



We all thirst.
Join us as we experience the
one drink that can truly satisfy!

Water is important. The Bible speaks of water almost from the very beginning to the very end.

Genesis 1:2 *The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.*

Revelation 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.*

In between there are more than 700 references to water in the Old and New Testaments.

Alongside that fact, we know that water is critical to sustaining life – we need it for growing our food, and we need it for ensuring our bodies remain healthy. Scientists say that it is possible (but not recommended) to live 3 weeks without food but **only 3 days without water**.

So clearly water is one of those things that God designed to be essential to life.

But there is another, perhaps more important, form, or source, of water that the Scriptures, and Jesus in particular, tell us is critical for genuine and abundant life. Jesus calls it “living water” and in His encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4) He reminds us that this *living water* is of far more significance than even the water that is drawn from a well (or poured from a tap). It is *living water*, says Jesus, which will sustain and give life to God’s people and will create a thirst and a longing within others to drink from the streams of God’s love, mercy, justice, healing and forgiveness.

It is this *living water* that we are going to explore over the coming 7 weeks in the series **H₂O**.

As we move through the next 7 weeks our Saturday evening (SCRC) and Sunday (Albion Park) gatherings will explore what it means to be thirsty ourselves for the *living water* that only Jesus can provide, and what it then means to go to share our lives – individually and as communities – in such a way that others develop a thirst and longing for the *living water* of a relationship with Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. This is, we believe, the calling and purpose of the church – as we seek to be obedient and faithful to Jesus’ call to “Come, follow me” (John 1:35-49), to “go...make disciples of all nations”, as we become what Mark calls *Come and See* people (John 1:43-46).

We will be challenged to consider our own relationship with Jesus (are we a “Fan” or a “Follower”?), what it means to recognise our own “thirst” and need to “drink” deeply (and often) from the “source” of *living water*, our need to allow our own desires, fears, anger, unforgiveness to be “drowned” in the *living water* that God provides so that “pure” new life can flow into and out of us.

We will consider how we can either create a thirst for Jesus within others, or drive them away from what can be a “polluted” well – where our own lack of *living water* means that we have little or nothing to offer a thirsty world and much of what we do as the church is little more than a “mirage” – promising much, but delivering little.

Finally, we will find ourselves called to embark on “new beginnings” as we become a mighty river of God’s presence and blessing, bringing life and healing to our own communities of faith and then into the communities to which God calls us – our homes, neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces etc.

Each week there will be some “homework” provided. In the future, we hope that we will revisit this series as a means by which we might invite our not-yet-Christian friends/family to share in. However, before we do that we invite all of us to explore the invitation to be refreshed and renewed by the *Living Water* (Jesus) for ourselves. The request this time is that you take time over one meal or coffee with your own family and/or a group of friends to look at the questions and think about what God is saying to you. You might also want to consider choosing one of the questions each week to discuss over the meal or morning tea following our weekly worship gatherings. Even if you choose not to do either of those things, please take time personally to think about what God might be saying to you personally – the good (and sometimes disturbing) news is that God always has something more to say to us!

Obviously, the questions are not compulsory and there won’t be a test at the end ☺. Nor do you need to have been at each week’s gathering to participate – each message will stand alone and you can catch-up by following the links on the SCRC website www.shellharbourcitychurch.org.au where you can watch the video sermons, read the reflections and download other resources. Let us know what you think.

We are living in interesting times. The influence of the Christian church in Australia is declining, but the need for *living water* is as desperate as any time in human history. With all of our creativity and ability we remain dry and barren in the very core of our being – the part that was intended to be nourished and nurtured by God. Our prayer and our longing is that we will allow Jesus to provide *living water* that will quench our own thirst, that will wash away our unhealthy, unhelpful past, and that our relationship with Jesus will become a river of life that brings new life into our personal lives, our churches and then into our communities.

Thanks for joining the H₂O journey.

The Ministry Team

Albion Park Uniting Church
Shellharbour City Regional Church
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