

Lent 3 3/19/17
John 4:5-30, 39-42 A

“IF YOU KNEW THE GIFT OF GOD, AND WHO IT IS THAT IS SAYING TO YOU, ‘GIVE ME A DRINK,’ YOU WOULD ASK HIM, AND HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN YOU LIVING WATER.”

I’m going to take a wild guess and say, that for the vast majority of you, this is not your first time in a church pew. And because it is not your first time, you are well familiar with the story I’m about to tell you. It’s called the story of the Good Samaritan and it goes something like this...

To avoid confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus left Judea and departed for Galilee. As He journeyed, He decided to take a little side trip through Samaria.

As He made His little side trip through Samaria, Jesus came to a town called Sychar. And being it was the 6th hour -- that’s 12 noon to you and me -- Jesus sent the boys in the band into town to buy a little lunch. And Jesus took a seat beside the only tourist attraction in town – Jacob’s well.

As He sat by Jacob’s well, a woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus looked at her and said, “Give me a drink.” And the woman looked at Jesus and said this, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” Jesus asked for a drink of water and He got a plate of attitude and side of sass in return.

To put the best construction on it: this woman is confused, shocked, because Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans. In the mind of the Jews, this woman was an inbred half-bred. The Samaritans had a mixed book for their Scriptures. They didn’t know the true God and they worshipped their idol god on Mt. Gerizim, instead of in the temple on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. These are just some of the reasons that Jews had

nothing to do with Samaritans. Other than that, they just hated them. They just did. It was as simple as that.

I suppose we could go ahead and put the worst construction on the situation by pointing out this woman was grumpy and had an attitude because she was just plain mad, bitter, at life. Her life. Notice what time it is that she is at Jacob's well drawing water -- the 6th hour. Noon, when the sun is highest in the sky and it is hot. Nobody drew water at 12 noon, in the heat of the day. They did it at 6 in the morning or 6 in the evening. But, this woman was an outcast. No one, not even her fellow Samaritan women, wanted to associate with her. And from Jesus' conversation with her, we know why. She has had 5 husbands and the man she is currently living with is not her husband. And it wasn't death that had separated her from any of those husbands. SGT Joe Friday would say this is a girl that can't keep an address. And given the context, it is safe to say that she was Miss Suzy Home-wrecker. Her torrid affairs and scandals had most likely torn marriages and families apart, and caused untold hurt. Do you understand why she is drawing water at noon?

There you have it – the story of the Good Samaritan. What? Were you expecting me to tell you a story about a guy who fell into the hands of robbers and got beat up and left for dead? So, a Samaritan comes along and bandages him up and takes him to an inn. Yes, he is a good Samaritan. But, so is she.

Before you say it, I will. Pastor, come on. This woman is anything but "good". She's got a lot of attitude, she's got a past, and her present lifestyle isn't real great, either.

I just ask that you understand this: "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” (v. 10). Once you understand that, you know why she is the Good Samaritan. Confused? Well, so was she.

It’s pretty easy to understand. The Bible says that “None is righteous, no, not one ... no one does good, not even one” (Ro 3:10,12). Not you, not me, not this Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. Do you know what you see in this Samaritan woman? You see yourself. In her, we see our egos, our love of self, our sin, we see it all. We see that we are bad.

Jesus asks of this Samaritan woman for a drink. He asked a few things of you, too. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself. Follow me. Go, and sin no more.” And you haven’t done that.

Jesus does not command us to worship at Mt. Gerizim or Mt Sinai. But, He does call upon you to hold His Word sacred and gladly hear it and learn it. But, you don’t. You trust in lady luck. You doubt the promises and assurances of God’s Word.

One more thing – maybe you are not a home wrecker like this Samaritan woman, but before you pick up a stone to stone her, maybe you want to consider this. You look at your neighbor with lust. And you know what Jesus says about that, don’t you? “I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt 5:28).

All that badness, all that sin, makes you just as bad as the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. But, the gift of God is the One who speaks at Jacob’s well. He changes all of that by giving you the Living Water.

Jesus came into this world to take from you your badness and give you all of His goodness. That’s what He’s hanging from the tree of the

cross. Nailed to the tree of the cross, He's taken from you all your ego, all your disobedience to God, all your lust, all your badness. All your sins are one Him and He bleeds and dies on that cross. And because of His bloody death upon that cross, all of your sins are forgiven; all your badness is gone.

And He fills you with His goodness when He fills you with Living Water. He pours it all over you and into you by means of Holy Baptism. He fills you with the living water of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness. And He fills you with that Living Water by means of His body and blood in His holy supper and He fills your ears with Living Water by means of His Word. Through these means of grace, Jesus has filled with Living Water that springs up with you in acts of goodness, kindness, love and mercy towards your neighbor.

Just ask this Samaritan woman. She received Living Water from Jesus, and what did she do? She left her water jar there at the well, went back into town, and told everyone, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" (v. 29). The people went out to Jesus and they received Living Water, so they believed in Jesus and said to her, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" (v. 42).

Church tradition, and its tradition not Scripture, holds that her name was Photini, which means "Enlightened One". Tradition holds that what she did in Sychar, she did also in Carthage. Tradition holds that she publicly confessed Jesus even during the persecutions of mad Nero. Tradition even holds that she told Nero's own daughter about Jesus and she came to believe in Him. And, tradition holds that Photini was martyred under Nero, just as Peter and Paul were.

Do you see why I call her the Good Samaritan? That's really and truly who she is. It has nothing to do with her attitude, her past, or her sin. It has everything to do with Jesus, who gives to her and to you living water.