

“Living Water”

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday March 15, 2020

John 4:5-42 Exodus 17:1-7

Did you catch the question at the end of the Exodus passage?

“The people quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

That seems to me to be one of the most fundamental questions of our existence. Is God among us or not?

Attached to that question, the underlying question behind it is;

If God is with us, is God for us?
In other words; is God on our side?

There might be some people asking that question today in light of all that has been happening.

And I don't know about you, but it seems to me that things were hard enough before the virus, and before the stock market crash.

And so we turn to Jesus, and our gospel reading

which opens in a surprising way, Jesus is tired, and stays to rest, while his disciples go on to get food, Jesus rests at a well.

For those who want to make Jesus larger than life, that he walked just above the earth, and didn't have feet of clay like you and I, we read that Jesus was tired.

Jesus stopped to rest.

While he was there he engaged in a most unusual conversation.

The conversation is unusual because of the what was said, but also because of who it involved.

Jesus engaged a Samaritan woman in conversation.

He asked her for a drink of water.

Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans, especially leaders like Jesus.

But not only does Jesus begin a conversation with her, but he also engages and pushes her deeper, offering her life.

A couple of things about this woman, first she was drawing water at noon, and she was alone. She didn't come with the rest of the women in the morning, she went at noon when no one else would be there.

She missed all the town gossip, most likely on

purpose, because much of the gossip would be about her, and what sins she had committed this time.

This was a woman that no one would be caught associating with, and yet Jesus not only asks her for a drink, but he offers her living water.

She is very interested in not having to come to the well.

Water, so you don't have to thirst again would be great.

It would save her work, and embarrassment.

She wants to know where Jesus might get this living water and how it might be hers.

Jesus pushes her further.

The woman's need is something deeper, something more.

“Go and get your husband and come back.” says Jesus

“I have no husband.” she replies.

Her answer is technically true, yet hides a great lie.

The truth is that 5 men had walked out on her and the 6th would not marry her.

She changed the subject.

Start a religious conversation, one with a focus far from her.

Jesus wont let her go.

He wasn't put off by her life, or offended by who she was.

Jesus wanted to meet the deep longing of her soul, with living water, that would spring up to eternal life in her.

Have any of you ever gotten your water from a spring?

It's kind of an odd experience for us moderns. Water from a good spring runs and runs, it's a funny feeling getting your water and not turning off the spring.

The water is cold, bone chilling cold, clear.

It bubbles up from the ground, coming from a source hidden, often deep from within the earth. A good spring can run year upon year upon year.

Water is life, a secure water source is essential for survival, it satisfies your thirst, and gives life to all around.

The well springing up to eternal life doesn't satisfy your thirst, but satisfies your soul.

Jesus can satisfy the deep longings in your heart, and in mine.

The Samaritan woman longed for what?
We can guess, for she is like any of us - likely she longed for love, intimacy, to feel cared for and security.

That deep ache that is inside of us,
that deepest longing in our souls can't be satisfied apart from God.

We try... God knows we try to fill that hole, satisfy that hunger, soothe or at least numb the ache.. with work, friends, distractions of every kind, frantic play, overloaded calendars, entertainment, retail therapy, food, drugs, or alcohol.

We can support and care for each other, we can be signs of God's love to another, but we cannot meet that deep longing in our own souls or in the soul of another.

Dig up your soul, dig up my soul, it's a barren desert.

But ask Jesus for living water and a spring starts to bubble up.

It's source is not in you or me, but in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit's love for us.

New life starts bubbling, like water for the

thirsty, like a healing balm, like springs in the desert; new life is ours in Jesus' name.

It is offered to any and all.

Who is the least worthy in our time?
In our culture, who do we value least?
Whoever it is, Jesus would seek that person out
and invite that person to experience new life.

The Samaritan woman was religiously an outcast,
politically of no power, and morally a wreck.
She was a woman- strike 1, a Samaritan – strike
2, and a 6 time loser/sinner/adulterer – strike 3.

Yet, Jesus engages her.
Jesus wont let her go, he wont let her off the
hook, wont let her easily escape his offer of life.

She got one of Jesus' most straightforward
answers.

Jesus said her plainly:

I am the Messiah you are waiting for.

And she believed him.

Beneath the cross of Jesus we examine the
longings of our hearts and how we've been
seeking to satisfy those longings, hear those
words:

I am the Messiah you are waiting for.

This morning, I would invite you to be quiet before God, and hear Jesus' gracious invitation to you to come and be filled, come and have the deep longings of your soul satisfied.

Come and be refreshed and ask Jesus to give you that life giving water, that a spring might bubble up in your to eternal life.

(silent prayer)

In the shadow of the cross we see the deep needs not only of our own souls, but we see also the needs of the world.

We are called to be part of Christ's response to the world.

How are we signs of Jesus' love to a needy world?

We pray that we might offer a cup of cold water in Jesus' name, and that we might point others to the source of the spring, Jesus our Lord.

Prayerfully we lift our world to God and God's care; use us Lord.

Prayer

Sovereign God, you are the source of living water, fill us to overflowing that we might be signs of your love for others. May the spring of your life giving water bubble up to us a spring to eternal life and may we use this life to renew us for your work, to be your witnesses and hands and feet today wherever there is need. In Jesus' name. Amen.