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John 4: 13-24

A spring maintenance

Hello, everyone? How are you? Today's story is the famous story of the Samaritan woman and Jesus. Jesus promised to give her an eternal spring of life. A "spring" is a place where water naturally springs from the ground (1). We know that wells are mentioned in the Bible even in ancient times and in the patriarchal age. Abraham's son Isaac discovered the spring, dug wells there, and was robbed many times (Genesis chapter 26). A spring is directly connected to human life, so it seems that it was also a source of conflict. The Samaritan woman was proud of the respected Jacob's Well. Also, the discovery of the spring seems to be very celebrated and valued even in modern times. About 20 years ago, I worked as interpreter for a famous Okinawan businessman. He found a source of hot springs in Okinawa, which were rare hot springs, and built a hotel resort there. This success was known to South Korea, and even a business mission team came. By the way, the suite room was 300,000 yen (about \$ 3,200) per day. At that time, I was surprised that a spring had a very high added value.

By the way, we, Christians, receive a spring from the moment we believe in Jesus. It is an "eternal life spring" that is incomparable to this world's. See verses 13 and 14. "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Jesus gives us 'the eternal spring of life' that springs up forever. John 7:38, 39, "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him would later receive." This spring of eternal life is Jesus himself, but especially the Holy Spirit. According to Romans 8:26, the Holy Spirit is praying with a deep moan and is one of the Trinity of God, having a personality. In the Bible, the work of the Holy Spirit is expressed as dove, wind, fire, breath, etc. (2). Today, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit is the spring of eternal life (3).

You all believe in Jesus, don't you? Therefore, all of us have already received the Holy Spirit of the spring of Life. It's amazing! This is too expensive, uncountable and we get it for free. Revelation 22:17, "The spirit and the bride say, 'Come'. Those who hear this say, 'Come.' Those who are thirsty come. They want the water of life. They receive it for free." The Holy Spirit personally invites us to come and drink the water of eternal

life. Hallelujah!

Next, I would like to think about the abundance and work of the Holy Spirit, the spring of eternal life. God showed a vision through Ezekiel shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in BC 593, the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. It symbolized the presence of God and the abundance of the work of the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel chapter 47 describes how water springs up from the temple, fills the ankles and knees, and eventually becomes a huge river that cannot be crossed by swimming. The work of the Holy Spirit is not enough to soak your feet. It is like a spring that is so large that it will eventually become a great river. God gave the Holy Spirit and also hope, richly working for the Israelites, who were saddened by the Babylonian captivity. With the rich work of the Holy Spirit, we too can overcome difficult times now.

Also, since the work of the Holy Spirit is a spring of eternal life, it will bear a lot of fruit. Imagine the scenery of a Japanese fountain. The life of the spring produces many fruits on the lush trees. Galatians 5:22 says, " But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (4). The fruits of the Holy Spirit are as if they were in heaven. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we Christians can live a life that bears the fruit of heaven on this earth. Personally, we are matured, have a good influence, and not only fill ourselves with joy, but also bring joy to many.

It's a wonderful grace and we can see this joy in the Bible. For example, Matthew 2:10 shows the moment when The Magi from the east found a star to worship Jesus. "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed!" Also, Acts 8: 8 tells us that Philip preached to Samaria and great joy arose for the people of Samaria who heard the gospel. These joys are completely different from those of the world because they are the joys of heaven received from the Holy Spirit after hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. We all want to be filled with this joy every day!

However, are we full of the joy, peace, hope, and power of the Holy Spirit in heaven now? Earlier, I testified to you, that I have been suffering from depression for more than 10 years due to several trials. It was hard for me to live a Christian life without satisfaction, joy and hope. How about everyone? Even if you don't face the hardships now, isn't your long religious life becoming boring? If you are in this kind of situation, you cannot say that you are full of heavenly joy with the Holy Spirit.

So how do you be filled with the Holy Spirit? Please look at verse 16. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Go, call your husband and come back." Surprised by this sudden

order, she lied, "I have no husband." Jesus said, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, the one whom you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." Since Jesus is God, he knew all of her painful past. We don't know if she's bereaved or divorced, but she had five ex-husbands in the past and unfortunately wasn't happy with her current husband. It would have been difficult to understand such a woman in modern times, but it was about 2,000 years ago, so it would have been even more so. There are people in the Bible who really have various problems. Anyway, her life was extremely miserable. No one likes misery. I think she worked hard to find happiness. However, she couldn't be satisfied because she couldn't find it no matter how hard she tried. She therefore clung to her husbands, and she knew that her husband's existence had become an idol. And she must have had a deep scar on her heart because she had failed so many times. She might be hated by society, isolated, and so bothered that she needed to come to the well at noon when no one else was there.

By the way, what does a "husband" mean to us? What are your priorities over Jesus Christ, the sins and wounds that make you sad? With such sins and wounds, the spring of life that we have received becomes dirty, and the joy of eternal life does not overflow. So what should we do with this husband problem? Next, Jesus teaches a Samaritan woman about worship. In worship, we experience the presence of God. Verses 23, 24, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." God is pleased when we worship Him in spirit and truth (5).

