

In 1996, a young marine corporal named Joey Mora was standing on a platform of an aircraft carrier patrolling the Iranian Sea. Incredibly, he fell overboard. His absence was not known for 36 hours. A search and rescue mission began, but was given up after another 24 hours. No one could survive in the sea without even a lifejacket after 60 hours. His parents were notified that he was "missing and presumed dead."

The rest of the story is one of those unbelievable events. Four Pakistani fishermen found Joey Mora about 72 hours after he had fallen from the aircraft carrier. He was treading water in his sleep, clinging to a makeshift floatation device made from his trousers -- a skill learned in most military survival training. He was delirious when they pulled him into their fishing boat. His tongue was dry and cracked and his throat parched.

Just about two years later, as he spoke with Stone Philips of NBC Dateline, he recounted an unbelievable story of will to live and survival. Who would not give up? He said it was God who kept him struggling to survive. His discovery by the fishermen makes searching for a needle in a haystack a piece of cake. The most excruciating thing of all? Joey said that the one thought that took over his body and pounded in his brain was "Water!"

Water. Fresh clean drinking water. It cleanses us, it revitalizes us. Just two weeks ago I was at a Weightwatcher meeting in Spanish Springs, and my instructor Stacey emphasized how important it was to drink 6 glasses of water a day. She emphasized with using portion control and counting points, I could continue to lose weight, and get to where my body weight should be for my height and age.

Today I want to offer all of you a drink. You might say the drinks are on me. It is a drink you will need to survive through the eons of time. You might call this stuff miracle water. Join me as I provide you with "A Real Thirst Quencher for a Dehydrated Soul".

"Jesus came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his Son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. In fact you can still visit this famous well if you travel to Palestine in this region between Jerusalem and Galilee. The current well is about 150 feet deep. It has a church over it and is tended by Greek Orthodox priests who lower a bucket and let you drink water from Jacob's well. Jesus came to the well, "tired as we he was from the journey." He sat down by the well. It was the middle of the day. Jesus was tired. He was hungry. His disciples had gone into town to buy food. He was thirsty. Never did Jesus use his power as God to provide food and water for himself, or even ease the pain and suffering he endured for our sins. In the tired eyes of Jesus and his weary body you see how much Jesus loves you with an intense personal love.

A Samaritan woman arrives at the well to draw water and take it home with her. Jesus asks her, "Will you give me a drink?" She cannot believe what she is hearing. Here is a man talking to her, a man who was a Jew, a man who was a rabbi talking to a woman. He broke all the rules. Jews and Samaritans did not get along because the Samaritans were half breeds, people who had intermarried with foreigners planted in the land by the Assyrians 700 years before Jesus was born. They even had their own worship place in Gerizim which was totally against Old Testament law that said worship could only be carried on in the temple in Jerusalem. She is astounded! "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"

If only this woman knew the man to whom she was talking was the Messiah, her Lord and God. Oh, dear Christian, see how Jesus begins to reveal himself to her. See how he creates a thirst in her to have him as the water of life. "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." If only people knew that salvation and eternal life and God's unfailing love were a pure gift of God, and

not something they earn on their own. If only the whole world knew who that person was talking to this woman. If only they knew Jesus as not just a tired Jew who needed a drink of water 2000 years ago, but Lord and God who came into our world to save us from our sin. If people only knew Jesus they would ask him, the water of life, to give them eternal salvation.

All people the world over are thirsting for something. Every man, woman, and child has certain desires that he wants satisfied. One man thirsts for knowledge. He reads shelves of books, spends years in study, perhaps even ruins his health in order to learn more and more. He adds degree after degree to his name, but still he is not satisfied. The more he learns, the more he realizes there is yet to learn. Another man thirsts after money and the things that money can buy. He works far beyond his endurance. He neglects his family and friends. He has no time for church, for devotions, for prayer, for worship. He attends such social functions where he will be able to meet prominent people who might help him get ahead. But the more he gets, the more he craves. There is no end to this kind of thirst as Solomon says in Eccl 5:10 "He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loves abundance with increase." Another thirsts after pleasure. He keeps late hours, visits questionable places of amusement, bends over the intoxicating cup, goes from one place of entertainment to another. It is his purpose to drain every possible drop of pleasure out of the chalice of life. But he too is not satisfied. Another man thirsts for power. He craves to be a little Caesar-a vest size pocket edition of one of the dictators. He wants people to come to him, to take orders from him, to do his will. But the more powerful he becomes, the more he thirsts for power. And so men are groping about, vainly trying to quench their burning desires. They are like the tendrils of a grapevine; reaching out, trying to find something round which they may entwine themselves and be at rest. There is something tragic about the ceaseless effort of man to fill his life with a multitude of lesser things. No wonder the prophet of old, addressing the Israelites who had strayed from the worship of the true God, solemnly said, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns that can hold no water." Note the plural. They made for themselves cisterns-one is not enough; they need many. Furthermore, they are broken cisterns-they are broken, underground storage vats, containing shallow, contaminated, poisonous water. And because men turn to these broken cisterns, they turn from the fountain of all blessings-the one unfailing fountain of living water that is God himself.

