



## **“A Thirsty Messiah, A Resourceful Woman”**

Pastor Andy CastroLang

March 15, 2020

### **Scripture (NRSV):**

#### **John 4:5-42**

5 So Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 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.) 10 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 you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?"

13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 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." 15 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." 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 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. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

25 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." 26 Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you." 27 Just then his 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?" 28 Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 29 "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" 30 Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 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."

### **Sermon:**

***"Our choices affect everyone around us. There is no such thing as "individual risk" or "individual wellness"...Brene Brown***

Maybe you have seen it? the meme that says "Community Thinking: not I but we, not my but our, and not them but us."

It is universal thinking. It is God thinking. It is, I believe, Jesus thinking, to think this way.

Jesus, in these verses, takes down every "dividing wall of hostility", as Paul so eloquently wrote of it, long ago.

The hostility between Jew and Samaritan. The hostility between the ritually clean and unclean, the theological elites and all the other religious camps. The hostility between men and women.

He does this simply by saying that he is thirsty.

And as a Jew, and as a man, and as someone who is, up to that moment of thirst, ritually pure...he blows all those separations apart.

He takes water from the Samaritan. The woman. The ritually impure. The religious heretic.

Sits and chats, and drinks the water.

And she gives it to him. And she asks her questions. And she imagines the possibilities. And embraces the hope he offers. And races out as an evangelist herself, filled with the hope and the good news that Jesus brings.

Jesus is famous for having turned over the tables of the moneychangers in the temple in Jerusalem.

Can you see how he is turning over the tables of his world, and ours too, with this one conversation at Jacob's famous and ancient well?

- Talking to this outcast woman with respect.
- Talking to a religious enemy with an openness and sharing of hope and truth about the very essence of God.
- Sharing a drink of water and utterly careless of any religious purity laws...he is undoing his world's expectations.
- Just yesterday somebody wondered out loud, how Christians could be so mean and judgmental when Jesus himself, was not that way? When you read this story, and see him breaking down the walls between people, declaring that worship is worship when it is in spirit and truth, not about a place?
- Here are some wise words from a commentator on this text:
- "Thus, Jesus left us with a crucial lesson to be learned: community can only be built when we are not afraid of overcoming old prejudices and are willing to break the social conventions that dehumanize us. The living water that Jesus promised the woman, symbolized in the water that Moses made come out of the rock in Exodus 17, is God's purifying water, the Holy Spirit (7:37-39), which can purify our hearts of old hatreds and hostilities and form us into a diverse people of God on earth."

Right now, in the face of this pandemic, let's be surprising, upending expectations of fear and hoarding, panic and faithlessness.

Let's be calm, and gracious.

Generous with sharing what we have so that others will not feel want.

Let's take time to respond with genuine care for the health of others, both physical and spiritual.

There are just a few people here today, singing, and playing music, adding to prayers and doing the live streaming of this service to all those who cannot, must not, be here today.

1. If you look at the SpokaneFAVS news site, you will see ways that the community is stepping up to help out one another. Some of us can be part of that.

2. We can certainly help out our neighbors, if we are healthy...shopping or running errands, watching the kids, making the phone calls to combat social isolation, sending cards, singing songs to each other, like the Italians are doing!
3. I know that Jenn Marquis is posting different activities we can do while we are cut off from one another: from virtual visits of famous museums around the world, to live stream of music from the Seattle symphony...
4. Along with other clergy in our conference I am researching the Zoom option, so that many kinds of church gatherings can continue and people can contribute through their computers.
5. In fact, many of our churches and congregations are sharing links to their services! It will be an amazing opportunity to do some virtual worship visits.

I promise to keep you posted about all of this.

Let me just close by sharing this one note, from a clergy colleague:

On Sat, Mar 14, 2020, 21:29 Diane Darling <[revdianedarling@gmail.com](mailto:revdianedarling@gmail.com)> wrote:

*“Friends, I just want all of you to know that this retired pastor has been thinking of you so much, and holding you in prayer –and yes, honestly, feeling relieved that I don’t have to deal with the unimaginable stress that this has put upon you and your congregations. I’ve known the challenge and privilege of leading congregations through some pretty significant social crises over the years, but never a time when we couldn’t gather close together, in the flesh, to hug and hold, cry and pray, and sing our hearts out to God in one voice, in the same room.*

*Please remember tomorrow morning that in spite of the glitches sure to occur in your first online worship stream, all that matters is that you are doing your best to keep connected with your people, and to keep them connected with one another and with God. Same purpose as ever - just an odd medium for sure!*

*With love and prayer,*

*Diane Darling“*