

John 4:1–30 Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To see that we all have a deep soul-thirst that only Jesus can satisfy.

Sermon Refresher:

- Our lives are trapped in a perpetual cycle of soul-thirst.
- Drinking what was never intended to satisfy our soul's eternal thirst only perpetuates the cycle of dissatisfaction in our lives.
- Only Jesus' Living Water can break the cycle of dissatisfaction in your life.

Icebreaker: What TV show have you been hooked on recently? What do you like about it? Or if not a TV show, what's a movie you've seen recently and really liked?

Discussion

1. Early in the sermon, Dave said: "Certainly in our culture today, those who seem to have the most of what most of us are wanting are the current music and film stars—the cultural pop icons: looks, fame, opportunity, success, money, power. But if beauty and brawn and bucks really did lead to a satisfying life, these celebrities would be the happiest people on earth. . . . Since they have what so many of us wish we had, it's worth asking, 'Do those things really satisfy them?'"
 - What do you think? Do you think those things really satisfy the "stars?" Why or why not?
2. Right before showing a long string of broken Hollywood relationships, Dave pointed out: "Perhaps a clue that they are in fact NOT satisfied is their perpetually revolving relationships. . . . All this seems to indicate that their wealth and popularity and looks and success don't really meet their deepest longings. Meanwhile, the rest of us are on the treadmill still chasing after that which never satisfies anyone."
 - What does it say about the rest of us that we keep chasing these things?

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Read John 4:1-15 out loud.

3. In what ways was this woman the least likely person for Jesus to talk to?
4. What does this tell us about Jesus that He talked to her like this?
 - What was the result in her life?
 - How does this change the way we think about people we may or may not share our faith with?

Optional: Read John 4:39-42 to see how the people in the town responded to the woman. What does the woman's response to Jesus (going and telling her friends) teach us about talking to our friends about Jesus?

Read John 4:16-19 out loud.

5. Talking about this interaction, Dave said: "Jesus gently and persistently and purposefully picks on the most sensitive, vulnerable, painful spot in her life—almost like a cruel invitation—'Go call your husband.'"
 - Why would Jesus do that? Why does Jesus rip open this hurting woman's inner life like this?
 - How would it be a sign of Jesus' love for us if He did the same to us?
6. In the sermon, Dave said that when the false promises of culture hit "our thirsty heart at just the right angle, we'll keep having to have more and more of it in a repeated cycle of dissatisfaction and it messes up our lives and we ultimately become more miserable."
 - Which false promises are most likely to hit your heart at just the right angle? Sex, relationships, excessive drinking/drugs, greater wealth, better vacations, newer things, bigger and better houses, better bodies, success, control, approval of others, etc.?
 - What makes them look so good from a certain angle? (What lies are the false promises telling you?)
 - How would that lead to a "repeated cycle of dissatisfaction?"

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Read John 4:23-26 out loud.

7. Why does Jesus start talking about worship all of a sudden? It seems that He changed the subject. Here's what Dave said: "The worship of God through Jesus is the most important single activity a Christian can do. It's how we actually *begin* to drink from Living Water. God's seeking true worshipers is motivated by his love for us. We were created to worship God because we were created to share in the joy and satisfaction of God's glory. And God is able to give of himself — of his glory — of his joy — to us when we worship him in spirit and truth. We connect with God through worship. It's how we enjoy God. So to say that God is seeking true worshipers is to say that *God is seeking to share his love and his joy and satisfaction.*"
 - How does this change the way you think about worship? According to this, why is it that we actually need worship?
8. Jesus said, "If you knew the gift of God . . . , you would have asked him . . ."
 - What is it about the gift of God that makes it so much more satisfying than anything else?

Optional: In the book of John, Jesus gives us many word pictures and descriptions to emphasize that He is the only one who can truly make us happy. Look up each reference below and then ask: What is the metaphor/description here? How does this word picture/description uniquely tell us that Jesus alone can make us truly happy?

- John 4:10, 7:37-38 – living water, rivers of living water
- John 6:35 – bread of life
- John 10:10-11 – the good shepherd, the abundant life
- John 11:25-26 – the resurrection and the life (eternal)
- John 15:11 – joy made full

Sharing and Prayer Time idea: Use that last optional question. Have each person look up one of those verses and take turns reading them and then letting people go around and say short prayers thanking Jesus for being the only source of true satisfaction.