This Samaritan woman is beginning to sense Jesus has something special to offer her. When she heard about living water, she thought of cold fresh spring of water bubbling up out of the ground. How could this mysterious stranger, this Jew, this tired and hungry Jew offer her such water? "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" Pointing to the well, to Jacob's well, that famous well that has watered thousands of people for many generations, Jesus says, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I will give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." If you drink a bottle of water, you will have to drink more water later in the day. Experts say we should drink about 8 glasses of water a day. Nothing in this life lasts whether it is water, or food, or health, or even the good we try to do. Only Jesus can offer us something that lasts forever. Only Jesus can create in us a living faith that springs up inside of us that believes in him as our Savior and allows us to live forever. In John 7 Jesus told the people in Jerusalem, "If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as he Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

Jesus now shows the woman how she can receive this special, living water. A water that

will bring her inner happiness, peace, and joy. He tells her to go home and get her husband. When Jesus mentions this, it brings up memories of a sinful past. This lady had 5 different husbands, and the live together she was presently with, wasn't even her husband. Her sins of adultery, fornication, and divorce loomed in her head. Jesus was hitting the woman with the Law. He was showing her that she hadn't lived up to God's standards. He was attempting to create a spiritual thirst within her. The thirst that He was speaking of was a spiritual thirst-anxiety of soul, conviction of sin, desire for pardon, longing after peace of conscience. All too few are thirsting for these things. If you feel the heavy burden of your sins, if you want forgiveness, if you feel helpless to help yourself, if you earnestly thirst for help and relief, then you are one of the persons to whom Jesus is talking when He says, "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

I am holding in my hand a jar. I can have something very smelly in this jar, something that has been in the refrigerator for months, rotten onions, old beans or old garlic. Set it out on the counter, let it warm up in the sun, and then open the cover and the smell will fill the room. As long as we can keep a lid on our sin we think we have ourselves covered. Nobody knows. No body smells how bad we are. We deceive our selves, but as 1 John 1 tells us, the truth is not in us. We may think we are better than others. We may even try to do good with the false hope that we can keep sin sealed and away from God. But Jesus knows. That is why he invites us to come to him. That is why he spent time with this woman at the well even though he was tired, hungry and exhausted. He wanted the lid taken off of her sin, so she would see how awful she was, and how much she needed him for salvation. As we sing in the hymn, "Foul and full of sin I am, I am all unrighteousness."

This woman thinks to herself, Ok, my sinful lifestyle is out of the jar. I am concerned about it. Well, where do I go to confess my sins and get them washed clean. Do I do the church thing at Mt. Gerazim or in Jerusalem? Jesus explains to her that it is not a building that matters or a place. What or whom she worships is all important. True worship begins when the Holy Spirit touches ones soul and one believes that Jesus is the Savior. Jesus is the only one who brings us forgiveness, and eternal life. The great believers of God in every age came to this fountain by faith and drank and were refreshed. They felt the heavy burden of their sins, they thirsted for forgiveness, they longed for pardon, they drank and received the forgiveness and peace and hope of heaven they thirsted for. Then too, in these golden words of Christ we have a precious promise held out to us. He says, "Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." First of all, they teach that all who come to Christ in faith will find abundant satisfaction for their own hearts. Secondly, they teach that believers will be a fountain of blessing to others. You my friends, have come to Christ. You have drunk of the living water. God now expects you to share your blessings with others. May the Lord Jesus help us meet someone at the well this week and bring them this living water. A drink that satisfies forever the dehydrated heart. Amen.