

THE SATISFYING LIFE

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:13-14.

People are rushing to and fro, not knowing one another, and not caring, because they all seem to be looking for something. All are looking for something. You can see it in half of the faces you see. Some are wanting something and are seeking or striving for it. Others are wanting something, but are not doing anything about it. They are willing to go on just being dissatisfied. Looking for what? It is some universal thing that is wanting. It is something that Christ alone can give.

A coal merchant in northwestern New York said to a man, "When we were poor we looked forward to the time when we would have our own home. We got that. Then we wanted a summer home and we got that. Then we needed a southern winter establishment, and we got that also. And then a lodge in the woods of Maine. We have them all now, and they are shut up most of the year while my wife and daughters are hurrying feverishly through Europe looking for something. I sit at home and dig for money to get something else."

That pictures more perfectly the condition of thousands of people than anything I can say. They are looking for something. They can never be satisfied with some thing, but they do not know it. It is not a thing which they need. It is Someone they need, and that One is Christ. He is the remedy for the unsatisfied life. He is the only source of the satisfying life.

Christ Himself is the water of life. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Water! You and I do not know the value of it. You and I have never been thirsty like those who have lived or traveled in some of the tropical countries. When one travels for hours over the burning sand with a tropical sun over his head and hundreds of pores of the body crying out for water, and then comes at last to the place where he can get an adequate supply to slake his awful burning thirst, he can truly appreciate the value of water. And yet, there is scarcely a comparison between that condition of the body and the condition of thousands in this world with a thirst of the soul.

There is nothing more pathetic than to see people hurrying with their pitchers to this well and that, seeking for water, only to be disappointed. On any busy street you will see them hurrying somewhere to get something that will satisfy the craving of their souls, but it will never be satisfied.

If there was ever a man who had the opportunity of gratifying himself with things, it was Lord Byron. But, no doubt, you are familiar with what he said at the end.

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flower, the fruit, the leaf are gone;
The worm, the canker and the grief,
Are mine alone."

Few men in the nineteenth century in England had greater opportunities of gratifying their desires than Mr. Wilford Blunt. He traveled all over the world. He particularly explored Syria, Arabia, Persia and Mesopotamia. He spoke Arabic like a native. He had a great number of fine horses, and took great pleasure in them; but at the end of his life, according to his own diary, when he was dying in sad disappointment, this is what he said:

"A black melancholy is on me caused by my sense of failure everywhere in life. My poetry; my eastern politics; my Arab horses, were all strings to my bow and they have one after another snapped, and today looking through my memoirs I perceive how slackly they are written and how unworthy they are, yet the diaries are full of things that are too important to destroy them and too unimportant to preserve them, and they overwhelm me with despair."

There you have it. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." Christ Jesus is the water of life and He satisfies the thirst of the soul in a three fold way:

I. Christ Satisfies The Thirst For Love.

This Samaritan woman was like a vine torn or fallen from its trellis, where it should be growing up into the sunlight and bearing its luscious fruit. Instead, it is crawling on the ground, and its tendrils have laid hold on every noxious weed and every decaying and putrid thing. That is the picture you have here. Is it possible to restore a life like that?

Yes, but it is very expensive. "Being in an agony He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." On the cross of shame He cried out, "I thirst," just that you and I might have the thirst of our souls quenched forever. Out of the darkness that fell upon that awful scene He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). It was in order that He might be able to come to you and me, and say, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and in order that we might sing, even if it should be in our dying hour:

"Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill,
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff comfort me still."

Paul sought to express the cost of it in one brief sentence, when he said, "He loved me and gave himself up for me." That was the wonder of wonders to Paul.

The heart of man was made to love, just as the eye is made for light, and the ear is made for sound. And the heart can never be satisfied until it finds the true object of love. You can never satisfy the human heart with some thing.

You see a little girl playing with a doll, and she seems to be perfectly satisfied. Is she? By and by the sun strikes upon her head and it begins to throb with pain. What happens? The doll is laid aside and the first question is, "Where is mother?" You cannot satisfy the soul with things. It is a person for whom the soul craves, and there is only One Who can fully satisfy, and that is Christ Jesus.

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." Even this Samaritan woman had a dim idea of that. She said, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." And when the sacrificial blood of Christ touches the soul the sin and the pollution pass away, and we become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Then we can sing,

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad."

II. Christ Satisfies The Thirst For Life.

The life for which the soul thirsts is not simply a life which can be copied; not some kind of an arrangement by which the hand is enabled to copy the headline, and only makes at best a miserable scrawl.

Idealism is a defective gospel. That is not it. It is not simply an example or a model that we want, but it is the power to copy it.

Most of us have to confess: "The good that I would do that I do not; but the evil I would not do that I do." "Oh, that a man would rise in me, that the man I am would cease to be."

It is not simply a copy we want, a model, but we want the power to copy it. From whence does this power come? It comes through the Christ Who died for us, and Who is willing to dwell in us, and to be to us everything we need. When we get Christ in us we are independent of circumstances or the things that are round about us.

