

## Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

May 7, 2023 Elemental: Water.

### I Intro.

We're nearly at the end of the school year and eventually summer. It's amazing how fast time flies. The staff and elders are working to bring some new and innovative ideas in all areas of our church life. We have seen an increased activity in our children's ministry, and we're working on new ideas for both our children and our students. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

### II Recap.

Yup...we're finally finishing the "**Elemental**" series. Finding and encountering God in the ordinary things all around us. The first two elements were encouraging and strengthened us. **Earth** is the assurance of God's faithful presence in everything around us. We can find comfort and hope when we see God's hand all around us. **Wind** is the promise of God to bring order out of chaos, to bring life out of lifelessness, and to bring courage out of fear. Wind, spirit, breath moves all around us, and everytime we feel the breeze, the unseen force, we can be reminded of what God does for us. **Fire** is a different story. No one likes or wants fire. But it may be the most powerful and strongest example of God's presence. In fire we are strengthened, purified, the important is separated from the unimportant. Through fire we also understand the importance of community.

Today we finish with **Water**.

### III Sunday.

Next to air, water is one of the most basic necessities of life. You can live without food longer than you can live without water. You can breathe dirty air and you won't feel the effects for a while. You drink dirty water and you will know immediately. Every major city was first founded because of its access to water. Water is THE staple of life. So, we finish this "**Elemental**" series talking about the most basic of all elements. And the most essential. As always weird awkward opening questions.

**Where's your favorite place of water? (And you CAN say shower or bath)**

**What does water mean to you spiritually?**

We did something really different with the scripture this Sunday. We typically hit scripture by taking a single longer passage and walking through it unpacking it with context. We did that here, but played with it a good bit. It would have been easier to cherry pick several passages that mention water, and build this wide and broad understanding of water. That would have been alright, but we wanted to really work a passage and wrestle with the differences between our regular understanding of water, and what water represents. So, read this well known story in **John 4:1-42** and we'll unpack it.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**How did you understand the different uses of the word 'water' in it?**

**What do you think the living water Jesus talked about represented?**

Now let's walk through this passage. What we did on Sunday morning was when the passage talked about just basic water we left in the word water. However, when Jesus talked about "*living water*" we substituted the words; "*forgiveness and renewal*". Because we believe this is what Jesus was talking about, and what he was offering this woman. The struggle for this woman was she was stuck in the surface literal word water. Even when Jesus was offering "*living water*", she just interpreted that as water that would allow her to drink less and therefore come to the well less often. She was having a difficult time making it anything more than what having to get water was like for her.

Let me spell that out. The act of getting water daily required that she face her greatest fear. And that's being continually confronted with shame and her guilt of the choices she had made. So, "*living water*" was simply a solution to avoid, or put a Band Aid, having to face her shame and guilt. What Jesus was offering her was not avoidance, hiding her from public judgment and condemnation. But actually removing the shame and guilt from her. By revealing herself to this woman, Jesus was saying; "*I already know these things about you. I don't judge or condemn you. And if you drink of this "living water" it will remove your need to hide, hoping not to be reminded of your past choices.*"

This was a huge revolutionary promise, and reveals the power of this final element. Also why we use water to baptize people. So, let's talk about water-water, and then "*living water*".

Water represents the earthly day to day concerns we have. They are real, necessary, but can consume more energy and importance than they often deserve. We need water (the things that help us survive) but they can take over our life. So, let's drill down on those things.

**What are the things you need in your day to day life?**

**How much energy and attention do they demand from you?**

**Can you see how these things might be taking a more than necessary amount of time and energy from you?**

"*Living water*" represents the life that Jesus wants to offer us. Even though water is very important, and we need it to survive, "*living water*" is wholeness, salvation, healing, forgiveness, renewal that Jesus offers all of us. Even though Jesus is fully aware of all of who we are (more than we are of ourselves) he still freely offers us all of those things. So, let's get a little personal.

**When was a time you experienced what Jesus said "*living water*" would bring?**

**What was that experience like? How did you respond to it?**

**And...where do you need to experience that "*living water*" now?**

#### **IV Challenge.**

This was our last 'element'. And the one that brings the most healing, wholeness, and the full on life Jesus promised us. All we have to do is be willing to let go of the things that are less important. We can have those less important things in our lives, but just not at the expense of the "*living water*" Jesus offers.

**So (I say that a lot don't I) what things could you leave at the well, to accept the "*living water*" that Jesus offers you?**