

## Interactive lesson



*picture from cropped from  
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-doing-yoga-inside-a-room-3094215/>;  
photo credit: Valeria Ushakova*

What are some of our universal physical needs, as humans?

How do we know when we should address those needs?

What symptoms do we have?

How should we address those needs?

How do we know when those needs have been met?

Once we meet a physical need, will we ever have to meet that physical need again?

Are some ways healthier than others for meeting our physical needs? How do you tell?

Do we have spiritual needs?

All around the world, every society has stories about creation and one or more gods. There seems to be a universal spiritual need, like the universal physical needs of hunger, breathing, sleep.

How do we know we must address our spiritual needs?

What symptoms do we have?

How should we address those needs?

How do we know when those needs have been met?

Once we meet a spiritual need, will we ever have to meet that spiritual need again?

Are some ways healthier than others for meeting our spiritual needs? How do you tell?

As Christians, we know the healthiest ways to address our spiritual needs involve seeking Christ, growing closer to God and to one another. We know we have addressed those needs when we bear fruits of the Spirit. And we know that it is not a one-off thing, but an ongoing cycle of use and replenishment.

I pray that you live in the abundance of spiritual nourishment that God offers, sharing the love of Christ with all whom you encounter.

## Gospel lesson

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is traveling (after last week's meeting with Nicodemus). Along the way, we find Him doing His countryside ministry.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-woman-samaria/>

**John 4:5-42**

**NRSV**

<sup>5</sup>So he came to a Samaritan city called Sy'char, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

<sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup>A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

<sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

<sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"

<sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,

<sup>14</sup> but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back."

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband';

<sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

<sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet.

<sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

<sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

<sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.

<sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

<sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."

<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?"

<sup>28</sup> Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,

<sup>29</sup> "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"

<sup>30</sup> They left the city and were on their way to him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something."

<sup>32</sup> But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

<sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.

<sup>35</sup> Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.

<sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

<sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'

<sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

<sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done."

<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days.

<sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word.

<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "You Who Are Thirsty">

TFWS #2132

## Message: Give Me Water



picture from  
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/learning-to-live-inside-out/third-sunday-in-lent-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/third-sunday-in-lent-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Abundant source of all life,

as we take time now to further consider today's

scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may be nourished well and overflowingly share Your gifts with all whom we encounter. Amen.

Our “Learning to Live Inside Out” Lenten series brings us today to “Give Me Water”:

“We’re thirsty this week. That’s the point. Thirsting for the living waters that Jesus spoke about to the woman at the well. And not simply a one time or easy but unsatisfying spiritual refreshment, but a recognition of the deepest thirsts that we have and how we seem to always be thirsty, no matter how often we drink.”



*pictures from Vicki Reece, used with permission*

When my sister’s son, Rory, went with his San Diego boy scout troop on his first high Sierra hike, his dad accompanied him with the scoutmaster and other scouts. Gear that the entire group used was split up among the hikers so that no one person would have too much to carry. One of those items was a filter for water, so that they could safely drink at the few locations of natural water sources along the trail rather than try to carry it all, and to refill their

canteens for drinks in between.

At one point along the way, some of the faster boys went ahead. The person carrying the water filter went with them instead of waiting for the slowest hiker, Rory, and his dad.

Rory was overweight and overheating from the exertion of the hike. He and his dad had used up their water in the expectation that they could refill it at the next water spot. However, there was no filter available for them there. They had to readjust what they were doing in order to survive a while longer with no water - risking a severe heat emergency.

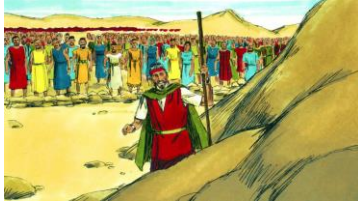
When they eventually did catch up with the other scouts, Rory's dad lit into the scout carrying the water filter in front of the entire group. He was furious, yelling that leaving people without water in the desert wilderness was potential murder.

The scoutmaster tried to calm him down, pointing out that the scout did not mean it and that everyone was safe after all. Would you have let it drop easily?

None of the scouts ever forgot that incident. Since then, Rory's dad refuses to rely on others for water and always carries his own filter on hikes despite the extra weight.



Water is critical to life, one of the basic human needs we discussed earlier. The Israelites understood that they needed water in the desert, too.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/moses-food-water/>

In Moses's day, the Israelites traveled through the desert wilderness expecting water where they camped, but found none at Rephidim. Did they trust God to provide, after they had had God in their midst, doing all those miracles to get them out of Egypt, leading them as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and feeding them manna and quails?

The people were like an infant crying for reassurance its mother was there. They demanded proof of God's presence, so Moses put on a show in front of the elders. In this way, not only was their need for water met, but the people had spiritual reassurance of the presence and power of God with them.

By Jesus's day, the people's faith had matured somewhat. No longer expecting cosmic-style miracles, they had more of a works-earned forgiveness mindset. Social taboos against Jews associating with Samaritans exemplified this. Jesus sought to correct them, to help people mature further in faith, by flouting the social taboos.



picture from

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/qnpi-018-samaritan-woman/>

First, He took the shorter route through Samaria instead of going around it to get from Judea to Galilee. Then He had the audacity to ask a Samaritan for water – and a woman, not a man. And she turned out to be a socially disreputable woman even among the Samaritans! Yet rather than viewing her as unclean, Jesus valued her as a person.

The woman, like most people in this sin-filled world, did not recognize the Lord when she first laid eyes upon Him. She challenged His claims, to the point of breaking a social taboo by asking a man who was not her husband to provide her with something.

Jesus pointed that out, indicating that righteousness before God was not earned by following social mores. He then did something unthinkable to the Jewish hierarchy of His day: He made it clear that as the Messiah, He was there for Samaritans as well as the Jews, for all who worship God in spirit and in truth.

Everyone thirsts for spiritual life, and God (who loves us) offers it to us freely and asks that we share what we have with others. How well do we do that? The woman left behind her worldly possession – her jar – and went to share news of the living water with her people in the city.

Jesus warned the disciples they had work to do, reaping what others had sown. When the Samaritans came, He spent two days with them, making it clear to the disciples that God welcomes all who seek Him, regardless of where or what rituals they follow.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/learning-to-live-inside-out/third-sunday-in-lent-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/third-sunday-in-lent-year-a-graphics>

We have a universal human need in our thirst for spiritual life and love. Not just to connect with God, but also to connect with other people. The living water should flow to all.

As Christians, we are expected to pass on the love of Christ. How often have we neglected to do that, distracted like that scout into leaving those in need without the replenishment they need so much? Be aware of others' need for connection in God's love too.

Seek and share the living water of Christ. Every time you have a beverage and take a drink, give God thanks for it and ask for an influx of the Holy Spirit.

Invite someone over (or go to their home), providing them with food and drink to share. Say a prayer with them before consuming it, perhaps something like, "Thank you God for this gift; may our bodies and souls be continually nourished by your grace. Amen."

Do not just do it once, but share the grace of Christ repeatedly. As people are worn down by this sinful

world, let them again be renewed by God through you.

May you drink deeply of the living water, live in the abundance of spiritual nourishment that God offers, and share the love of Christ with all whom you meet.

<Benediction>



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In this Lenten season, go with grace of God inside you to live the love of God outside, throughout our community.

Drink deeply from the water of life that Christ offers and share the Holy Spirit's overflowing grace with all whom you encounter.

May you thrive in God's restorative peace, Shalom, until we gather again. Amen.