The lives of so many people are like drifting wood. They are at the mercy of circumstances. They float or drift away in whatever direction the wind happens to blow. But with Christ within us we are independent of circumstances. It does not matter what they are.

Over in the midst of the English Channel a strong fortress was built on the rocks. Ceaselessly the waves beat upon against those walls. You might ask, "How does the garrison live inside, inasmuch as they cannot drink that salty water?" This is the way. They sunk a well down below the water until they touched the springs of fresh water, so they are independent of their circumstances or surroundings. They have water within the fortification for themselves, and it is so with the believer in whom Jesus Christ is enthroned.

You will remember that wonderful and beautiful statement of the prophet Habakkuk: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall." If He takes away everything, what will you do then? "I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in the God of my salvation." He will be independent of circumstances. That is what Christ does for us, enables us to be independent of our circumstances. He gives us an age-abiding life. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life."

III. Christ Satisfies The Thirst For Light.

He satisfies the thirst for light upon the pressing, daily problems of the human soul; the problems of sin, salvation, satisfaction and service. He gives light upon all these subjects.

Sin is morè darkness. The two persons of whom the sinner is most ignorant are God and himself. He does not know either, because he is in moral darkness. The darkness hath blinded the eyes, and the sad thing today is that some are only indifferent to it. They are content to remain in the condition, so Christ does not have any attraction for them.

Christ gave a twofold light to this Samaritan woman. First, He let her see herself, and then He let her see Himself. Thereby He met her need for light.

Christ told her to "Go and call your husband." Christ cannot overlook sin. He is the true physician, the true surgeon. The surgeon does not go into the hospital to see a patient with a dangerous tumor, and cover it over with a pink plaster and sprinkle rose water on it. Instead, he takes his sharpest lancet and cuts it out.

Christ can pardon any sin of any penitent sinner no matter how deep the dye is, but He cannot overlook any sin. He will never make light of any sin. "Go call thy husband and come hither."

The woman had said, "Give me this water that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw." Yes, there are many people like her, quite willing to make a convenience out of religion. If religion will give them a better place in society, help them to get a better position or more business, add to their store of pleasures, then they will patronize it, but if not, then they will renounce it. "Give me this water that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw."

Christ told her, "Go and call thy husband." She said, "I have no husband." "Well said, 'I have no husband,' for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

What was her answer? "Sir, I perceive ---." The light is striking into her soul. She sees things now she had never seen before. "I perceive that thou art a prophet. You seem to understand me. You seem to know more about me even than to this moment I have known about myself."

But what did she do? You know that when a sudden blaze of light comes upon you, you put your hands up to shield your eyes because it hurts. So when Jesus Christ let the light flash into her dark soul it hurt, and she put up a camouflage. She wanted to get Him turned aside from the personal appeal to the discussion of the general religious question. Thousands are ready to discuss general religious questions, but they want to keep away from the personal appeal.

But Christ refused to be turned aside. He tore aside her camouflage and gathered up the truth in that great sentence, "God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." He left that woman with her soul black with sin standing in the presence of the holy God.

What did she do? She went away and told her folk in the city, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did." As a matter of fact, Christ did not tell her all things. That would have taken hours, but it appeared to her that He did tell her all things that ever she did. Her whole past life, blotted with sin, was there before her eyes like an open book.

Christ let her see herself and then He showed her Himself. To see sin without seeing the Saviour is despairing, and so He said to her, "The water that I shall give him," meaning the priceless and satisfying gift. That gift was Christ Himself. Christ said, "He that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

That was a solemn moment. There was the Samaritan woman with her sin exposed, face to face with the only Saviour Who could put it away. That was a very solemn moment, because she could do one of two things that men and women are doing all the time. She could yield her life to Christ, or she could turn her back on Him and go away. That is what people are doing now. Many of them listen to the gospel of Christ and then turn their backs on Him and go their sinful ways. While you are free to do that, you ought not to do so. Christ wants you to receive Him as your Saviour. He longs for you to have the very things that you need, and He is ready to give them to you if you will receive Him.

What is to be done with water, if the thirst is to be quenched? Why it is to be drunk, of course. That is a commonplace, but an important thing to say. It is not to be

discussed or to be analyzed; that is not the purpose of water. Rather, it is to be drunk. And yet, how many are doing that with Christ? They admire Him, they analyze Him, and they discuss Him. They do everything with Him except receive Him. John said, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." You see He showed her herself in order that He might bring her to Himself. She was thinking of a distant Messiah and she was standing in His very presence. She was startled to find herself face to face with Him. What should she do with Him?

You know what she did with Christ. She received Him as her Saviour. What have you done with Him? Is yours the unsatisfied heart? Has the thirst of your soul ever been quenched? Receive Him as your Saviour now. Do not go away from this service without Christ. He will satisfy your thirst for love, life and light.