

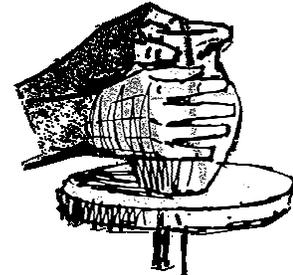
His Workmanship: Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*

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Isaiah 64:8

Living Water, from notes by Lonnie Branam and John Van Schepen

[continued from last week] Thirst is one of the most powerful spiritual symbols in all of scripture. As dehydration draws the whole of our physical being to a longing for water, so a spiritual void will draw our spirits into a search for deeper meaning for our lives. "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God," Ps 42:1. "I stretch out my hands to You; my soul thirsts for You like a parched land," Ps 143:6. Thirst is something we experience when the pituitary gland secretes two hormones in the body. One causes a physical reaction in the kidneys, and the other causes the more complicated activity of the hypothalamus to send signals to the salivary glands to reduce secretions. Just thinking about thirst can make you thirsty—because the hypothalamus starts talking to the salivary glands. Physical thirst can be excruciating and dangerous. Dehydration will get you into serious difficulty in a hurry. If you have ever been really, truly thirsty, then you will be much more able to understand thirst in a spiritual sense.

A. Why do we need the living water that Jesus has? Because of the black hole of sin in our lives.

Jesus met a woman of Samaria who was dehydrated spiritually and did not

know it. She went to the well with a deep thirst for something. She didn't even know what it was that she needed, but she longed for something better, something that she hadn't been able to find, and something that would satisfy her search for true meaning in life and bring joy to her heart. The world doesn't have anything that could fill her thirst. She had tried it in relationships. Every day people are trying to fill their thirst by seeking out a new relationship. Promiscuity rules the land as men and women search for something or someone who will be real. But no person can fill that void in our souls. No person, no matter much love there is or how much infatuation there is, has the ability to fill the emptiness in our hearts that yearn after God. We know something is missing. Every morning when we wake up we are wondering if there is more to life. Yes, there is! We all need Jesus to fill that void in our souls. Some will attempt to find a way to slake this thirst in their soul by using drugs, alcohol, medication—or by seeking entertainment and thrills and "stuff" or riches—but those won't fill the void either. The thrill, the high, and the euphoria will come quickly to end, and then the thirst for more is greater than ever. The thirst is still there, and it continues to grow.

The flesh craves the feelings and the drugs, but the real thirst is in the soul. That craving and that thirst must be filled with something, so we are compelled to go get another fix, and another, then another, and it never ends as we continue to search for fulfillment. The thirst is never satisfied, the hunger for more increases, the demon down in the soul will scream and cry for more, ever more, driving the body ever closer to death. That's Satan's business—to kill, steal, and destroy, and he will see to it that we are never really satisfied, no matter how much we take. B. What is the source of this living water? Jesus Himself is the living water, and the truth He speaks is the living water. We must put our faith in Him. There's only one answer for the thirst down in our souls. There is only one person who can fill that void in our hearts. The answer for our thirst is only found in Jesus Christ.

The woman at the well said, "I know that Messiah is coming"; she came to know that the Christ would answer all her needs. "When He comes, He will explain it all." She was admitting that there is only one solution—and that is God Himself. Jesus answered, "I Who speak to you, I AM He." Jesus claimed for Himself that great name by which God had long ago revealed Himself to
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"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord," Acts 3:19 (a parallel to Acts 2:38), *from p. 1*

the people of Israel when He spoke to Moses from a burning bush. Remember? *Moses said, "When the people of Israel ask me what is His name, then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent you,' "* Ex 3:13-14. Jesus was revealing clearly to this woman that He is the Messiah and that He is also God! What a gift He was giving her—the first clear statement that He is the Christ!

Suddenly the Samaritan woman saw and believed! Jesus is the well of living water. He is the source of eternal life. What Jesus said made sense. *"Whoever drinks the water that I give him will never thirst; the water I give him will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life,"* Jn 4:14. By driving her to see her sin and revealing that He is the Messiah, the covenant-keeping God, Jesus gave this woman power to receive forgiveness and the gift of living water. Jesus! " C. What is the effect, the power, of this water in our lives? The black holes of sin are removed. We will point others to the Fountain of Life. *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it,"* Is 55:1, 10-11. God's word is like rainwater that gives life, nourishment, and beauty to all living things. His truth, coming down like rain or snow from heaven, does not return to Him void, but accomplishes what it was intended to accomplish. Not a drop of rain is lost; not a flake of snow is a failure. Likewise, we may engage in the preaching and teaching of God's word, for not one lesson can be lost or unproductive. As literal water gives life, nourishes and beautifies the earth, so

living water gives life to the soul and nourishes and beautifies the earth with holy, righteous people, beautifying each soul with godly character. Only Jesus can provide the living water that washes away our sins. Only Jesus can satisfy our needs and quench our thirst; He satisfies not a mere temporary thirst but our longing for what is eternal. Anything else that gets thrown at us is only counterfeit. Don't be fooled. Don't be deceived by the emptiness, meaninglessness of desperate housewives, thugs, and others that media throws at you. Jesus looks at our lives and calls sin sin and points us to the truth of God. Maybe you are thinking, *"Does it really make any difference?"* Look at the dramatic change from vs. 28-30. The outcast woman became an evangelist. When she ran back to the people of the town, she left her water bucket behind because she had been filled with the living water of God's love. No longer did she hide from others in shame and humiliation, but she began telling them about Jesus. What difference did it make? Look at v. 39, *"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony."* If there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who is found, can you imagine the joy in heaven that day caused by the changed lives in that village? What Jesus said had become true: the living water [God's message given by the Holy Spirit] that she had received from Jesus was now gushing up bringing eternal life to many others.

