



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

Sonia Coldicutt

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Well of Living Water is a creative, thoughtful approach to the acts and teachings of Jesus.

Sonia Coldicutt's *Well of Living Water* is an imaginative exploration of the gospels that applies their messages to modern life.

The work begins by tracing the events related to the birth of Jesus. The unexpectedness of the angel's announcement to Mary is likened to the accounts of contemporary women, including a pregnant teenager, a career woman who's not ready to have children but who realizes that she's expecting, a single mother, and a childless couple. Their anxiety is used to imagine Mary's fear when the angel appeared to her.

The text moves on to other stages of Jesus's life, including his visit to the Jerusalem Temple with his parents, his baptism, the start of his ministry, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. Each chapter reflects upon select gospel verses before linking them to ordinary life today. For example, when Jesus selects his first disciples, he is recalled to have given them the choice of following him; the book argues the importance of taking a similar approach to parenting, giving children some level of freedom while still providing guidance, in order to enable them to make the right choices by themselves.

The book's choices are engaging, especially its tendency to imagine dialogues between the realistic characters involved. With the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, an extrabiblical conversation is imagined: here, Peter's wife feels strained by the duty of entertaining more guests than anticipated; meanwhile, her mother, though ill, gets on with their preparations for Peter's guests.

The work's success is in capturing the characters' sympathetic emotions, as with the story of the Samaritan woman whom Jesus meets at the well and whose pain turns to joy. After Jesus reveals himself to her, the work explains that her pain, rejection, and disappointment ceased; it imagines a bubbling sense of excitement arising withing her following their conversation.

The work puts forward Coldicutt's perspective as fact on some debatable aspects of the gospels, as when it's suggested that Jesus may not have carried a complete cross moments before his crucifixion, as it would have been too heavy for one man to carry. Such concerns are not fundamental to the messages in the book; they take some focus away from the more significant topics discussed.

Coldicutt's faith experiences, including accounts of how her faith impacted her in her role as a wife and mother, are used to introduce the work, making it more personable. The comprehensive table of contents and clear chapter titles make the book easy to navigate, while discussion questions at the end of each chapter summarize main messages and provide direction for further reading or research.

Well of Living Water is a creative, thoughtful approach to the acts and teachings of Jesus, reflecting on topics like obedience, prayer, and growing a relationship with God.

EDITH WAIRIMU (January 15, 2020)

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