

Give Me Water!

Our main Bible passage today from John 4 is a wonderful encounter between the Woman of Samaria and Jesus.

Let me quickly introduce you to this amazing woman.

The Bible writers don't give the Woman of Samaria a name. But we do know where she lives, and a little about her personal situation.

This woman is a Samaritan, a people group who were looked down on by the Jews because of their history of intermarriage with non-Jews and their different beliefs about where to worship God.

We can also infer that this woman was viewed as a second class citizen, even among her own people. Going to fetch water at the hottest part of the day was surely unusual. Maybe she went at noon to avoid meeting the other women. Maybe she felt ashamed or afraid.

We also know that she had a history of broken relationships. Multiple husbands. Relationships she was too ashamed to mention. Was this her choice of how to live, or was she trapped in a bad situation, abused, losing hope?

The theme for the service this week is Give Me Water. These are words which a weary Jesus said to this Samaritan Woman as she came to draw water from the well in the heat of the day – “Give me water”. And in the course of their interaction, Jesus offers living water to the woman, who then says to him, “Give Me This Water”.

In this passage, we have Jesus turning an everyday scenario into a deep spiritual encounter.

And it all starts with thirst.

THIRST

The Woman of Samaria wanted water, but what she really needed was to be seen and accepted and valued.

The Woman of Samaria wanted a drink, but what she really needed was a second chance and a new life.

She was thirsty: thirsty for water. But Jesus saw her real thirst.

Jesus offers living water, eternal life. As we read in Romans 5 verse 5, 'God's love has been poured into our hearts'. God's grace is abundant; a bubbling stream which never runs dry.

What are *you* thirsty for? What do you really need?

But this encounter with Jesus wasn't a one-way encounter. Jesus didn't just come and give her something. This encounter involved dialogue, conversation, relationship. There were questions and responses, in both directions.

DIALOGUE

Entering into dialogue with God always reveals something: a deeper level, a new understanding, an exciting revelation. It is through this dialogue that Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah for the very first time.

I would also say that entering into dialogue with another person can also reveal something precious, especially if it's someone who appears to be different to us. It could be someone from a different cultural background to us, someone with a different family situation to us, someone who is older or younger than us.

Do *you* dialogue with God? In your prayer life, do you expect to hear God speak with you?

And is there someone in this congregation with whom you have not spoken before? Maybe today is the day to start a conversation...

What emerges in this dialogue between the Woman of Samaria and Jesus is the perceptive nature of this woman.

PERCEPTION

The Woman of Samaria gradually sensed who she was talking with. At first she just saw a Jewish man (verse 9), then she recognized him as a prophet (verse

19), and finally, she realizes he is Messiah – God’s anointed one who would save the world (verse 29).

This woman’s perception enabled her to see God.

What special gifts of perception do *you* have that help you to encounter God? Maybe you have excellent analytical skills which help you to think about God’s goodness when you study the Bible. Maybe you have great listening skills which help you to hear God’ words as someone tells you about their day. Maybe you have empathic skills, which help you to feel God’s love for the world when you feel other peoples’ pain.

This all happened during the Woman of Samaria’s daily trip to the well.

ENCOUNTERING GOD IN THE EVERYDAY

Her daily chore of fetching water had been hijacked by God, and in her mundane existence she met the Saviour of the world. In her everyday, she conversed with the Messiah who promised her everlasting life. In her shame and sin, she met the Redeemer who knew her and accepted her.

Do *you* expect to meet God in your everyday life? Just imagine, there are a thousand opportunities for us to encounter God in each day – when we’re cleaning our teeth, when we’re waiting for the computer to start up, when we’re interrupted for the tenth time... God can be found even here.

This encounter totally surprised the Woman of Samaria! She was enlivened. Her spirit was woken up. Her heart was ablaze. So much so that she left her bucket behind and ran to the city to tell anyone who would listen!

THE POWER OF OUR TESTIMONY

Remember, this is the same city where she had felt ashamed to show her face, the city full of people she had avoided. Through her encounter with Jesus though, her value as a child of God had been restored. And now she was not afraid to tell her story.

And how did people respond? They listened. The city people must have sensed something authentic and powerful in her words. Some believed right there and then. Others were intrigued enough to want to spend time with Jesus themselves, and they too came to believe that he was indeed the Messiah.

Do *you* know the power of your own personal testimony? That simple thing that God did for you... that tiny prayer which was answered... that wonderful feeling you had when you were worshipping... this is your testimony, and when you share it, people may be drawn to Jesus!

As I draw to a close, let's remember that this Woman of Samaria, this woman who nobody valued, had the key which opened the Gift of God for herself and for many others. The key was her thirst, her willingness to engage in dialogue, and her perception.

So, dear sisters and brothers, let us learn from the Woman of Samaria.

The Woman of Samaria was thirsty. We are thirsty too. We are longing to be seen, to be accepted and valued. We are desperate for our deepest desires to be met. Let's be even more thirsty for God's good gifts, because he can meet our deepest needs.

The Woman of Samaria perceived who Jesus was. We too have the ability to perceive God in our midst. We can meet God in our everyday. Let's be alert to encountering God in our daily routines.

The Woman of Samaria dialogued with Jesus. We too can speak with God. God's Gift of living water is for everyone who says to Jesus, "Give Me This Water". And God's Gift sometimes reveals itself in the unlikely request from a weary person sitting on the ground who says to you, "Give Me Water".

The Woman of Samaria rushed to tell what had just happened to her. Let's be bold in sharing our personal testimonies. Telling someone about your own encounter with God might just ignite a spark of faith in them.

Dear sisters and brothers, let us accept God's Gift of eternal life. Let us drink from this bubbling spring of living water.

Amen