

Sermon

Seeking: Will You Give Me A Drink?

A Sermon for Cary Presbyterian Church

Sunday, March 12, 2023

Third Sunday in Lent

John 4:5 So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

John 4:7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

John 4:16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the

Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

John 4:27 Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” 28 Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 29 “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” 30 They left the city and were on their way to him.

John 4:31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” 33 So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. 35 Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. 36 The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

John 4:39 Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

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Ex. 17:1 From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 The people quarreled with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses said to them, “Why do you

quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” 3 But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?” 4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” 5 The LORD said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

- I. Last week we considered Abram and Sarai’s call to leave home and set off on a life of wandering with God.**
 - A. That wandering over the course of several generations left the people of God in Egypt.**
 - B. After several more generations the people of God had gone from relative prosperity in Egypt to harsh enslavement and bitter toil.**
 - C. God sends Moses to offer yet *another* invitation to leave what had become “home” to wander off with God in search of a new a promised land.**
 - D. The 40 years of wandering between Egypt and the Promised land is, of course, reflected in the**
 - 1. 40 days Jesus spends in the wilderness being tempted,**
 - 2. and in our own practice of journeying through 40 days of Lent.**
 - E. Today’s passage from Exodus 17 happens not long after our new 40-year wandering adventure begins with God.**
 - 1. We are “camping” at Rephidim.**

2. **We are, “unhappy campers” as it turns out.**
3. **Thirsty, and afraid, and soon full of complaints.**

“Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?”

F. Seems a fair concern - can’t go long without water.

II. Thirst and water are at the heart of John 4 too

A. Jesus and disciples in Samaria

B. Jesus alone with Samaritan woman

1. **She is at Jacob’s well collecting water**
2. **Jesus, “Give me a drink.”**

C. This simple request is anything but simple

1. **He is Jewish**
2. **She is Samaritan**
3. **He should not be speaking to her much less asking for water — and his disciples wonder about that when they return and discover the situation:**

his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman,

D. Jesus introduces the woman to the idea of “living water” which comes from within and sates the thirst which might last a lifetime.

III. Two responses to thirst:

A. Accuse Moses of malpractice and God of abandonment

B. Engage in wonderment about the possibility of being sated by a living source within.

C. These are the stories given to us this third week of Lent.

IV. I wonder what you have experienced of deep spiritual thirst?

A. “Thirst” is used throughout scripture to describe the experience of a sustained yearning for God.

*Psa. 42: 1 As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.*

*2 My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and behold
the face of God?*

*3 My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”*

B. It is common to mistake spiritual “thirst” as the result of weak faith or sinful living.

1. If only you had faith enough

2. You suffer because you have sinned (Job)

C. When we were camping at Rephidim our impulse was to accuse . . .

D. My Story of pilgrimage with Ben Johnson

E. Ben was trying to help me learn at least two things

1. Everything worth having is *grace*

2. My thirst was not a problem to be solved so much as an invitation to live in the rain of God’s grace.

“God has been calling and I interpreted it as ‘absence.’ I have been ignoring, denying, until the thirst was so great I dropped everything to find him.”

“I was always in church, but never spiritually at home. My spiritual home was in my own solitude and in communion. I know a lot about God but I do not know the Lord.”

“I am off to Columbia Theological Seminary to see if I can fill this hole in my gut...”

- F. “I know a lot about God, but I do not know the Lord.”**
 - 1. Like me having left seminary knowing all about God as an idea — but not in a living relationship with the person of my risen Lord.**

- V. On Ash Wednesday — “keep a holy Lent . . . prayer...”**
 - A. Prayer is the life-blood of our *relationship* with God**
 - 1. With out it, our friendship with God atrophies and dies.**
 - B. Use the daily devotions we’re supplying**
 - C. Make a SMART goal of spending time with God**
“I will pray 5 minutes each day at morning and night.”
 - D. The thirst within us - this yearning to find and inhabit a fuller life is a sign that, once again, God is inviting us into a deeper communion with God and with each other as we set out on the wild adventure of following “the Holy One of Israel, who alone we worship and serve.”**