



e - Votion

Dear Friends,

Today I am reading John 4:5-42: (a long but beautiful passage)

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.



A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink' you would have asked him, and he would have given living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband and come back." The woman answered I'm, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying 'I have no husband; for you have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!': The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do now know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman

said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then the disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! HE cannot be the Messiah can he? They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony. "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

Devotional:

Remember the old saying, "Water water everywhere, but not a drop to drink? There is also an old song that says "You never miss the water till the well runs dry." These talk about our physical understanding of water, H₂O, but also emotional/spiritual thirst. In this passage, Jesus promises that everyone who drinks of the water he offers will never be thirsty again. This offer would be most welcome to people in South Sudan and other African countries where clean water is scarce, or people affected by drought in California, or people who are recently affected by chemical contamination to their water supply in West Virginia. We take our water for granted don't we? At least until we have a problem. Jesus' promises water as a place of God's flowing grace and it speaks to our deep need for both spiritual and physical water.

I am interested in what goes on in California because Katie lives there and this has been the driest year in California's recorded history--maybe the worst since 1580. (How THEY know that is a mystery to me.) But then storms have doubled the snow in other places, even northern California. California experts say though that drought conditions are SEVERE in 90% of the state of California, causing problems for farmers and even leaving communities without drinking water. All of this is affecting the livestock and the migrant workers won't have enough places to work this year.

When we don't have access to WATER, a necessity of life, bitter fights might occur. Farmers against farmers, businesses against businesses, communities against communities... When our water supply is not safe to drink, we have doubts about it ever being safe. When we aren't sure we can drink it, is it safe to take a bath in, or to wash dishes and clothes? How will we brush our teeth? The plight of the people in Africa has hit close to home. They have struggled for years to have safe water.

Jesus understands the value of water--both physically and spiritually. He knows that water is sometimes scarce and generally precious, and he tells this unnamed woman from Samaria that he is the source of water, and it will never dry up, it will never run out, it will always be safe. Jesus provides refreshment for the spirit and soul. Life begins in water--the watery chaos of creation and the water of our baptism. For this Samaritan woman, coming to the well was not a place of fellowship like with so many people. She has come in the heat of the day, when no one else will be there. She comes alone.

I've read lots of commentaries on this passage through the years, I've heard a few sermons on this passage, and it is RICH with material to discuss. We envision her in a short short skirt, bright red lipstick, scanty morals--after all she has had 5 husbands and currently is with a man who is not her husband. She most likely felt like she had run out of choices. She had few options left. Maybe as she came to the well that day, she was trying to figure out what to do... lost in her thoughts and interrupted by this strange man at the well. And for someone out of options, Jesus offers her the promise of new life, a new beginning, no matter what has happened before and she becomes the first evangelist in John's gospel. As the story ends she is surrounded by people, somehow woven back into community and sharing the good news. God cared enough for her to make things right and God cares enough for us to make things right. She has been given room and time in her life to listen to Jesus and that living water gives her the courage to tell others about him.

Hopefully, this third week of Lent, we have found room for Jesus. Perhaps we have tasted the living water he offers. What do you need to pass on the good news that we experience? Jesus sees past any barrier we can think of and he offers us grace unconditionally. Think about all the things that divide us in the world today--gender, race, religion, politics, age, socioeconomic status, education, and so on. God can cross these divisions and more and transform us to share his love in a variety of ways and communities.



PRAYER CONCERNS:

- Please pray for Helen Holyfield, age 96, at home on Hospice.
- Please pray for Jamie Bouton, in rehab.
- Please pray for our children and youth in the church and those not yet here.

- Please pray for the situations around the world that are fragile, conflicted, wars and rumors of wars.
- Please pray for those who have not yet drunk of the living water Jesus offers.

CALENDAR:

- Grief workshop for folks experiencing a loss sponsored by Morris Baker funeral home, at Holiday Inn Monday March 24 (in the evening). Call Morris Baker for more information.
- Thursday Mar 20 7 pm Communications Pillar
- Thursday Mar 27 Leadership Pillar

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

-- St Francis of Assisi

Blessings,

Jane Taylor
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