The old song says it well: *"There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains."* The cross is God's own fountain of living water—wet and wild, refreshing, spontaneous, leaping and gushing for all eternity. Come to the cross today and drink deeply of the gracious for-

givenness offered there to you. Claim the great promise of God's Word, *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come,"* 2 Cor 5:17. It is that fountain of living water that we receive in baptism. The water not only represents our cleansing by Jesus's blood, but that water is living water that represents the Holy Spirit given to us through God's word to renew us every day. Long after the water has dried from our heads, we may be assured that the Holy Spirit leads us and directs us by God's word; that He empowers us and encourages us and enlivens us to live the way of Jesus. Be assured today that this living water can and will sustain us through the driest times and the weariest days. The living water that Jesus offers to the world is the gospel of the death of Christ which comes down like the rain from heaven. It is the word of God that came down in the days of Christ and the apostles. It is the word of God spoken by Jesus and revealed in the New Testament. It is the word of God about Jesus, His incarnation His life, His death, His resurrection, His teachings, His laws, His commandments, His promises, and His love. It is the word of God about getting into Jesus by believing, repenting, confessing Him, and being baptized into Him. We find this water in baptism. Baptism points to the cleansing blood of Jesus and to the renewing power of the Spirit that Jesus invites us all to come and drink of in Him. The living water is the knowledge of Christ. God's word says, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom and understanding,"* Col 3:16. *"Be filled with the Spirit,"* Eph 5:18. Those are other ways of saying, *"Be filled with the living water."* Take it in, friends. It is not living water to you until you take it into your minds and hearts and apply it
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Psalm 133:1

God makes my heart clean in 2015 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." —Ps 51:10

Living Water, from p. 2

to the way you live. You must get it out of the New Testament into your mind. Don't waste the little time God has given you. Don't throw away your opportunities to drink the living water. Your coming together with God's people where the word of God is faithfully taught is one of the most important activities of your life. For your soul's sake, do not neglect these opportunities to drink. But remember that Jesus said, "Come to Me and drink," for "out of his heart will flow rivers of living water," Jn 7:37-38. He expects us not just to hear but to tell—to be an outpouring of God's word to other people.

One of the most beautiful descriptions of heaven is that of a land and place where living waters flow. It is like a beautiful city with the throne of God in the center, Rev 22. Flowing directly from the throne of God is a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, and on either side of the river the tree of life bears fruit. This refers to the words of Jesus about people who believe in Him and receive His Spirit—out of their hearts will flow a river of water springing up into everlasting life. Whoever drinks of the water Jesus gives them will never thirst. "And the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life," Jn 4:14. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink," Jn 7:37. After describing heaven as the city of living water, some of the last words from heaven say, "Let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely," Rev 22:17. These are Christ's last

Discipleship Here At Home

words about living water. "If anyone thirsts for the water I have to give, let him come." That is, if anyone is interested in going to heaven, if anyone wants to live forever instead of perishing, if anyone wants to serve God, if anyone is interested in goodness, purity of life, and holiness, come and drink. If anyone is wants to be reconciled to God and is interested in My atonement, let him come and drink. No one else will come.

Is your soul parched from thirst today? Is your spirit longing for a place of acceptance and healing? Do you have black holes in your life through which your life is draining away every day? Jesus said, "Come to me, come to the wellspring of life and received God's gift of living water. It's yours for the asking. I give it freely." And then go into the world as the word of God rises up within the well of your personality, for you have now become "Christ's ambassador, as though God were making his appeal through you," 2 Cor 5:20. Go and tell others of the living water so that they too might be reconciled to God.

Danger to US Military, from p. 4 and contend for religious freedom in the armed forces. In many ways, the U.S. military is a cultural vanguard. What the military tolerates—or in the case of Obama's military, actually *affirms*—will be a precursor of what our culture as a whole will embrace.

