

“Love Outflows In Joy”

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John 4:5-15 = springs of living water

Jesus was alone at a well. Not just any well. A well reputed to have been dug by Jacob himself. A well that had been providing cool, clear water from time immemorial.

Nor was this a routine trip. Jesus was way, way beyond the limits of what was acceptable for Jews. None of the faithful would ever take the Samaria route from Jerusalem to Galilee. The Samaritans were considered irredeemably apostate. To get even the soil on one's feet was considered spiritually polluting, requiring ritual cleansing.

This is the path Jesus chose: “why?” God only knows.



Tired, thirsty and sheltering himself from the midday heat, he met a Samaritan woman. That she was alone at the well at midday meant she was an outsider, shunned, ostracized in her own community.

He asked her for a drink. Jesus is breaking down walls, crossing barriers. Righteous men don't talk to women, it broke the Law of Moses ~ much less an obviously fallen woman ~ a Samaritan woman to boot. This is so very, very wrong. Either Jesus has poor boundaries, or maybe it's God's plan for love to outflow in joy.

Jesus requests a drink, and after she defers, Jesus says something extraordinary: “[I could give] you living water.” This same water Jesus has just offered to Nicodemus, saying: “no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.”



This pure, crystal clear water which restores the soul, Jesus has offered to the righteous Pharisee Nicodemus. Jesus now offers it to a fallen woman

in Samaria. We ourselves are somewhere in between ~ meaning we too are included in this offer, each and every.

What an evocative image, **“living water.”** What a wonderful metaphor for life in God’s reign. **“Living water”** is **“kingdom water”** is the **“water of life for the ages.”**

When our Javanese sisters and brothers speak of the living water offered by Jesus, they often compare it to a simple earthenware vessel called a kendi. A kendi is a water storage pot made of

lightly fired clay ~ inexpensive and serviceable. Workers in the field carry them with. Set in the shade, water seeps to the outside and cools the remaining water. This imparts a wonderfully refreshing aroma and taste. Each drink not only sates thirst but soothes the

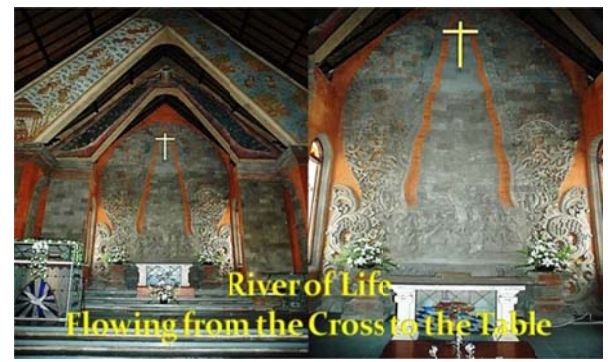
heart and satisfies the senses.

Just so the living water Jesus offers us satisfies the soul. For the Javanese, the kendi represents the **“springs of living water gushing up to eternal life”** we heard today. Even more a kendi is a peasant’s vessel, no highborn would ever use one. The cool refreshment is lifesaving for the marginalized ~ restorative not just for the thirsty, but life-bringing for the vulnerable, the meek, the refugee, the hungry, the hopeless, the weak, the **“least of these.”**

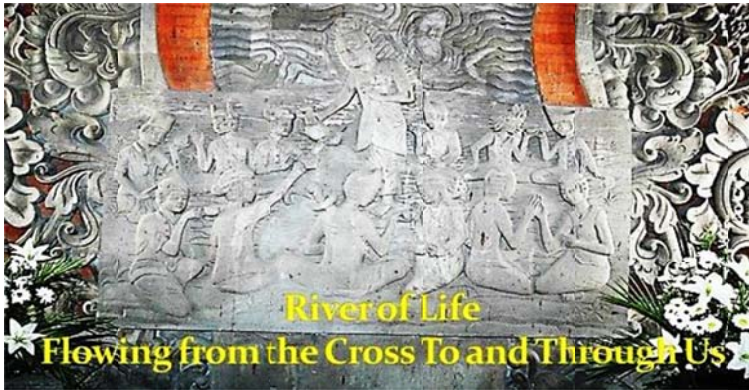
God’s plan is for love to outflow in joy. Jesus breaks every barrier down in order to offer kingdom life to everyone. In our turn, we pass it on so God’s love outflows.



On a mission some years ago, I was invited to an beautifully ornate church in Bali. The chancel wall was exquisitely carved depicting the river of life flowing out from the cross coming to rest at the table of the Last Supper. Around the table are gathered men and women, young and old, all



in indigenous dress. At the center is Jesus serving from a kendi.



This artist's rendering shows a wonderful truth about Living Water. It all flows to and through the table ~ flows to and through the church ~ flows to and through indigenous people everywhere. God's love all

flows to and through us out into the world.

Centel is the highest, driest, last village on the side of Mt Merbabu in Central Java. Centel has something no other village on the mountain has ~ it has a spring. There is also a church in Centel, not ornate, but a spring nevertheless of living water for the soul.



The physical spring is prolific and never runs dry even in times of drought ~ more than enough to meet the villager's needs. The Christians there with help from Christians world-wide were able to build a distribution system so that water from the spring outside the village could be piped into the village

square. There was more than enough life-giving water for everyone, so they offered to pass it on, to share.

The next settlement down the mountain happened to be a Muslim village. The inhabitants there had to make many trips every day in order to carry heavy containers of water from several miles away. The water was dirty and tasted bad. Waterborne diseases were common.



You would have thought the next village to have jumped at the offer. But they didn't. The village head feared that water from the Christian spring would infect them with Christianity.

Despite these fears, the Muslim village head eventually relented. The water line was laid. The water came, the village rejoiced, and indeed some were drawn to the faith having tasted crystal clear water. Over time more and more became involved and a church was established in the village. The physical spring had become a spring of living spiritual water.

God's love outflows in joy.

<https://drdjaylosher.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/sister-act-full-going-out-into-the-neighborhood-just-a-touch-of-love-hd.mp4>

"A touch of love." Exactly what we will be doing ~ God's love outflows in Joy.

As the water from Jacob's well, as the spring in Centel, as the chancel carving in Bali illustrates so well God's love outflows in joy from the Cross to the table and beyond through us.

