

A Woman at the Well and a City in Need

John 4:1-38

Our story today is full of contrasts and these will serve as keys to understanding. Jesus needed to go through Samaria on His way from Judea to Galilee. This was an indication of haste. The Jews preferred to go the long way and avoid Samaria but if you were in a hurry, you could cut the travel time in half but it meant the probability of contact with the hated Samaritans. Jesus would end up staying in Sychar of Samaria for two full days. Was He in a hurry or did He have a plan?

Jesus sitting by the well, waiting for the disciples to return with lunch asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water. When she questioned Him, He offered her a drink of living water. So that He asked for a drink and then offered a better drink in almost the same sentence.

Jesus asked the woman to call her husband when He knew that she had been with 5 husbands and that the man who she was with was not her husband.

Jesus stayed by the well since He was too famished and thirsty to continue with the disciples into the city to buy lunch. When they returned with lunch, Jesus declined to eat since he said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

They had been in a hurry to get to Galilee for the sake of the ministry but they had possibly the most fruitful experience of their time with Jesus at this "random" stop on the way.

As the woman pointed out, it was especially unusual for a Jewish man to speak to a Samaritan woman and particularly if the woman was unaccompanied. But Jesus asked for a drink. He met the woman's hesitation with an offer to give her a drink of a different kind. Living water, once you drink it you will never thirst again. What is it? A fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

It took some work, but Jesus got her to the place where she understood that Jesus was talking about satisfaction and fulfillment rather than just her next trip to the well for water. This spoke to her since her existence had been nothing but dissatisfaction. Five husbands and now a boyfriend, will happiness be discovered in the next relationship? At this point, she knew better than to believe the lie even when she committed to believing the lie again.

Jesus knew her. She knew that He did. There was no viable explanation as to how He could know her as He did unless God had revealed to Him all that He knew. She concluded, ...you must be a prophet. Again, she tried avoidance but Jesus brought the conversation back to the principle of genuine relationship with God. A true worshiper is one who worships the Father in Spirit and in Truth. She was convinced and posed the possibility that Jesus might be the Messiah. Jesus answered, "I that speak unto you am He."

As she left, the disciples returned and just in time to see that Jesus had been talking to her. They wondered but lunch was on their mind and so they started laying it out - excited that they had been able to bring back a nice meal for their

weary and exhausted leader but then Jesus said He was no longer hungry. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me..." Everyone says that you have to wait 4 months for the harvest but look, the fields have already turned white! No doubt they looked at the fields around them and I cannot say what they saw but Jesus told them that He was sending them to reap where they had not sown. The harvest is now...

It was just about then that they were distracted by the noise of a crowd. The woman they had seen leaving was returning and the whole town was coming with her. Might have been a nervous moment for them, they were in the heart of Samaria and they were Jews but Jesus was not alarmed. Upon closer inspection the crowd was certainly not angry. There was a buzz among them but what was it about? The woman was speaking, "Here He is," (she was pointing to Jesus) "He's the man who told me everything that I ever did." The crowd buzzed even more enthusiastically and then Jesus spoke to them. He talked to them about living water, about the satisfaction that comes when you actually know God and

worship Him. Encountering Jesus had changed the woman and now it changed a town. Some of the people said that they believed as soon as they heard the testimony of the woman. Others said that they believed only after seeing Jesus for themselves. But they all believed.

Two days later when they continued their journey to Galilee, the disciples surely saw that the fields that were ripe and ready for harvest were the people of Sychar, Samaria. Funny though, they had gone into town there and come out with lunch with no idea that a spiritual harvest was ready for the reaping. What would have happened if they had come into town and cried out, "Come and see a man who turned water into wine"?