



Sprinkler Heads

...I am the Living Water. I long to flow through them and reach out to places far beyond their little puddles.

The wind was weaving through the branches of my apricot tree as I sat at the table having lunch with Jesus. We were spending time conversing about an upcoming women's retreat. After about ten minutes of gazing out the window and asking for his blessing on the retreat, I found myself losing focus. My thoughts wandered something like this: "Why is my grass dying? We run our sprinklers regularly, but it's only green in little spots...like it has chicken-pox. What is wrong with this picture?" Before I realized what I was doing, I had wandered outside...leaving Jesus alone at the table.

I fought my way through a dying azalea, turned the sprinkler box to manual and began to test the valves. When I got to valve number six, the valve that serviced the blotchy chicken-pox yard, I waited to hear the water start flowing and then turned to look at the lawn. Nothing happened. I could hear the water, but I couldn't see a thing.

Then, as if hidden springs were bursting forth from underground, puddles began to form in the vicinity of the green spots. Curious, I wandered over to the closest puddle and knelt down, weaving my fingers through the wet grass. Blindly, I felt the cool plastic of the sprinkler head trapped flat against the dirt, overgrown by grass and weeds.

I pulled a few strands of grass away and gently lifted the retractable head. Water began to radiate around me in a four-foot circle. I jumped back with a smile. I had freed it!

Feeling the warm glow of success, I trotted over to the next little green puddle, dug around a bit to find the buried head and once again, with a rip and a tug and a toss, I had freed it, too! I skipped out of the onslaught of water drops, but before I could tackle my next challenge I felt a twinge of conscience.

"Oh, Jesus, I'm so sorry. I forgot. I'm supposed to be praying for this retreat. Why am

I so distractible? It's my ADHD, Lord. Right?"

He smiled and said we could discuss my excuses later, but right now I was actually where he wanted me to be.

As I waited to hear from him, I paused and looked around the lawn. Two little sprinklers were now radiating life in an expansive circle. Yet there were many more sprinklers which were trapped and stunted and flat.

And God said, "You will meet women this week who are stuck. Women with heavy cares and choking expectations. Women who feel that they will never make a difference. Maybe even feel like they are drowning. And this is not what I have made them for. I am the Living Water. I long to flow through them and reach out to places far beyond their little puddles. They were made simply to stand tall and let me do my work. When I flow freely through them, the world will see the wonder of my love and power."

Suddenly my prayer life was revitalized. I prayed tearful prayers over those women for whom the weeds of care and worry choke out the flowing water of the Spirit. I begged him to rip away the lies that suppress and contain and stunt what he has for the precious women coming to our retreat.

As I prayed, I was vigorously yanking and pulling and ripping away the weeds. With each tug, mud splattered my face and my clothes, and soon I was soaking wet. But more and more sprinklers were being set free.

Within ten minutes I was standing in the middle of a lawn that was being fully nourished. I threw my arms in the air and danced, tears streaming down my face.

It seemed so simple and beautiful. We may only be hollow pieces of plastic, sometimes trapped and weighed down by the cares of the world, but when Jesus frees us and flows through us something amazing happens—we can water the world. □

—Susan Reedy