

The Woman at the Well Meets Jesus

Adapted from *The Message*

John 4:7-26

Shelly: Narrator

Larry: Jesus

Kathryn: Samaritan woman

Based on *The Message* version of the New Testament

Part I

Narrator: On his travels, Jesus passed through a village of the Samaritans. Now Samaritans believed many of the same things that Jews did, but they disagreed on some important things as well. Therefore, they generally, did not live, worship or work with each other. But Jesus was trying to avoid his enemies, so he had to take a round-about way back to Galilee. He sent his disciples into the Samaritan village to buy food, and he sat down at a very ancient well, said to have been first dug by the joint ancestor of both Jews and Samaritans, Jacob, grandson of Abraham and Sarah, and father of Joseph. It was noon, a time when most people did not come to the well because the sun was high and it was too hot to be carrying heavy jars of water, work normally done by women. But a Samaritan woman happened to come by, carrying her large jug, just as Jesus sat down.

Jesus: Would you give me a drink of water?

Woman (shocked): How come you, clearly Jewish, are asking me, clearly a Samaritan, for a drink?

Jesus: If you understood the generosity of God and who I am, **you** would be asking **me** for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water.

Woman: Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this "living water?" Are you

a better man than our ancestor Jacob who dug this well and passed it down to us?

Jesus: Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty, again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst, not ever. The water I give will be a spring within, gushing fountains of endless life.

Woman: Sir, give me this water so that I won't ever get thirsty and won't ever have to come back to this well again!

Jesus: Go call your husband and then come back.

Woman: I have no husband.

Jesus: That's nicely put: "I have no husband." You've had five husbands, and the man you live with now isn't your husband. You spoke truth there, sure enough.

Woman: Oh, so you're a prophet! Well, tell me this: our ancestors worshiped God at this mountain, but your people insist that Jerusalem is the only place for worship, right?

Jesus: Believe me, the time is coming when you will worship God neither here at this mountain, nor there in Jerusalem. The time is coming, and has in fact come, when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people God is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly **themselves** before God in their worship. God is sheer being; Spirit. Those who worship must do so out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration.

Woman: I don't know about all that. I do know that the Messiah is coming. Then we'll get the whole story.

Jesus: I am he, you don't have to wait any longer or look any further.

Meditation

"It's who you are and the way you live that count before God....That's the kind of people God is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before God in their worship....Those who worship must do so out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves..."

There is nothing like a pandemic for bringing us face to face with the reality of our true selves. When we are emotionally stripped to the basics, we find ourselves leading with fear, or anger, or greed, or empathy, or compassion, or love, or, most likely, some combination of the above.

I invite us to take a few moments this morning, and meditate on Jesus' conversation with this Samaritan woman, where he called to her true self in a variety of ways, in which she responded with questions, a bit of evasion, but great openness. And he responded by offering living water, taking her questions seriously and offering her the very first revelation of his true self! Let us meditate on what our true selves look like when tested. How are you responding to the stresses and worries of these times? Are you remembering that your thirst is met with a loving offer of living water? Let's be in silent meditation together.

Part II

Narrator: Jesus' disciples came back from town, and they were shocked. They couldn't believe he was talking with a Samaritan and a woman of questionable reputation. None of them said anything, but their faces showed what they were thinking. The woman took the hint and left, even without her water jug! She ran to the village.

Woman (to congregation): Come see a man who knew all about my life, who knows me inside and out. Do you think this could be the Messiah??

Narrator: Many of those who heard her went out to see what all the fuss was about. After listening to Jesus for a while, they asked him to stay on for a couple of days and teach them more. So, Jesus did. After hearing what Jesus had to say, many people entrusted their lives to him. They came to the woman and said: "We're no longer taking your word for it. We've heard him for ourselves and know for sure: he's the Savior of the world!"

Meditation

If, indeed, this woman had a checkered marital history and was now living with a man to whom she was not married (which simply was not done in those times), then it is utterly amazing that she had the courage to go and proclaim her experience with Jesus, and even more amazing that anyone listened to her! Jesus had listened to her, knowing about her life. She listened to him, and out of this new relationship of love, she simply had to invite other people to share living water.

It is so important to listen to people, perhaps especially people we think have nothing important to say to us. In these challenging days, to whom are you listening and whom are you ignoring? Are we listening to people telling us about their lives as folk with chronic illnesses, who are Asian, who can't work at home and wonder where they are going to get money for their needs, who are homeless and/or hungry and wonder how their needs will be met? Children and teens who have lost the important connections of friends, sports, theater, music and other programs at school? Their parents? Take a moment to meditate and let us hold these folk in our hearts as we come to prayer today. Amen.