

March 12, 2023

John 4:5-42

Bible Study:

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

⁷A 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.) ⁹The 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.)

An understatement:

- **blacks & whites, Muslim & Christian**
- **plus, women were not to be alone with men**
- **one of the lessons in this story: Jesus challenges cultural norms, acceptable behavior**

¹⁰Jesus 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." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but 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." ¹⁵The 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."

- **I have often wondered about this "never thirsty" again drink**

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back."

¹⁷The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

I assume their conversation was longer than this, as later the women told her friends that Jesus knew all about her

¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet.

²⁰Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But 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. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship [God] must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Jesus' confession about being the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One justifies his throwing out the rules and welcoming all in

²⁷Just 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?"

Even though they would have liked to.

²⁸Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city.

She knew she was not welcome by the disciples

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?" ³⁰They left the city and were on their way to him.

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

Jesus’ “food”, he is nourished, by the healing of those left out, left behind; people who need to hear that they are loved and lovable by God – the “harvest” here are the many Samaritans coming to listen to him

This is also an argument for interdependence

³⁹Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They 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.”

Jesus’ staying is also barrier crossing

John shares this story with us to tell us Jesus is the Messiah, but there is so much more here.

The woman connects with Jesus and she asks the hard “Whys!?” of life questions

The Samaritans ask Jesus to stay, because they too have so many questions.

Their questions are our questions.

Like them, we thirst for answers

The thirst-quenching answers, the living water Jesus offers is found in his answers to the woman’s questions

How do we obtain this living water?

worshiping, honoring God in spirit and truth

Jesus teaches, by example, this worship of God breaks down barriers and assures the Samaritans, and us, that all are welcome into relationship with God.

Living as Jesus teaches is how living water bubbles up in us; This living water quenches our thirst for answers – not by giving us answers that are beyond our understanding, rather assuring us we need not be afraid of the unknown.

This knowing does not take away the hardships of life, but it reassures us that we are loved and lovable, we are valued and valuable.

Later in the story, when his disciples wanted him to eat, Jesus refers to food which he “harvested” as sharing this Gospel of welcome and acceptance

When I saw that Jesus talked about water and food in this way, I was reminded of one of the beatitudes: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.” Mathew 5:6

Our thirst is quenched and our hunger stilled, when we, like Jesus, share with the world God’s welcome

This sharing, this way of life, is how we “worship” God – “honor” God

By so living, living water of faith bubbles up in us. Amen.