

- Thus the famous “woman at the well” story of John 4.
- To review some background:
- Remember that the Jews and the Samaritans had much hatred for one another—the Jews seeing the Samaritans as having polluted themselves by intermarriage with foreigners, and relations worsened after the Jews in 200 BC destroyed the Samaritans place of sacrifice on Mt. Gerizim.
- We can see this animosity in Luke’s Gospel (Luke 9) when a Samaritan town refuses hospitality to Jesus and the apostles, and James and John want to call fire down upon it.

-
- So, a Jewish rabbi of Jesus’ time would rarely deign to speak to a woman—especially a Samaritan one—and never in public...in order to prevent scandal and temptation, as well as the fact that women were viewed as inferior. Being a Samaritan was simply yet another mark against her.
 - She would have been seen as the lowest of the low...apparently shunned by even her own city since she was coming during the heat of the day to fetch water...and yet, Jesus requests her fellowship in asking for a drink. This is why both the woman and the disciples are so surprised.
 - But Jesus was a breaker of barriers, and contrary to some theories today, He was not constrained by societal norms or judgments of the time.
 - He dares, after all—against all convention—to speak well of a Samaritan in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), reinforcing our realization that God looks into the heart to see our worth, not at the surface.
 -
 - Thus Jesus is telling the Samaritan woman: *“If you will only recognize me, I will give you something far surpassing the*

material realm, which cannot satisfy—the true and everlasting refreshment of grace.”

- In their conversation, He gradually draws her toward the spiritual, even revealing her sinful past...and yet assures her the time is nigh for a new time of grace—not of futile sacrifices at Gerizim or Jerusalem, but the worship of God in Spirit and truth...which the reader knows will proceed from His Passion, death and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- Here Jesus explicitly affirms Himself as the long-awaited Messiah...the one who will show the world all things.
-
- But...an obstacle—the moral disorder of her life.
- So, the woman, faced with her sinfulness, implicitly admits (confesses) it, and yet rejoices in the fact that the Messiah Himself accepts her...so excited that she herself becomes an apostle to the heretofore rejected people of Samaria...leaving behind her jar and her worldliness—as the apostles had left behind their boats—in her enthusiasm of finding the source of truth.

-
- The woman is everyman, or everywoman...her realization of Christ the path of every true disciple: recognition, repentance, conversion, evangelization.
 - Christ lays bare what we truly are...stripped of our carefully-crafted façade...for He knows us even better than we know ourselves.
 - True Christianity begins with recognizing God...followed by a realization that the way we are living our lives simply will not do...but rather we must turn to God...turn to Christ. This is why all the Gospels begin with the theme: “Repent!”...the original

Greek text using the word “metanoia”, meaning a deep change of heart and conversion...

- ...for Jesus tells us: “...*true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth...and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.*” ...worship Him by word AND action...
- ...remembering St. Paul’s words to us today: “*God proves His love for us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.*”

-
- Today, and every day, Jesus is at the well of our hearts...asking for a drink...as He said upon the cross: “*I thirst!*”...not for water, but for our faith...our souls. Will we reciprocate love for love?
 - And in this story of this Samaritan woman He teaches us that the Christian cannot hold onto prejudices or divisions of peoples...for as St. Paul tells us: “...*in Christ Jesus you are all [children] of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” (Galatians 3:26-28 RSV)
 - He, in turn, gives His faithful the living water for which they thirst—God’s grace, His strength...and His forgiveness...if only we turn to Him...
 - “*For the Lamb...will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*” (Revelation 7:16-17 RSV)

Reading 1

[Ex 17:3-7](#)

In those days, in their thirst for water,
the people grumbled against Moses,
saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt?
Was it just to have us die here of thirst
with our children and our livestock?”
So Moses cried out to the LORD,
“What shall I do with this people?
a little more and they will stone me!”
The LORD answered Moses,
“Go over there in front of the people,
along with some of the elders of Israel,
holding in your hand, as you go,
the staff with which you struck the river.
I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb.
Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it
for the people to drink.”
This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel.
The place was called Massah and Meribah,
because the Israelites quarreled there
and tested the LORD, saying,
“Is the LORD in our midst or not?”

[Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9](#)

Responsorial Psalm

R. (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,
Where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen my works.”

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

[Rom 5:1-2, 5-8](#)

Reading 2

Brothers and sisters:

Since we have been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have gained access by faith
to this grace in which we stand,
and we boast in hope of the glory of God.

And hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For Christ, while we were still helpless,
died at the appointed time for the ungodly.

Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person,
though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die.

But God proves his love for us
in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

[Jn 4:5-42 or 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42](#)

Gospel

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar,
near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.
Jacob’s well was there.

Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well.
It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her,
“Give me a drink.”

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.
The Samaritan woman said to him,

“How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?”

—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—

Jesus answered and said to her,

“If you knew the gift of God
and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’
you would have asked him
and he would have given you living water.”

The woman said to him,

“Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep;
where then can you get this living water?
Are you greater than our father Jacob,
who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself
with his children and his flocks?”

Jesus answered and said to her,

“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again;
but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst;
the water I shall give will become in him
a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him,

“Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty
or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her,

“Go call your husband and come back.”

The woman answered and said to him,

“I do not have a husband.”

Jesus answered her,

“You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband.’

For you have had five husbands,
and the one you have now is not your husband.

What you have said is true.”

The woman said to him,

“Sir, I can see that you are a prophet.
Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain;
but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus said to her,

“Believe me, woman, the hour is coming
when you will worship the Father
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You people worship what you do not understand;
we worship what we understand,

because salvation is from the Jews.

But the hour is coming, and is now here,

when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth;

and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.

God is Spirit, and those who worship him

must worship in Spirit and truth.”

The woman said to him,

“I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ;

when he comes, he will tell us everything.”

Jesus said to her,

“I am he, the one speaking with you.”

At that moment his disciples returned,

and were amazed that he was talking with a woman,

but still no one said, “What are you looking for?”

or “Why are you talking with her?”

The woman left her water jar

and went into the town and said to the people,

“Come see a man who told me everything I have done.

Could he possibly be the Christ?”

They went out of the town and came to him.

Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat.”

But he said to them,

“I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

So the disciples said to one another,

“Could someone have brought him something to eat?”

Jesus said to them,

“My food is to do the will of the one who sent me

and to finish his work.

Do you not say, ‘In four months the harvest will be here’?

I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest.

The reaper is already receiving payment

and gathering crops for eternal life,

so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together.

For here the saying is verified that ‘One sows and another reaps.’

I sent you to reap what you have not worked for;

others have done the work,

and you are sharing the fruits of their work.”

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him

because of the word of the woman who testified,

“He told me everything I have done.”
When the Samaritans came to him,
they invited him to stay with them;
and he stayed there two days.
Many more began to believe in him because of his word,
and they said to the woman,
“We no longer believe because of your word;
for we have heard for ourselves,
and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.”

OR

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar,
near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.
Jacob’s well was there.
Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well.
It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.
Jesus said to her,
“Give me a drink.”
His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.
The Samaritan woman said to him,
“How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?”
—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—
Jesus answered and said to her,
“If you knew the gift of God
and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’
you would have asked him
and he would have given you living water.”
The woman said to him,
“Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep;
where then can you get this living water?
Are you greater than our father Jacob,
who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself
with his children and his flocks?”
Jesus answered and said to her,
“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again;
but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst;
the water I shall give will become in him
a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him,
“Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty
or have to keep coming here to draw water.

“I can see that you are a prophet.
Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain;
but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.”
Jesus said to her,
“Believe me, woman, the hour is coming
when you will worship the Father
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
You people worship what you do not understand;
we worship what we understand,
because salvation is from the Jews.
But the hour is coming, and is now here,
when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth;
and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.
God is Spirit, and those who worship him
must worship in Spirit and truth.”
The woman said to him,
“I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ;
when he comes, he will tell us everything.”
Jesus said to her,
“I am he, the one who is speaking with you.”

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him.
When the Samaritans came to him,
they invited him to stay with them;
and he stayed there two days.
Many more began to believe in him because of his word,
and they said to the woman,
“We no longer believe because of your word;
for we have heard for ourselves,
and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.”