

Lent 3            3/12/23  
John 4:5-26    A

A WOMAN FROM SAMARIA CAME TO DRAW WATER. JESUS SAID TO HER, 'GIVE ME A DRINK.' THE SAMARITAN WOMAN SAID TO HIM, "HOW IS IT THAT YOU, A JEW, ASK FOR A DRINK FROM ME, A WOMAN OF SAMARIA?"

Not exactly the kind of girl you'd want to take home to mother. She was not just a Samaritan; she was an adulterer. She had had 5 husbands and the man she was living with was not her husband. Even among her own community, she was an outcast. John tells us, "about the sixth hour" -- noon by our watches -- "there came a woman of Samaria to draw water". Yes, it was the job of the women to draw water, but they certainly did not do it at the sixth hour, in the heat of the day. They would come at daybreak or just before sundown, when it was cooler. For the women of this day, the well was their gathering point for social contact – the social media of their day is perhaps the best way for us to think of it. The Evangelist is pointing out to us that even her fellow Samaritan women didn't want this home wrecker around; she was an outcast. And she knows it.

As their conversation continues, Jesus tells her what she already knows – she is an adulterer, a sinner, and God Himself said that the penalty for adultery was death.

But before you pick up a stone to cast, remember that you, too, are an adulterer. Before you get on your high-horse of self-righteousness, I am not your accuser, God is. No, in a literal sense, you may not have broken the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment, but, as His holy and beloved bride, you certainly have been unfaithful to your bridegroom Christ.

In the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, adultery is a common image of God's people forsaking Him. For example, God instructs the

Prophet Hosea, “Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife ...because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD” (1:2). God used the marriage of the prophet to illustrate the sin of Israel. The adulterous wife that Hosea took to be his bride represented idolatrous Israel that was the Lord’s bride. Israel’s sin of leaving the true God, and worshipping false gods was spiritual adultery.

What is true of Israel is true of us: we have departed from God to fear, love, and trust in the gods of our own design. We have been unfaithful. And, the wages of that is death.

We must ever be on guard because the devil has one chief weapon – the lie. And when he comes to whisper his lies in our ear as he did to Eve in fair Eden’s garden, we bite; we devour his lie hook, line, and sinker. And the lie that we believe with all our heart goes like this – you do good for God, He’ll do good for you. But, you do bad for God, and watch out, He’s going to get you, because He’s going to do bad to you. We love this lie. We cling to it. Why? Because we ignore the truth of the Bible to believe that lie of the father of all lie that we are good people. And if we are good people, then God is going to do good for us, right.

And yet, who’s before us this morning? The woman from Samaritan. She does not eat at the popular kid table in the lunch room. She’s a sinner; guilty of public sinner. It’s no secret. She’s an outcast. She’s mocked, she’s ridiculed; she’s the subject of much gossip. She’s just not liked. She’s not doing good for God. And yet, here is God doing good for her. Jesus, very God of very God, in human body does not treat her as her neighbors do. Nor, does He treat her as her sins deserve. She’s not rejected by God. She’s not punished by God. She is loved by God. She is loved with an undeserved, unconditional love.

You ever feel like that woman from Samaria? You've sinned. You know it. Your neighbor knows it. Sometimes, this world just has a way of beating up on us. Not liking us. We don't fit in. We're rejected; maybe even mocked.

But, here is the GOOD NEWS of the Gospel: God loves you, just as much as He loved this woman from Samaria. And He does not treat you as your sin deserve.

Jesus has to "pass through Samaria" to save this woman. And, He had to come to this world of sinners, born of Virgin Mother, to save us poor sinners. Recall and cherish Jesus' word to Nicodemus from last week, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," God so loved the world -- God so loved you -- that He gave His Son to the death of the cross, to die the punishment of your adultery, your unfaithfulness, your sin. That living water Jesus gives us is the forgiveness of sins, and where there is forgiveness, there is life and salvation.

And, Jesus says, "The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (v. 14). Your sin made you an outcast before your Father in heaven, deserving death and hell, but in the living water of your baptism, God forgave you and made you a new creation in Christ. Through His Word and Body and Blood, Jesus continues to give you the living waters of His grace, to continue the work He began in your baptism, daily renewing you in His image.

"He had to pass through Samaria" (v. 4). Jesus had to go through Samaria to save this Samaritan woman. Her life and lifestyle made her an outcast, but not with Jesus. Jesus welcomed her, would you? Yes, yes, you say, but your life betrays you. What about that son or daughter who broke your heart? What about that brother or sister who got a greater

share of the inheritance than you? What about that co-worker who stabbed you in the back? Hearing the words of our Gospel, you cannot help but recall how God treated you when your sin made you an outcast before God. His love changed us and His love compels us (cf. 2 Co 5:14). As Jesus had to go through Samaria to reach out in love to this Samaritan woman, so we reach out in love to even those “outcasts” among us. Living in Christ, we live those words of Paul, “love keeps no record of wrong”.

One other thing I wish to call your attention to this morning is what it means to live as a new creation in Christ. Although John may not specifically tell us, we can tell from the fruits of her life, that this Samaritan woman did not continue in her life of sin. What John tells us is that she went into town and told everyone that the Promised Messiah, the Christ, was among them and “many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of that woman’s testimony” (v. 39).

This brings to mind another episode in the life of Jesus, when they brought to Him a woman caught in adultery [BTW, don’t you love their hypocrisy -- both the adulterer and the adulteress were supposed to be put to death]. We know Jesus shows them their hypocrisy by saying that the one without sin should throw the first stone. But, do you recall His closing words to the woman? “Go, and from now on sin no more” (Jn 8).

We hear the Gospel that we are justified by faith alone, that God is more than willing to forgive us all of our sins, and it is easy for us to think that we can live any way that we want to. Being new in Christ does not mean that we have a license to live apart from the will of God as we have come to know it in the 10 Commandments.

We will never be without sin, for we all daily sin much. But, to be without sin is very much to be our desire. We are not to love sin; we are

not to be like a dog returning to its own vomit, to wink at sin, rejoice and find joy in it, we are to hate sin as much as God does.

Jesus gave this woman from Samaria the gift of God – the forgiveness of her sins and eternal life. Be of good cheer, for Jesus has given you this same gift, that you may give it to your neighbor.