each other.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our hospitals, for everyone needing care and treatment, especially for cancer and heart and other life-threatening illnesses, that there will be progress in their treatment being carried out sooner rather than later.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring to You Your family all over the world who live in poverty, that they will receive a share of the world's riches to enable them to live and work, and create life for themselves, which gives them hope for the future.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father God, we thank You for those we hold in our hearts and who we love. We pray for their wellbeing and sense of hope. We ask that Your Holy Spirit would go and rest amongst them as a reminder of our love for them.

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

There will now be just a moment's quiet for you to talk to your Heavenly Father and tell Him whatever is on your heart.

[pause]

Ann and I pray for each one of you watching this service, that you will know for yourselves how much you are loved by God. Put your trust in Him to be with you, whatever is going on in your lives. Receive His blessing, and be refreshed with living waters, as promised by Jesus, through the anointing of God's Holy Spirit, day by day.

We pray for each one of you, that you will receive God's blessing at the point of need in your lives, in the name of Jesus.
Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Ann and I pray for you all watching this service, that you will be refreshed and renewed.

We thank You, Father, as the sun rising and setting day by day is constant, so Your love and care for each one of us is constant, and never changes.
Amen.

We're now going to sing, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*.

Conclusion

[Ann:]

Our next Healing and Refreshing service will be back to the usual slot of the first Sunday in the month, and that will be the 2nd of May. This will be a time of soaking prayer. If this is something new to you, it's a time of putting away our shopping list of prayers and laying or sitting relaxed and soaking in God's presence, allowing Him to come to us in the quiet. When we have these times in church building, people bring cushions or sleeping bag or blankets. Anything to make this time comfortable, lying on the hard floor. So you can do this in your own home too, or if you prefer to sit comfortably in your chair, the choice is entirely yours. During this time there will be quiet music playing, and some video pictures and verses of Scripture to help you. So do join us for this time of soaking with the Lord.

In a moment we're going to end our time together with a wonderful song, *What a Beautiful Name*. Thank you for being with us. It's always special for Lynda and I to know that you are with us.

I'm going to say a final blessing, and maybe you would like to repeat each line.

As we bless one another, help us to say, Lord,
as the deer longs for streams of water,
so I long for you, O God.
I will put my hope in God.
I will praise Him again,
my Saviour, and my God.
Amen.

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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