

LIVING WATER

Cornerstone 2023

SUPPLIES:

1. Piece of paper for each student
2. Pen for each student (or colored pencils or markers if you're an over achiever)

INTRODUCTION:

1. **If you had to enter an eating competition, what food would you choose? How much do you think you could eat of that food?**
 - a. Here are some of the competitive eating records.
 - b. Patrick Bertolletti ate 300 pickled jalapeno peppers in 10 minutes!
 - c. Don Lerman ate 7 sticks of butter in 5 minutes!
 - d. Sonya Thomas ate 8.4 pounds (the weight of a baby!) of baked beans in 2 minutes and 47 seconds!
 - e. Takeru Kobayashi ate 17.7 pounds of cow brains in 15 minutes. Gross and gross!
 - f. Oleg Zhornitskiy ate 1 gallon of mayonnaise in 8 minutes!
 - g. Joey Chestnut ate 76 hot dogs and buns in 10 minutes!
 - h. **Which one is most amazing to you?**
2. After Joey Chestnut ate 76 hot dogs, you'd think he would be so stuffed that he'd never want to eat again.
 - a. But no matter how much a person eats, they'll be hungry again soon
 - b. Hunger is a never-ending process
 - c. Food cannot fulfill us
3. This class is focused on Jesus as "Living Water"
 - a. For those that don't know the story that this reference comes from, "Living Water" sounds kind of strange
 - b. I envision water that has a mind of its own, kind of like the ocean in Moana!
 - c. Jesus isn't telling us he's like the ocean in Moana. This phrase comes from a conversation that is focused on fulfillment.
4. **What does it mean to be fulfilled? How would you describe a person that is fulfilled?**
 - a. Content, satisfied, no longer in need, purpose driven, provided for, joyful, etc.
 - b. That sounds pretty appealing. I want to live a fulfilled life.
 - c. Where do we turn for fulfillment? We turn to Jesus.

STUDY:

1. Let's begin by setting the scene. **Ask a student to read John 4:1-9.**
2. The author is giving us all kinds of clues to help us understand the context for this conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.
3. First: Jesus is alone with a woman!?
 - a. Traditionally, devout Jewish men intentionally avoided being alone with a woman that was not their wife
 - b. Fear of impurity and immorality kept them from being alone with a woman

- c. When his disciples come back and find Jesus alone with this woman, they're shocked
 - d. Does Jesus seem to be afraid to be alone in a conversation with a woman? Nope
 - e. **Why do you think Jesus isn't afraid to be alone with this woman?**
 - i. Because he views her with honor and dignity
 - ii. Jesus doesn't view her as a potential avenue for immorality. He sees her as a hurting child of God that needs help.
4. Second: Jesus is with a Samaritan!?
- a. **What was the relationship between Jews and Samaritans?** Strained to say the least!
 - i. The Samaritans were viewed as unclean
 - ii. Many of them had Jewish descent, but they had intermarried with other nations
 - iii. When Samaritans came to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship, they were treated as Gentiles. They could not enter into the Temple proper.
 - iv. Many Jews would rather walk around Samaria than have to go through it and encounter the "unclean" inhabitants
 - v. This background makes stories like Jesus' parable of a "Good Samaritan" come to life
 - b. **Why do you think Jesus isn't concerned that this woman is a Samaritan?**
 - i. Again, Jesus views this woman with honor and dignity
 - ii. Jesus sees a woman that is hurting and needs help. He doesn't focus on what divides them
5. Third: Jesus is with a sinner!?
- a. We learn later that this woman has been in a number of relationships. It's very possible that this has made her an outcast.
 - b. **When you live in a blazing hot climate and must make a long walk outside of town to fetch water, when would you go?** In the morning or evening when it's cool
 - i. This woman is at the well at noon, when it's incredibly hot outside
 - ii. It's possible this is because she is avoiding others
 - iii. In a small town, people know her past
 - iv. It's possible she chose to come to the well at noon so she didn't have to feel the judgmental glances of her community
 - c. In Jesus' time, religious leaders intentionally separated themselves from known sinners
 - i. But Jesus isn't worried about the perceptions of others
 - ii. He sees a woman that needs help and he's there to encourage her
6. Let's continue the story. **Ask a student to read John 4:10-18.**
- a. **Now that we've read more of her story, what has happened in this woman's past that is making her an outsider?**
 - i. She has been married to 5 different men and her current guy is not her husband

