

Dranesville United Methodist Church  
Sermon – Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup> 2020  
**“Living Water”**  
**John 4:5-42**

Vision discussions included talking about:

Who should we try to reach?

How do we reach them?

Passage may help

Has become one of my favorite passages

2017 visited the site (Church built around Jacob’s well)

Nablus in Palestinian Territory

Bookmark by a Greek Orthodox priest/bulletin cover

Drank from the well which may be 3500-4000 years old

Deep (Rope attached to bucket over 100’ long) and cold

Passed by Mount Gerizim, where Samaritans still worship atop the mountain

Today’s lesson shows us how wide Jesus’ reach was

Compare with Nicodemus in Chapter 3 (Last week)

Jesus shared the gospel with both Nicodemus and Samaritan woman

**Nicodemus**

Respected heritage

Seen “signs” - Knows Jesus is “from God”

Takes initiative - **Goes to** Jesus at night

Represents official orthodoxy

Belongs to religious “in group”

Comes to faith slowly

**Samaritan woman**

Questionable past

Jesus is total stranger

**Approached by** Jesus at noon

Represents a despised heresy

Outcast

Comes to believe quickly

The gospel is for both of them and everyone in between

We all fit in there somewhere

Jesus chose to go through Samaria

Quickest, most direct route from Judea to Galilee

Dangerous for Jewish travelers

Animosity going back at least five centuries

Tired, been walking 4-6 hours

Noontime

Stopped at well while disciples went into town to buy food

Many men in OT met wives at wells

Isaac's proxy (Eliezer), Jacob, Moses, Isaiah and others

Woman came alone

Water usually drawn in morning and evening by groups of women

Being alone indicated that the woman was not part of the "in crowd"

Often been accused of being immoral. Was she? More later

Jesus asked for a drink

Shocking - speaking to a Samaritan AND a woman

Woman questions Jesus' motives

Jews and Samaritans don't share utensils and other physical objects

For Jesus to drink from the woman's water jug or bucket would

render Jesus ritually unclean

Think segregation in this country

Water fountains, bathrooms, swimming pools, etc.

Pentagon

Jesus essentially tells her that, if she knew who he was, she would have asked him for "living water."

Living water usually meant a flowing stream

Woman is very literal.

She and Jesus talk past one another

How can Jesus get this water without a bucket?

Ironic question: Are you greater than Jacob? (Who do you think you are?)

Jesus offers water that will cause her to never thirst again

Woman makes the right request for the wrong reason

Doesn't want to shlep to this well every day

Jesus seems to change the subject; but he is preparing her to receive the living water

She, like everyone in the world, is in need of a savior.

She may not know it or know to articulate that need.

Only those who know they are lost can be saved

No sign last week that Nicodemus knew (or admitted) that he was lost

We may have gone awhile before knowing we were lost and needed a savior

Maybe some here today who have never thought of  
themselves as lost  
Jesus tells her to go, call her husband, and come back  
She states she has no husband  
True statement, as far as it goes  
Maybe there is more to her story than we are told  
Maybe she got a bad rap she didn't fully deserve  
Why five husbands?  
Divorced due to adultery or some frivolous reason? Widowed?  
Don't know  
Strong-willed? Smarter than the men and intimidated them  
After first marriage, would probably always be second wife  
Disposable  
Last man may have taken her in without even the offer of marriage  
Accustomed to rejection  
Was immoral; but she may have been doing whatever she could to  
survive  
Would make her socially unacceptable  
How many folks today do we look down on who are doing whatever they can (not  
breaking the law, per se) just to survive?  
Easy to judge if we're not in those situations  
She was in a spiritual and relational desert  
The woman had not been cast away too far to be beyond Jesus' reach

Identified Jesus as a prophet  
Partly correct

She changed the subject  
Diversion?  
Genuine interest?  
The woman was bright, clever and spiritually hungry  
Like many of our neighbors  
Jesus met the woman where she was and evangelized her there  
He spoke to her of a time when God may be worshiped anywhere; not just in  
Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim.  
With the Holy Spirit dwelling in believers, people themselves become  
the Temple where God is present.  
This is the "living water" Jesus was talking about

As Jesus spoke to the woman, she expressed her longing for the Messiah. The Samaritans believed that the Messiah would be someone like Moses; a great prophet who would explain everything about God and be a spiritual leader.

The woman must have been stunned when Jesus told her that he is the Messiah. He would have identified himself as “I am;” the same way God identified Himself to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3. Those words would not have been lost on the woman.

She took off, leaving her water jug behind, to tell the townspeople what she had experienced.

Her first words, “Come and see,” are words of invitation used several times in the Gospel of John.

Persons are not compelled to follow Jesus.

They are invited to “come and see.”

Everyone is free to check things out for themselves and make their own decisions.

The woman had not arrived at a fully developed faith; but she testified to what she had experienced and to the extent of the faith she had.

Let’s recap her encounter with Jesus:

The conversation, when it started, seemed to hold little promise.

There were many differences between Jesus and the woman.

The woman took Jesus literally; causing her to be confused.

The conversation starts to go deeper.

Jesus’ request for her to bring her husband made her uncomfortable; so she may have tried to evade.

How many times have you ever started an argument or tried to evade when someone put you on the spot?

Jesus self-identifies as the Messiah

Through her subsequent actions many of the townspeople encounter Jesus and come to believe.

She seemed to witness to them with little concern for how she herself would be received.

How many times do we think we can’t talk to others about faith because we don’t know as much as we think we should?

This woman was an unlikely witness.

Compared to her, how do we stack up?

Remarkable fact.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman ( a female outcast, not a pious Jewish male) that he is the Messiah (or the Christ).

First time he told ANYONE.

Tells us something about how the gospel is for everyone

As the woman is leaving, Jesus' disciples return and have a conversation with Jesus in which they are confused when he tells them about having food of which they know nothing.

Jesus tells the disciples the fields (of souls) are ripe for the harvest.

Samaritans are the first people who come to believe in him.

Jesus and his disciples stayed two days with the Samaritans - ate their food, stayed in their homes, and continued to teach.

The Samaritans are the first to declare that Jesus is the savior of the world; not just for the Jews.

Good news for us

Nicodemus was told that "God so loved the world (not just the Jews) that He gave his only Son that WHOEVER believed in Him might have eternal life.

Our "Samaria" today may be the political and cultural boundaries that too often stand between people in the Church and the needy people outside its doors.

Jesus crossed those boundaries and challenges us to do likewise

Who are the people in our community who are "dismissed" or "invisible" and are ignored, like the Samaritan woman?

What can we do about it?

Appearances can be deceiving.

In many ways, most of our neighbors are not ignored by the world; but, like the Samaritan woman, they are in a spiritual desert.

The two largest demographic groups in our community are called American Royalty and Silver Sophisticates.

Most of you fall in one or the other group

The common assumption about both groups (and by many in the groups) is that they are well-off and don't need anything.

Old rich folks (like Nicodemus) need Jesus as much as anyone else

We can invite them the same way the Samaritan woman issued her invitations to "Come and see."

Jesus offers "living water;" but we need to drink!

How? Prayer, Bible reading, corporate worship, fasting, deeds of mercy and service.

This helps us prepare to encounter God

Makes us accident prone

Lent is a great time to drink of this “living water.”