

The Well House

[Jesus said,] “Whoever believes in me, . . . rivers of living water will flow from within them” (John 7:38).

Scripture: John 7:37-43

Song: “Send Refreshing”

Some old churches have a small “well house” containing the facility’s pump to its underground water source. Sometimes before church services, the pump may need to be primed. There are a few reasons this might be necessary: there may be a leak in the line, the water level may have dropped too low, or there may have been a power outage. Once the pump is primed, however, clean water flows once again throughout the church building.

As believers in Christ Jesus, rivers of living water flow from within us. You might say each of us is a sort of *spiritual* water pump. Yet there may be times when God needs to, in a sense, prime *us*. For example, there might be times when our commitment to prayer and God’s Word becomes leaky. Maybe our level of trust drops because of difficult circumstances, or we experience something like a spiritual power outage due to sin. At these times, we can humbly seek God’s restoration.

Out in the “well house” of prayer, God primes the pump of each heart and gets us back in working order. Then living water can flow clean and clear again, through us, to a parched world in desperate need of Jesus.

Father, thank You for Your living water and for opportunities to share it with others. In Jesus’ name, amen.

March 13–19. **Melinda Eye Cooper** lives in Tennessee with her husband. She has three sons, two daughters-in-law, four beautiful granddaughters . . . and a spunky dog!

My Money Idol

[Those settling in Samaria] worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought (2 Kings 17:33).

Scripture: 2 Kings 17:24-34

Song: “O for a Heart to Praise My God”

I grew up in a family with nine siblings. Money was tight, so I rarely had any cash in my hand. That is, until I was 13 and got a job waiting tables. When I cashed my first paycheck, my eyes lit up! That money burned a hole in my pocket, and I found that spending it was more fun than I could have imagined.

As Christians we sometimes do what the people settling in Samaria did: we worship God but also serve our own gods. We may carry idols from childhood—things we were taught to value or honor above God. Or we may acquire idols along our way as we grow in independence. My love for money (and spending it) became an idol for me.

It can be hard to recognize our idols. We may love someone more than we love God. Or we may place too much trust in something other than God. Or as it was with me, perhaps money or materialism has captivated us. However, God alone is worthy of our devotion, and if we are willing, God will help us tear down our idols until He alone occupies His rightful place in our lives.

Father, please expose any idols I'm holding on to, and fill me with renewed passion to turn from them and worship You alone. In Jesus' name, amen.

Getting Past Put-Downs

The peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building (Ezra 4:4).

Scripture: Ezra 4:1-8, 11b-16

Song: “Anywhere with Jesus”

“So, you’re an author now?” someone close to me responded in a private message after I invited everyone to “like” my author page on social media. The sarcastic comment cut deep, crushing my enthusiasm. I explained the purpose of the page, and that person gave it a “like,” but the put-down settled in my spirit as discouragement. It’s often true that when we commit ourselves to serving God with the abilities and resources He’s provided, we’ll face opposition in one form or another.

It’s nothing new for the enemy of our souls to seek to derail our service to God. Like the people of Judah who were working to rebuild God’s temple, we may encounter opposition that tries to interfere with our work or cut down our morale. Before we know it, we may become overwhelmed by the weight of discouragement and lose heart.

But instead of giving up, let’s press on! Let’s continue seeking to make the name of our God known—whether it’s speaking truth, writing encouragement, or doing whatever else He has put before us to do. Although we don’t know the exact outcome of our efforts, we do know our Lord is with us. As we obey Him, He will strengthen us to persevere—and He will bring about what He intends for His glory.

Father, when we’re discouraged, give us strength to keep doing the work You’ve called us to do. In Jesus’ name, amen.

A Rock and a Hard Place

“Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one” (Isaiah 44:8).

Scripture: Isaiah 44:1-8

Song: “Rock of Ages”

One day a colleague shared a distressing story about his life. He was consumed with anxiety about how to deal with his difficult circumstances. Putting pressure on himself to handle everything was causing him great stress. “I’m really between a rock and a hard place,” he said. I had compassion for him; yet as he spoke that familiar phrase, I suddenly saw the proverbial *rock* in a new light.