Take away religious freedom in the U.S. military and you take away its greatest strength. Just because a person volunteers to put on a uniform does not mean that he must check his faith at the door. Military life is hard and dangerous. This reality makes it only natural that the gravity of military life should lead to serious consideration of spiritual matters. In times of peril to life and limb, it is a great comfort to know that many of those who "have your back" share a deep commitment to each other, to the United States, and to God.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Jonathan Hadders**—fractured rib, acute pain
 - **Judy Strand**—broken arm, post-surgery pain
 - **Sheryle McNeill**—pinched nerve
 - **Tracy Corray**—tom tendon in right foot
 - **Linda Szymanski's mother**—fall last week, broke ankle, rehab post surgery
 - **Letha Fink's brother Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, recent diagnosis of neuro-muscular disease
 - **Charos' neighbor Evelyn Velasquez**—cancer
 - **Danny Dodd**, formerly of Westside—home after full brain radiation in Denver; improving; 275 Country Meadow Rd, Ignacio, CO 81137
 - **Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, cancer; has rallied so well from her PE last week that she has returned home (temp housing in Memphis until treatments finish in Nov)
 - **Bill Dennis**—home recovery following rehab
 - **Sandra Perry**—diabetes complications; back on oxygen; port to be inserted in Nov for dialysis
 - **Aubrie and Aaron Andrews**, friends of **Boyd's**—**Aaron** recently lost leg in motorcycle accident; pray they will receive the gospel
 - **Larry Campbell's FL partner Terry Hargadine's wife Michelle**—cancerous lymph nodes removed, latest scan shows improvement; picc line inserted for chemo
 - **Kayla Knighten, Christine Adams's daughter**, needs our prayers; **Judy Strand** requests prayer for her son **Joe**; pray **Ed's son Rodney Schulz** and Sheryle's daughter **Tiffany** receive the gospel.
 - **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's grandmother**—third stage pancreatic cancer; **Brett's grandmother Sue**, and Aunt **Bonnie Doss**—cancer returned
 - **Brittany Tope's mother**—breast cancer, improving; grandmother—on dialysis
- CHRONIC CONDITIONS**
Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr.; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Kirk Johnson—MS
Menards—**Lloyd** diabetes, Alzheimers;
Virginia blindness from macular degeneration; high bp
Cheryl Reames—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
Judy Sartin—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
Judy and Mike Strand—hepatitis trtment
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness
Rejoice Merrit Zollars has chosen to work and worship with Westside. Phone is 740-398-1599
 590 Merlin Dr, #103, Lafayette, CO 80026
mjzollars@gmail.com
Travel! The **Campbells** are in AR helping Pat's father move.
Moving Andreas Duval moved to NC last week. The **Lucases** will soon move back to Brazil; next Sunday 8/30 will be last day with us.
Passing Bill Crihfield, 82, of Bryan, TX, formerly of Westside, passed away last Thurs.



Exposing current trends

military religious freedom

A Clear and Present Danger by Tony Perkins

President Obama, America's Commander-In-Chief, is aggressively attacking what he believes is the greatest threat to the U.S. Armed Forces. No, not ISIS. Not Hamas. Not Russia, China, Iran, or North Korea. It's servicemen and women Christians who dare to practice their faith openly.

As President Obama has radically transformed the military, removing the prohibition against open homosexuality and now pushing to lift the ban on transgenderism in the military, there appears to be room for anyone and everything but Christians. The Obama administration is focusing on providing gender reassignment drugs for a convicted traitor facing 35 years in Leavenworth; adding benefits for same-sex couples; and sponsoring gay pride events. This is a terrible waste of much-needed resources after the dangerous cuts of the military budget!

But what makes the President's agenda even more diabolical is that while he is expanding protections for LGBT troops, he is also attempting to force Christians in the military underground.

Our servicemen and women can now lose their military careers and promotion simply for living out their values as Christians.

- Army Chaplain Joseph Lawhorn received a disciplinary Letter of Concern because he shared spiritual resources (along with secular ones, by the way) in a suicide prevention message.
- Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Monk's distinguished career was abruptly interrupted when he was relieved of his duties for telling his lesbian commander that service members under his supervision shouldn't be punished for believing that marriage is a holy covenant between one man and one woman—a belief shared by most Americans.
- Navy Lieutenant Commander Wesley Modder, a Navy chaplain praised as the "best of the best," now faces involuntary separation from the Navy. His crime? He shared his beliefs about Christ, sexuality, and marriage during a private counseling session.
- Lance Corporal Monica Sterling was court-martialed and given a bad-conduct discharge from the Marine Corps for refusing to obey an order to remove a Post-it with a Bible verse from her work station.

These are just a few of the incidents of overt persecution that targeted servicemen and women Christians. There are many, many more. You can read them in the publication, "A Clear and Present Danger: The Threat to Religious Liberty in the Military" at <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF15F47.pdf>

The war on Christians will destroy our military. Already we see signs that America's military is corroding as morale plummets. According to a survey of more than 770,000 soldiers, more than half are unhappy and distrust leadership. That's why it is essential that we fight



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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

• **adult Bible class**, "The Gospel According to John," Jonathan Hadders

• **Sermon**, "Liberty in Christ (part 1)," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon, Questions Answered: "What Does the Bible Say About Cremation?" Jim Reingrover

Feeding on His Word Reading

Everyone is invited to an open Bible reading of the gospel of Mark this afternoon, 4 pm, at the Wilkeses' house, supper to follow. See **Joel Walker** for schedule.

The Smoky Hill church has a song service this evening 5:30-6:30 pm.