Then, what is the worship in spirit and in truth? I think it has many meanings, but I think that our thinking changes through worship. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, in which people change their minds and change their behavior, is very popular now, but if we think of our spiritual level that the change of thought comes from the Bible. It means having spiritual values, not of the world. We Christians should live with spiritual thoughts and a mind that goes far beyond the ideas and philosophies of the world. Romans 8: 6, 7, "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." Here, the mind of the sinful refers to the values and self-centered thoughts of the world, and the result is unfortunately death. However, the thought of the spirit is the thought of God, and the result is life and peace.

Ezekiel 36:26, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." God gives us a new spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, and removes our sins and wounds like stones. We can solve our sin's problems and deep wounds during weekly Zoom worship, daily devotion and prayer

meetings and so on. This transforms our thoughts into God's thoughts.

I know one lady who was very religious and lived in Vancouver. She married three times, but she had sufferings because her three husbands died. It's a rare case. And she raised five children alone, including her own children and the children of her partners who died. Many who saw this situation may have blamed her for being guilty of her previous life or for her faults. Some Christians blame themselves, thinking they are being punished by God if they experience struggling continually as I did. However, the lady had a different idea because she was walking with faith. She said, "I sometimes feel sad about this situation, but I have the joy of raising children, and I'm sure God has a plan in my life because God loves me." She lived her life with the thought of God. And she shared her spring of joy to her neighbors like me. I am still grateful for her love for revealing her painful past to encourage me, who was struggling at the time.

In John chapter 9, Jesus declared that the man blind from birth had been born for the glory of God. Jesus gives us life and hope to think of God, even we are in trouble. The Samaritan woman met Jesus and found hope in her life. She finally realized that she had been worshiping her husband like an idol, and believed in Jesus as her God and Christ, who understood all her sadness, emptiness, wounds, and sins. She met Jesus and she was filled with the joy of heaven, so she threw away her bucket and ran into the city to preach Jesus' gospel. Her life totally changed because of Jesus who is the spring of eternal life.

Recently, I realized that I could have my mind be transformed through worship. Since I started studying theology about three years ago, I have been reading the Bible, praising, and praying for at least an hour every day, hoping to change my life. Even when I am very sleepy, I open the Bible, nodding in front of my desk. One day I had a wonderful experience while continuing worship before God. Actually, I did not get along with my sister and brother-in-law after I was divorced. I was even more shocked when she didn't help me and swore at me for being so reliant on her. When Kenta and Taishi were still small, I was kicked out of my sister's big house twice. At that time, I didn't intend to rely on her financially, but I was more deeply hurt by her cold words than by being kicked out. I did my best to be happy, but the result was bad, and it was because my sister didn't understand my suffering. The feelings of the Samaritan woman would have been like this. For more than 10 years, it was really painful for me because I came up with bad thoughts every day, saying to myself, "Your sister is heartless. You have been abandoned

by your own siblings." This unhealthy idea really drove me to be in deep depression. This is a very painful flashback symptom of PTSD (6). However, from a spiritual point of view, this was a state in which wounds and sins were stuck like stones to the eternal spring of life that I had received by grace. But it was really painful because I couldn't do anything for myself with my own power.

While I was reading the Psalms on the night of February 26th; I even wrote down the date because I was really thankful. Psalms 49: 6-8, "those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches? No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him- the ransom for a life is costly." The purchase of the soul is expensive and must be given up forever." I was surprised when I read this word. Until now, I asked God to answer a difficult question because I was wondering why my sister didn't help me. But I was able to forgive my sister and brother-in-law whom I couldn't forgive by myself, like the snow melting,. This power was not my power but the amazing power of the Holy Spirit. It seemed that God was saying this. "No matter how rich your sister and brother-in-law were, they couldn't pay your ransom because you're very valuable to me and your siblings aren't capable to help you. So I have taken care of you and your children specially." It reminds me of the love of Jesus for paying my ransom. And I was thankful for the grace of God that I never became homeless even for one day although I was kicked out of my sister's house. I also repented of my sin of hating my own siblings for more than 10 years, and of complaining about God's plans and authority in my life. I also repented of my sin of depending on people rather than on God. I gradually began to understand my sinfulness and God's love.

After that, amazingly, my thinking changed completely. From that day, I didn't hate my sister and brother-in-law anymore. Since that day, amazingly, the flashbacks have disappeared and my hatred for my sister has completely disappeared. It was a miracle that I never experienced before. I felt free and I was really looking forward to fellowship with God. Rev. DM Lloyd Johns of England teaches from 'Joy unspeakable' that we Christians should be filled with the Holy Spirit every day "(7). I pray that all of us will be filled with the Holy Spirit every day and that our sins and wounds will be resolved.

This is Paul's prayer that Rie- san told me about two years ago. Ephesians 1: 17-19, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. And has

incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,” This word tells us how rich and wide the life in the Holy Spirit is. It will take a whole lifetime to understand how big God is. It's far beyond our imagination. At first, it felt vague whether or not this word would be fulfilled in my life, but now I realize that there is a spiritual world that I have been experiencing. It seemed like water has been flowing out of the temple, covering my ankles. Eventually, it was up to my knees, and I am now really looking forward to swimming in the huge river of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5: 18-20, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Please praise, sing and thank God, and pray that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit every day. By worshiping with our spirit and truth, I pray that our spring of eternal life will always overflow.

*reference

- ① Izumi(Spring): Japanese dictionary, Gakken, 2014.
- ② Seirei(Holy Spirit), p285-291, ③ Mizu (living) water, p424
- ④ Mi (Holy Spirit) fruit, p420,
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