There is no other Rock besides our God, and He has promised to be with us in every circumstance. When our trust is in God, we have no need to fear life’s hard places. The Lord is sovereign and completely in control. When we slip into relying on ourselves to handle difficult situations, it’s good to remember that our self-trust is actually a form of idolatry that brings with it tremendous stress that God does not intend for us to carry.

However, when we place our trust in our powerful, compassionate God, we see that we aren’t really ever between a rock and a hard place. Rather, the Rock is between us and life’s hard places! He’s our fortress and our refuge (Psalm 91:2). Christ is our Rock; He is our protection.

Father, I want to live in the peace of Your protection today and reaffirm my trust in You alone. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Unrecognized Thirst

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 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.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water” (John 4:13-15).

Scripture: John 4:1-15

Song: “Ho, Everyone That Is Thirsty”

When my dad was in the later stages of Alzheimer’s, he’d lick his dry lips, in need of a sip of water. If we asked whether he wanted a drink, he’d shake his head and tell us no. Due to the advanced stage of the disease, he didn’t know his own need for hydration. But we’d hand him a glass of water and he’d drink it, quenching his unrecognized thirst.

Fallen humanity needs Jesus. People may try everything else on the planet (even as the “disease” of their fallen condition advances), and yet their spiritual thirst remains unrecognized and unmet. The Samaritan woman didn’t recognize her spiritual thirst until she encountered Jesus at the well. Her mindset was in the natural realm, but Jesus spoke to her in spiritual terms about her need for a different kind of water.

When we encounter Jesus, He reveals our spiritual thirst to us and offers us living water. Receiving His provision, our parched spirits are refreshed and our lives are forever transformed.

Father, thank You for revealing my need for living water and for the privilege of telling others about You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Who Is He?

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he” (John 4:25-26).

Scripture: John 4:16-26

Song: “Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord”

A man waved at me in the parking lot as I exited a local store. I didn't recognize him, but the closer we got, the more he waved as if we knew each other. He wore sunglasses and dress clothes . . . I couldn't place him. However, once we were face-to-face and he spoke, I realized I *did* know him. He's related by marriage to one of my family members. Normally, we'd see each other at family events like birthday parties, places I'd expect him to be. But since I'd never seen him in public before, and without his wife, I had trouble placing him in this different context.

How strange it must have been for the woman at the well to be speaking with Jesus but not realize who He was. She knew Messiah was coming but didn't know He was right there in front of her. And she had no idea Jesus would choose her to spread the good news that the Messiah was here.

God reveals himself—His compassion and saving grace—to humble hearts. Our past doesn't stop Him from choosing us. Recognizing who He is and responding to Him in faith is what matters.

Father, thank You for opening my eyes to see You and for choosing me to carry to others the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. In Jesus' name, amen.

Good Food

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:34-35).

Scripture: John 4:27-29, 31-42

Song: “Rescue the Perishing”

I received a nice, social media message from a new friend who said, “I like your feed.” I smiled. I knew she meant my newsfeed, but it reminded me of what I’m “feeding” those who follow my page. My content on that platform is Scripture and photos of little church buildings that I’ve (for the most part) seen on road trips. “I like your feed” made me think about what we’re feeding others through our social media communication.

Jesus said His food is to do the will of His Father and to finish His work. As Christians, our food is also to do the will of God and to share Jesus with the world. Truly, the fields now are riper than ever for harvest!

Through social media we have a historically unique opportunity to reach more people than ever before. The world needs to hear how God has changed our lives—how He has saved us and lavished on us His love, grace, and forgiveness. And the people of the world need to know how much He loves *them*.

Father, thank You for opportunities to share Christ with the world. Help us use every means at our disposal to let others know about Your saving grace. In Jesus’ name, amen.