Third Sunday of Lent

March 15, 2020

John 4:6-26 Series A

Living Water

 Grace, mercy, and peace to you in Jesus Amen.

Last week we talked about Nicodemus's curiosity and how it brought him to Jesus to get some burning questions answered. Some questions that he could not let go of until he had the answers he needed. Those questions ultimately led to his salvation. Those same questions gave him the faith he needed to stand up for Jesus and to declare him his Lord and Savior during the events of Holy Week. Then we talked about what God is doing in your lives to make you curious about him. What has God prompted you to do to put your faith into action during this season of Lent? Is there something he has made you curious about? Is there something he is prompting you to change in your faith journey with Him? How is God challenging you to grow in this season of Lent? What curiosity has he placed on your heart? Perhaps it's something more than giving up meat on Fridays or chocolate? Maybe God wants more or your time and attention. Maybe he wants you to be more curious about His Holy Word? Let the curiosity of the Holy Spirit, which dwells within you, stretch you, and take you to new levels of understanding of Jesus.

Today, we have a woman who is curious about this living water that Jesus offers her. A woman whose life had experienced much turmoil. She was divorced not once or even twice, but five times. The man she was now living with her sixth partner, she was not married too. Even by Samaritan standards, she was considered exceptionally immoral. By Jewish standards, her reputation as a woman was far worse. The pure Jews considered all of Samaritan's unclean. A woman with six different men as her partners would have been considered one of the filthiest of the unclean. One of the traditions of the day is that Jews and Samaritans have nothing to do with one another. They did not even acknowledge one another. Certainly not ever exchanging food or water utensils for that would make the Jewish person ceremoniously unclean to do such a thing as that.

Most people draw from the wells of the day at the end of the day around quitting time of 6 pm. Not her, she is there in the heat of the day alone at noon. However, this woman is there alone at noon, not expecting to see anyone there, let alone a Jewish Man or teacher.

 She understands these unwritten laws of interaction or rather lack of interaction between Jews and Samaritans. The power differential in modern terms between a Jewish man and a Samaritan woman of the day would be the stronger than that of a wealthy white man and the poorest of the poor of a woman from a minority culture back in the early 1900s. It just didn't happen. So, you can now understand her disbelief. You can understand her amazement. This Jewish man is breaking all the rules of engagement by asking her for a drink of water.

She is so astonished she asks him, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan. How can you ask me for a drink?"

She wastes no time in getting to the issue of the day at least culturally?

 However, Jesus knows that there is an even bigger issue that needs to be addressed. The point of her heart and her salvation. Her very life is at stake here. If she were a Jewish woman, she most likely would have already been stoned to death for her multiple acts of adultery.

 In compassion and understanding, Jesus turns the tables on her with these words, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and would have given you living water."

 The woman is now more curious than ever about what Jesus is offering her. She sees and knows that he has nothing with which to draw the water out of the well, yet he is offering her living water. How can this be? Jesus tells her, "that everyone who drinks from this well will thirst again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

 She asks Jesus for this water, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." She is still thinking in physical terms. Jesus tells her to, "Go, call your husband, and come back."

She is honest and tells him she does not have a husband. Jesus affirms her truthful statement and then unfolds her very life in front of her and reaffirms her for her truthful statement.

 She now understands this is more than just a Jewish man asking her for a drink of water. Listen to her words, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim the place where we must worship is Jerusalem."

Jesus responds with, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. **22**You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23**Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **24**God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

**25**The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." **26**Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he." As the disciples return from their excursions. She leaves Jesus with her water jar goes into town and tells everyone, "Come and see, the man who told me everything I ever did!" The city responds with, could this be the Christ, and the entire town follows her back to Jesus to be harvested into salvation. In fact, many who came out believed immediately. The townspeople ask Jesus to stay with them, which he does for two more days, and more people come to faith because they have heard for themselves Jesus' message of salvation. They have heard about the living water that he is offering them. They receive the gifts of faith, baptism, and redemption. Thus, they have the living water that is flowing in them and out of them, as evidenced by them sharing Jesus' message of salvation with others. Their water has not become stagnant. It is continuously flowing in, through and out of them and into others with the help of the Holy Spirit. Each of you also has that living water in you. The question before you today from Jesus is, have you stopped up the river of living water, and are you keeping it to yourself or are you allowing it to be a living river of water that is flowing into you, through you and out of you to others. That living water is your baptismal grace and the Holy Spirit, which is daily poured into you. Are you allowing Him to work in and through you to bring others to the same well that the Samaritan woman brought her entire town too! Surely everyone here has a better reputation than she did. Yet, in her great gratitude, she shamelessly proclaimed the truth that was declared to her. Is there something that you are ashamed of? Something that is keeping you from proclaiming the truth of this living water that already dwells within you? If not, then what's stopping you from proclaiming the living waters to others?" Let the living waters flow out of you just as much as they flow into you. The living waters of faith, salvation, and sanctification. It's these waters that daily and continually wash you clean and keep bringing you back to the grace and forgiveness that is yours in Christ Jesus. Don't horde this for yourselves. It's gifts that are meant to be given away to others no matter how bad a reputation no matter how immoral the person may be. These are the folks who know they need it the most and often long for it the most. So, share it with them and give them the same loving water that Jesus gave to you and continues to give to you. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus until the day of his return. Amen.