

John 4:5-42

Jesus Encounters The Samaritan Women at the Well

High noon is an odd time to do the chore of getting water at the well. St. John is stickler for details, and it is a detail that is important as we shall see later. The time for going to the well would be in the coolness of the morning before the sun got too high in the sky. Besides that, all the women in town would be there. Early morning would be a great time for the women of the community to have a little fellowship. But this woman comes alone at noon.

Equally odd is that a Jew would be passing through Samaritan country. Jews in their travels would avoid Samaria seeing that Samaritans were half breeds, the left-over Jews from an earlier time of the exile intermarrying with foreigners. Samaritans were not pure. Jews needed to keep their distance even if meant traveling 60 miles "out of the way."

However, Jesus, the Messiah is passing through Samaria, and stops at the well just outside of the town of Sychar at high noon. It is as if Jesus, the Messiah, shows up on this day, at this particular time just for this one particular woman.

John reports that Jesus was "wearied from His journey" and he is sitting by the well. If Jesus had been carrying his own canteen, he could have helped Himself. Which sounds a bit strange. Jesus the Son of God could have commanded the water to come up from the well and report to His lips to quench his thirst. But on this day Jesus sets aside his divinity, remains weary and thirsty just so He can ask this woman for a drink of water. He is waiting for her now even as she on her way to the well at this odd time of day to get water for the daily cooking and washing. Jesus already knows she has had five husbands and the one she is with is not her husband. Maybe all five have died on her, or she has had five divorces and now no longer believes in "as long as we both shall live." Who knows. Whatever it is has made her an outcast among an outcast people.

The conversation that ensues is just not an idle conversation by any means. Each word has purpose. Jesus knows every detail about this woman just as He knows every detail about you and me. We heard it this morning just before we confessed

our sins. "Almighty God from whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom all secrets are known." But Jesus picks this one because it is the one that weighs on her the most. It is the one piece that has become an unbearable yoke around her neck. Whether it is heavy grief, or disappointment, or guilt, only Jesus knows, and he is ready to cleanse it. Jesus knows what weighs you down and drains your joy too. Take your burden to Him.

As she approaches, she sets her jar down and Jesus asks, "Give me a drink." She already sees Jesus' request as out of bounds for reason already stated. In this day and enlightened age we may feel "what is the big deal." But in Jesus' time he was doing something very radical. A Jewish Rabbi never spoke to a woman in the open. And then we have the racial thing at work here too.

But then again Jesus was always crossing all kinds of boundaries to share God's grace. At this point the woman is clueless of who Jesus is. We have here the opposite of what is happening in our OT reading for today. The Children of Israel are thirsty and demand something to drink and God gives them water to drink from the rock. Now here we God in Flesh asking for a drink because He is thirsty, and she gives him all kinds of excuses why she cannot.

But Jesus is patient. Just as He is patient with each of us. "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you 'give me a drink' you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water." What is this gift of God? A quick search in the Concordance gives us 4 NT Gift of God references. Acts 8:20, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8, and 2 Tim 1:6.

From these references we find that this gift of God Jesus wants this woman to have is nothing other than eternal life given through the Holy Spirit, the faith to believe that this gift is for you! For you! personally!

Quite a gift. Like all gifts it is free. It cannot be purchased. It cannot be earned. It is of God because He is the one who paid for it with his own precious suffer and blood and He is the one who gives it to you.

Even if this gift is freely given, eternal life and forgiveness, it is of little use if we do not know that it is given for you and me. God gives us the faith to trust His

Word when he says, "If you knew the GIFT OF GOD And who say to you give me drink, you would have asked, and He would have given you living water.

To all who are weary and heavy-laden Christ calls and says, I will give you this gift.

Why Jesus singles this woman out certainly has nothing to do with her exemplary lifestyle, or even that she was searching for God's truth. I do not really know, but maybe it has something to do with the witness of God's radical grace given all. Men and Women, boys and girls, of all races and nationalities, God loves you, died for you while you were still sinners and desires that you be in relationship with Him and part of the community of Christ.

Now if it comes down to Christ radical love for sinners for the reason of This Divine encounter, reflect just a minute how Christ called you. Maybe it was that walk you took down this aisle to this font, maybe you were an infant and maybe you more grown up, But right here at this well Jesus was waiting for you. You received this gift of God, the faith to believe it. A community of Faith to help and encourage you to strengthen this faith. And the faith to believe it. Living water from the word. The entire reason lies in God alone and His love for you.

Now since John is stickler for details, he would have added that Jesus did get His drink that asked for. Either John missed or it never happened. Because it is not here in Chapter four.

However, when we get to chapter 19, this is the day and time that Jesus is thirsty again. This time Jesus is not sitting at a well but He is hanging on a cross. John notes the time of day. It is noon. Jesus cries, "I thirst." I wonder if Jesus was thinking back to the time when He met this Samaritan Women at Jacob's well. He who ask this woman for a drink of water, pled to his Father in heaven not to drink from the cup of suffering that His Father had prepared for Him, But He drinks from that cup, which is the punishment of all our sins. Which is His death. He does this so that we may drink from and cup of Salvation and never be thirsty again.

This encounter with Jesus changed this woman's life. She so excited to meet the Messiah and ran to proclaimed to everyone "He Told me everything I ever did." And the town who had shunned her believed because of her testimony.