

Well of Living Water: The Story of a Man Who Was God

Sonia Coldicutt

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Well of Living Water combines testimonies with stories to illustrate the transformative power of Christian faith.

Drawing on the gospels, personal experiences, and storytelling, Sonia Coldicutt's spiritual text *Well of Living Water* aims to vivify the story of Jesus for contemporary Christians.

The book begins with a testimonial: Coldicutt says that she was inspired to become a Christian because of the joy she witnessed the religion bringing to her friends, and that she, in turn, seeks to support the faith of others, assuring them of Jesus's love and aid. Drawing on the work of a contemporary study Bible to do so, the book then retells gospel stories to emphasize Jesus's character, and to share the culture and attitudes of the time in which he lived. These biblical stories combine with stories about contemporary people who face their own challenges.

The narrative is both entertaining and reverent as it fleshes out stories about Jesus's life with dialogue, color, and contextual information about life in Jesus's time period. A story about Mary breaking the news of her unexpected pregnancy to Joseph is moving in conveying their fear, confusion, and love: while he could have had her stoned to death, he used everyday acts to convey love, instead, like sweeping a bench clear of wood shavings so that they could sit together to talk. Brief anecdotes about modern pregnancy are used to amplify this retelling, as of a young girl who is afraid to tell her parents that she is pregnant; a professional woman considering an abortion; and a childless woman who feels empty.

Elsewhere, the woman at the well is testy because of Jewish-Samaritan divides—until Jesus's words lead her to feel filled with "living water," or a bubbling up of joy. Her response is to go and tell the people of her town what happened and bring them to Jesus, too; the story is tied back to Coldicutt's testimonial. Questions append these stories to invite explorations of related Christian teachings.

The book's twenty-four chapters all follow a similar format, with selected gospel stories used to demonstrate personal transformations through encounters with Jesus—and to suggest that the same life-changing potential is available today. The table of contents gives a clear indication of what can be found in each chapter. But grammatical, spelling, and formatting errors mar the text, and its excessive use of all caps and exclamation points is distracting.

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KRISTINE MORRIS (August 28, 2021)

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