

The Rev. Charlie Holt

I'm celebrating this year, will. I've been married to my wife for 30 years. So we were we were married, in August. So this we celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary last August, but I, I when I hadn't met Brooke, I was interacting with one of my friends. And she says, I really want you to go on this flood relief trip to Albany, Georgia.

There was a hurricane and there was water inundation of these houses. And we got to rip up drywall and hardwood floors. And oh, and there's this girl I want you to meet on the trip. Her name is Brooke. And there was something about the way that she was describing, her that really piqued my interest. I actually was dating somebody else at the time.

And I had to deal with that problem later, but, we went on this trip, and I can tell you that, the first day that I met my wife, I knew that I wanted to marry her. And there was there was something and in my heart that just got on fire. And I didn't sleep the whole time.

I was in Albany, Georgia. May have had something to do with the fact that I was on cots in a gym, but it also, I think, had to do with love. And, I, we were we met in August and we were married the next August, and it only took a year to get the deal sealed, which is, really great.

Jesus. It is, a groom in search of a bride in this passage. And we don't often think about the longings of the heart of the Lord. Very often we sometimes come at it more from our longings and our desires. But what John is doing in his gospel is he's bringing out a wedding theme of a groom who is looking for his bride.

He's trying to find her. Not unlike I was looking for a bride back then. And this theme goes all through the Gospel of John. It starts at the beginning, where he came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him, not the bride. And then there's, a wedding feast that Jesus goes to. And Cain of Galilee when he turns the water into wine because they ran out of wine, remember in his mom says, hey, Jesus, you need to do something about this.

And Jesus doesn't just turn it into any old wine, but it's like Rombauer or something like that. I mean, it's really good stuff. And, the master of the ceremony drinks it, and he says a lot of people, they wait till the guests have had way too much to drink, and they serve the cheap stuff. But you saved the best for last.

And. And the John highlights this miracle at a wedding, which is very unusual because none of the other gospel writers tell this story. But for some reason, John puts it prominently is the first miracle that Jesus performs where he revealed his glory and then the wedding theme continues through the gospel when he says, John the Baptist is the friend of the bridegroom, which back in that day had a special, unique role of being the one who got to announce, here comes the groom.

And he. He would do this at various occasions, and he would be the one that would announce the grand entrance of the groom. And Jesus says of John the Baptist, if you can accept it, he is the friend of the bridegroom. And then, we have this scene, which is John chapter four of The Samaritan Woman at a well.

And at first, you know, this is just a meeting, a woman at a well. But if you know the rest of the Bible, you know that that's where men meet their wives. Is it Wells? It's like the old town watering hole. And here. Jesus, is meeting a woman. And what are they talking about? Marriage. They have a discussion about marriage.

Just to finish the thought, John will go on to tell that in John chapter 14 about how he's got to go away with his father and prepare a place, and then bring you back to the place that I have prepared for you with my father. That's all wedding imagery about when the groom goes and he builds the house for the bride with his dad, and then he comes back, and then he carries her across the threshold.

We often read that one at funerals, but it's a wedding theme, in John. And then at the very end of John's writings, in the Book of Revelation is the grand wedding feast of the lamb and the bride, and in revelation chapter 20 and 21. So this is a theme for John where he's talking about the longing of, of the groom's heart and how Jesus as the Messiah is looking for his bride and the way that it's expressed is, I'm thirsty, I'm hungry.

And his disciples think he's talking about food. So they go off and go to get him some fast food from Messiah King.

Chick fil A, I don't know, wherever they went, but they went off to go get him some fast food somewhere, and, and here he is at this. Well, and here's a woman. She's a Samaritan woman says, Will you get me a drink? That's interesting, isn't it? It's Jesus asking her for something. Not usually. It's usually the other way around.

People asking him for something, but he asks her to give him something. He wants something to drink. My wife, who I mentioned earlier. You know this about her? She's a health coach. And so one of the things that she's constantly on me about is making sure that I drink enough water. And sometimes I'm really successful.

I have a cup that I carry around with me. It's one of those Stanley Cup, which I affectionately called the Saint and Lee Cup, and I carry my Saint and Lee Cup around and I, I know that if I drink several of those through the day, I will, I will drink enough water. But one of the things that I've noticed, because sometimes I don't, is that I get this feeling that's kind of like right here and what in my brain, I think I'm hungry.

But my wife is has often told me, you can mistake hunger pains and it's really you're thirsty, you're dehydrated. You need to you need to, feed it with some water and. This this whole gospel story is about mistaking thirst and hunger because just as we can mistake thirst and hunger and get those two things confused, there's actually something about our hearts.

And in our guts that we literally can feel longing and mistake it for a material longing. But it's really, relational or spiritual thirst. And just as we might feed thirst mistakenly, we can also try to satisfy and feed materially something that can only deeply and truly be satisfied spiritually. And this is what Jesus is getting at when he says to the woman, he says, well, if you knew who you were talking to, you would have asked me for a drink, but you would have asked me for a drink of living water.

She's living water. What are you talking about? Living water says, well, you drink this water, you're going to get thirsty again. It's not going to satisfy the deep, deep longings of your heart. But if you can get a hold of some living water, well, then all of the sudden you actually will not just be satisfied, but you will have this water of living water.

This life welling up from what side of you that you actually will become a source of water for other people. It'll be like a spring gets set forth and unloose in your life. You will have water abundantly coursing from within. You.

She says, sir, give me some of this water. And so, Jesus, now he's got her, and he puts her his finger on her trying to satisfy her thirst with the wrong thing, says, go get your husband. So that back to the wedding theme again. Go get your husband. This is why I don't I don't have a husband, he says, you're right.