- ii. **What labels do you think this woman carried?**
 - iii. Sinner, needy, unholy, etc
 - b. This woman is searching
 - i. You don't go through that many relationships unless you're searching for something
 - ii. She may be wrestling with self-worth issues
 - iii. Currently, her life is bleak. We could describe her as EMPTY.
 - iv. She needs to fill her life with something, but everything she has tried does not bring satisfaction or fulfillment
 - c. Jesus offers the woman Living Water
 - i. This Living Water fulfills you and you'll never be thirsty again
 - ii. She doesn't know what this Living Water is, she just knows that she wants some
- 7. The conversation concludes with John 4:25-26. **Ask a student to read John 4:25-26.**
 - a. Jesus announces himself as the Messiah to a Samaritan woman
 - i. Jesus is the Christ
 - ii. Jesus is the Son of God
 - iii. Jesus is the Savior of the World
 - b. And Jesus doesn't just come for the Jews. He brings salvation for all!
 - c. By announcing himself as the Messiah, Jesus is taking ownership of the title Living Water
 - i. What does it mean that Jesus is Living Water? Jesus fills you in a way that nothing else can
 - ii. Life with Jesus is content and fulfilling
 - iii. Life away from Jesus is a constant search for fulfillment

APPLICATION:

1. Drawing activity (Give students paper and pen)
 - a. Draw the outline of a person on your paper
 - b. Then, inside the body, draw or write all the things that people turn to for fulfillment
 - c. At the end, we'll share some of the things that people pursue for fulfillment that aren't Jesus
2. Processing activity
 - a. Have you ever run on a treadmill? It's incredibly unfulfilling. You run and run and run, but you never move!
 - b. This is what life is like away from Jesus. Running and running but never being satisfied
 - c. In order to illustrate, I need a volunteer. Please run in place the whole time we process our activity. Run at a quick pace!
 - d. **What were some of the things that you drew inside of your person? What are things we turn to for fulfillment that aren't Jesus?**

- i. Popularity/acceptance, phones, cars, clothes, food, achievements, appearances, boyfriend, girlfriend, power, money, etc.
 - e. How many of these things are permanent? How many of them will never let you down?
 - i. Zero!
 - ii. None of these things can sustain you or bring you fulfillment
 - f. Looking to technology for fulfillment is a never-ending pursuit. As soon as you have the latest and greatest, they create something new for you to buy.
 - g. Looking to relationships for fulfillment is a never-ending pursuit. No matter how much you invest in a relationship, that other person will let you down at times.
 - h. Looking to money for fulfillment is a never-ending pursuit. Some of the happiest people in the world have almost nothing to their name. And those who have money seem to always be chasing after more.
 - i. Looking to appearances for fulfillment is a never-ending pursuit. Styles change constantly, meaning you must always be updating to not become obsolete.
 - j. When you build your life on the pursuit of these things, you're constantly running, but never achieving your goal of fulfillment
 - i. It's like constantly running in place, your whole life!
 - k. (Question for student still running in place)- Are you starting to get tired? Could you imagine doing this for the rest of your life?
- 3. The woman at the well was stuck on the treadmill – pursuing fulfillment through relationships
 - a. Instead of finding fulfillment, she found emptiness
 - b. Jesus offers a new life
 - i. A life that doesn't chase after meaningless things
 - ii. A life filled with purpose
 - iii. A life that doesn't wear us out, but fills us up
 - iv. A life that goes on for eternity in the presence of a good God
 - c. The answer to fulfillment is Jesus, our Living Water
 - i. If your life is empty, you need Jesus
 - ii. If your life is full of junk, you need Jesus
 - iii. If your life is aimless and meaningless, you need Jesus
- 4. When the woman at the well realizes that she's stuck in a pattern of emptiness, she steps off the treadmill and embraces life with Jesus
 - a. Too often, we don't tell the end of her story!
 - b. Ask a student to read John 4:28-30 and 4:39-42**
 - c. This woman that had been labeled a sinner and an outcast is now an Evangelist!
 - d. She tells many about Jesus and many come to faith because of her testimony
 - e. Jesus allows her to be part of something bigger than herself
 - i. He gives her purpose and fulfillment
 - ii. And the woman graciously shares the good news with others