

## Well, Well, Well

Water is the basis of life, it is essential for life. Without it, we cannot imagine life existing. While I'll be giving a short science-based presentation about water, it is to be taken neither as an exhaustive description nor to be technically complete, so my apologies to any scientists or science students. Water is known as a universal solvent - nearly every compound has some degree of solubility in water. Of the compounds that are not soluble in water, many of them form the basis for our physical bodies. It can exist in the three states of nature: solid, liquid and gas with a relatively large temperature range in the liquid state. It is made up of just three atoms - 2 hydrogen atoms and 1 oxygen atom. The physical arrangement of these three atoms helps to impart unique properties to water that makes it so vital to life. There is a survivalist's saying that a person can survive 3 minutes with oxygen, 3 days without water and 3 weeks without food. When a person does not have enough water and becomes dehydrated, their mental capabilities begin to decrease as well as a decrease in muscle coordination and fatigue. The space program that has sent probes to other planets have been designed to detect if there is water present in order to determine if those places could (or had) sustained life. So, even today, with all theological concerns set aside, water is important to life.

In both of the creation accounts in the Book of Genesis, water is essential for creation to occur. Aside from the triune God, who is the ultimate source of life; water can be said to be the essence of life. It is from out of the waters that life springs forth. It is water that nourishes all life forms allowing for the cycle of life to be complete. The role of water in creation can be seen at any lakeshore or streambed. It's usually pretty easy to find a perfectly smooth rock,

one that has been rounded and smoothed by the action of the water moving over it for a period of time. Another example of creative waters is in the southwest where there are beautiful rock formations that had been "carved" by the action of ancient waters eroding away the softer rock around these formations.

We also know that water does not always take time to create. From the Flood in the Bible to the tsunamis and hurricanes to even the spring flooding of area rivers and streams; we are familiar with how destructive and disruptive water can be when it goes beyond its "boundaries." In this instance, raging waters can quickly 'recreate' landscapes, moving rocks and soil, uprooting trees and carrying away homes.

In the Biblical description of the Garden of Eden, the river that flows through the garden, giving life to the garden then splits into four rivers, giving life to the rest of the world. It is these same waters that God controlled with His breath, His Spirit that spread out to the world giving life to our world. Every great city, indeed most of civilization can be found near water. Water is what gives life. Throughout the Bible, we read of references where life is associated with water. The prophet Jeremiah uses the image of a stream sustaining a tree in the desert to illustrate how God's Word nourishes us and will never fail us. Naaman was told to wash in the waters of the Jordan River in order to become cleansed of leprosy, to become a new man. Jacob's well, which was mentioned by the Samaritan woman in the Gospel had a long history and connection to the land and the people while providing life.

While it is not typically included in the "I am" statements of Jesus, this text provides the closest that we have where Jesus proclaims that He is the Living Water. Actually, He goes back further and identifies as being the source of this

water. This reinforces the statement Jesus made to Nicodemus as to the purpose for Jesus coming to earth, namely, to save the world and give eternal life to all who believe in His name.

On some stationery, there can be a mark that is on the paper. This mark is called a 'watermark' and is purposely put on the paper to identify the owner of the paper. When the watermark is widely known, one can recognize the source of the document without reading it. Just as a watermark is put on paper to identify the 'owner', we too are given a watermark during our baptism. God has placed His mark on us and cleansed us in the baptismal waters, creating a new person. It is through God's Word and this water that creates us anew. This new person is no longer a slave to sin on a death march. By the creative, living water given to us by and through Jesus, we are now a new being, a new creation destined to live in the light of God's love. Near the end of the Book of Revelation, the author speaks of a river that flows through the center of the eternal city, recalling for us the image of the river in the Garden of Eden. This river flows with life-giving water, the kind of water Jesus spoke about to the Samaritan woman at the well; the kind of water that gives new life to all of creation. Looking out at this new creation, God is bound to say, "It is good."

As we continue our Lenten journey, may we remember the life-giving water of our baptism, allowing it to make a new creation in us every day.

YouTube links:

Gospel and Sermon: <https://youtu.be/KTppWOXws2U>

Service: <https://youtu.be/x8ftNOTtOnA>