You've actually had five husbands, and the guy that you're living with now is not your husband.

She says, I can see you're a prophet. Remember that country song looking for love and all the wrong places. Looking for love and too many faces. You know what? Childress knows that great song. That's what. That's what her problem was. She was looking for love in all the wrong places. She was. She was trying to satisfy the deep, deep longings of her heart.

But she was trying to do it with material relationships with men. And as good as guys are, my daughter, has a has guys that are courting her. And she's got three rules that comes to, to bring them from being a guy that she would date to, a guy that she would want to marry. And I'm so grateful that she's got these three rules.

But the three rules are one. You got to have a job. Number two, you need, you need to have a deep relationship with Jesus. And number three, you need to drink less. Aren't those some great rules? If you're a young, young man, those are, looking for a wife. Take those to heart. Get a job, get to know Jesus, and don't drink so much.

You might become marriage material. Try to get that across to my son.

But, we all, we all have, a longing for love and for relationship. But until our hearts are satisfied, ultimately, in a love for God and loved by him, no human being will ever really fit the bill. As great as some people are, and there are a lot of wonderful people. Marriage material is out there. But they never will deeply satisfy the longing of the human heart.

Saint Augustine put it this way, says the heart is restless until it finds its rest in the Lord. And, Blaise Pascal was a great scientist and theologian and would get ideas what he called thoughts, and he would write them down on a piece of paper and throw them in a drawer. And one day somebody collected all of his thoughts, which were really great.

They were they were puns. Says he was French. And the essays are now collected in a beautiful book. You can read his deep, Christian thoughts about the Lord. But one of the thoughts that Ponce had was that, there is a God shaped vacuum in every human heart. And you think about that where we just have this void that unless God is in there, we will we will constantly be hungering and thirsting for the wrong things.

And we will try to put money in there or our relationships with people, or maybe a good job or some identity thing or whatever it is. We're trying to fill that void with anything that we can because it just aches. It hurts without the Lord filling it deeply. And I wonder if some of you might know what I'm talking about with this.

What's really interesting about Nicodemus versus the woman at the well, Nicodemus, he came to Jesus at night. Here she is out in the middle of the day at noon. And that's instructive. She comes, he comes to her at him at night because he's worried about his reputation, because he's afraid more of what other people think about him. Why?

Because he has everything to lose. If he plays this wrong way when it comes to this would be Messiah, good teacher guy. He could lose his reputation. He might lose his wealth. He might lose his status with his peers as a person. His high up in society. So he comes at night, he's skeptical. He's hard hearted.

He's not receptive to having Jesus touch his heart with being born again. But here's this Samaritan woman. She's out in the middle of the day. Why? Because that's the hottest time of day, and nobody else is at the well. And she's there because she's the person who's broken. Because she's a person who's ashamed of her life, who doesn't want to run into people because she knows what people think about her.

And it's not good. She has a reputation. Not only is she a Samaritan who doesn't associate with Jews, but she is a woman who's been married five times and living with a guy that's not her husband.

And she has a broken heart. But what's fascinating about those two people is her receptivity to Jesus. She goes, I know when Messiah comes, he'll explain all these things about worship and Jesus says to her, I am he. Jesus didn't reveal, his nature of Messiah to anyone else up to that point except for her. He's she is the first one that he just point blank says, I'm the Messiah.

Why? Because she was the first one that had a heart that was hurting enough and broken enough, and in touch with those deep, deep longings. Enough that she was ready to receive it. And when he made himself vulnerable to her and she to him, her heart just went on fire. For the Lord. She ran back to her village, told everybody about him.

And the whole village gets set on fire for the Lord. It's a Samaritan village. He came to that which his own, his own did not receive him. But to those who did receive him, he gave the right to become children of God. And here's this incredible village that is deeply satisfying the longing heart of the Messiah looking for his bride.

He loves when people love him. He loves when people are on fire for him and are excited about their relationship with him. So when the disciples come back from Messiah King and they have the, you know, the bag with all the French fries and the hamburgers and everything, and they, they bring it to him and say, Jesus, here's the food.

He says, I have food to eat that you don't know about. Did somebody else get them lunch from somewhere else?

No. Jesus said, chick fil A is closed on Sundays.

Now he says, no, I have food to eat. That you don't know about. My food is to do the father's will and to reap this incredible harvest of souls. Was so fulfilling for him to see people coming to him and believing in him and wanting to give their lives to him, that that this was what was satisfying the longing and hungry heart of the grim.

His bride was there, and she loved him, and he loved her. And it was really great. So, I want to end by just asking you to get in touch with those deep longings. And I know some of us have a lot to lose. If we really got zealous for the Lord, people might think we're crazy. We could lose our reputations in society if we became one of those Jesus freaks or whatever, whatever it might be.

But, But what? Who cares what other people think? You know, even Nicodemus, I'm sure, had places in his heart that desperately needed Jesus. I mean, why else would he have gone to him if he didn't have those desires and longings to really go deeper with the Lord? But every single one of us has that God shaped vacuum.

Every single one of us has that restless heart that, yes, it might be satisfied with worldly things, but is it really, truly satisfying you? Or is it just mistaking a deeper thirst with, feeding it with the wrong thing? And so I, I invite you to ask you to get in touch with that hunger, that thirst that is within your heart.

And, come to this table today, bringing that thirst and that hunger to the Lord and commune with him, with that, with spiritual food that comes only from the Messiah. Let us pray. Heavenly father, thank you so much for the gift of Jesus your word. I know you're seeking true worshipers, those who worship in spirit and in truth.

And so we invite you, Lord, into our hearts. Lord, satisfy my heart, satisfy the longings of my heart with your presence, with your word, with your Son Jesus, in his name we pray. Amen.