



Seekers of Living Water

It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood as Jesus settles in alongside the well where long, long ago his ancestor Jacob saw a woman so beautiful in his eyes that the Bible says, "he wept." And, he showed off his strength—moving the stone off of the well all by himself. Today Jesus' neighborhood is the place of powerful, God-ordained, life and nation-changing meetings. It is important to remember that history, because the woman who shows up at the well, that Jesus starts a conversation with, has been described in many demeaning ways. It's often pointed out she's gone through so many husbands that no one wants to be seen with her. Her very presence is said to be embarrassing. We might assume she was at the well in the mid-day because she ran out of water. But, over history, Christians have come to conclusion she was such a bad person she wasn't allowed at the well with the other women. No good person would go to the well at noon-hour.

But, friends, Jesus went to the well at the noon-hour, it seems, because he might have been thirsty. He does ask for water. He likely went to the well because he knew it was a holy place—a place where God's goodness shined through people. And, if this woman was such a social pariah, I find it odd that when she went back to the town everyone in the community decided, "let's listen to her and go to meet this man."

So, whatever you've heard about this woman at the well, I ask you to set it aside just for the morning. Instead, imagine just like God brought Jacob and Rachel together at that well for a mighty purpose, imagine, today that God brought Jesus and this remarkable woman together at Jacob's well for a mighty purpose. Jesus, son of God and Jewish Rabbi meets a Samaritan, the long-lost relatives of the Jews, who knows theology and Scripture and happens to be a woman. Imagine this meeting isn't about so much about Jesus saving a broken woman, as the God of Jacob and Rachel embracing an entire forgotten tribe of people. Imagine this meeting at the well is for all seekers of living water.



2020 Commemorative Jewelry

In this past weekly devotion, I shared about Toilet Paper shortages. It seemed everyone was sharing about the Toilet Paper—one of my favorites was the 2020 Commemorative Jewelry. And, I had my own fun. I found out my son was one roll from empty, so I met him at his workplace, pulled my hat down low on my head, put on my sunglasses, and motioned for him to come to the back of my care, where I barely popped the trunk and pulled out a pack for him. I told him Bob's Bootleg TP Service had the good stuff. My wife handed me a CVS receipt and said, "look, for those who run out of toilet paper." I expect many of us have had some good TP laughs this week.

Yet, I have a hunch the TP shortage is fueled by more than a need for toilet paper. I suspect human beings have a longing to feel safe, prepared, and able to do something to provide for ourselves. I also believe Jesus was telling the woman at the well she needed, and her people needed, and the Jewish people needed, and we all need some things we cannot provide or store up for ourselves.



We need a "higher power" to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves.

Courage in the face of adversity, calm in the presence of the storm, strength for the journey, at some point in life we all run out of the emotional wherewithal to meet life's challenges. At some points in life, we all thirst for more. We all find ourselves, at one time or another, parched, running on empty, out of steam, in-the- midst-of a dry spell. We need living water—a spiritual source that never runs dry.

At almost every graveside I utter the words, "In the midst of life we draw near death from where does our help come? Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." At almost every funeral we read the 23rd Psalm. It starts out beside with us beside the still waters, but it speaks the powerful truth of the valley of the shadow moments in our lives. Jesus names five dry spells in the life of the woman he is talking with— five divorces or deaths or someone walked out on someone moments in the woman's life. And, he doesn't judge her, or turn his back on her, or do anything but tell her the promise of the 23rd Psalm—"Your cup runneth over" when you have the living water...and I am that living water. There'll come a time when Jews, Samaritans, holy mountains and holy wells, and synagogues and churches won't be as important as worshipping God in truth, and spirit—from the heart. Jesus just obliterates the divide between Jew and Samaritan, between man and woman, between parched spirits and filled spirits.



Living water, "the cup that runneth over, even in the presence of our enemies," "the peace that passes understanding" comes through God's love in Christ. These are unusual days we are living in and they give us a chance to lean into God's care. It's easy to become anxious. It is not uncommon to hear swearing about something being cancelled. And, no, the Corona Covid 19 death toll hasn't reached that of other diseases. But, every most death is still someone who was loved. Both of my parents are in that most at risk age and health-concerns age group.

A pastor friend shared this poem written just this week...suggesting what I would call worship in spirit and truth—of treating this odd time in our world like a Sabbath time.

Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love--
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.
--Lynn Ungar 3/11/20

Her words stir my heart and remind me God whispers into our lives even now—even when there are concerns of over-reacting and under-reacting, even with a whole lot of inconvenience, even with this reminder of our mortality, limits, and the fact that things like virus' and natural disasters 'no nothing' of male or female, rich or poor, Jew or Samaritan, Atheist or Christian. This time may make us more tender-hearted toward our neighbors, more aware of the ways we may unwittingly carry not just viruses, but attitudes, and ideas that may bring harm to one another. This is a time God might bring us back to Spirit and Truth.



So, during these odd and anxious times I invite us to take a moment a few times a day to whisper simple prayers:

"Jesus, provide for me what I can't provide for myself.

"Jesus provide us assurance that you are with us always & a peace that passes human understanding."



"God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference."



Come, All Who Are Thirsty

Jesus' neighborhood is filled with those who thirsty. Jesus neighborhood is filled with seekers. In the words of Isaiah the 55th chapter: "All who are thirsty, come to the water!" Let Jesus give you the living water and do for you heart and soul and mind, what you unable to do for yourself. All who are thirsty come to the water, and re-discover the peace that passes understanding. Amen.