



*The Water and the Woman*

John 4: 5-42

Third Sunday in Lent, March 19, 2017

First Federated Church, Peoria, Illinois

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It was a hot day around noon. A woman made her way to the community well hoping that she would not meet anyone that she knew. Kind of like any one of us who tries to slip into the grocery store on a Saturday afternoon just to pick up a few things and not bothering to clean up or shave before we go. We hope that we do not see anyone that we know, but invariably we barely get inside the store when we meet a boss or co-worker or that “put-together” person that makes us feel inferior.

There was a man at the well. She hadn't anticipated that, but there he was. As she approached he asked her for a drink of water. By his appearance she could tell that he was a Jew. In that day and age Jews did not talk to Samaritans and vice versa. It has been that way for generations. Yet, there he was asking for a drink. “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?” Oh, if only she knew who was asking for a drink of water.

And so it went. He told her everything there was to tell. He knew that she had been married five times and that the man that she was now living with was not her husband. In a day and age when the sole prerogative for divorce lay with the man. She had been passed around from husband to husband like damaged goods. She was a victim of a culture that gave her no respect. When he told her that he already knew, he did it in a voice that did not condemn. It understood.

The stranger at the well also spoke of “Living Water”, not the water found in the well but water that bring real life. As he spoke to her she could feel her heart pound in a new way because he gave her a new way of life for Living Water is Life, real life. She could be freed from the chains of her past and begin life anew—or at least as new as anyone can begin life. It was a lot like being “born again.”

She ran to her village and told everyone she met about the man that she met at the well. “He knew *all* about me,” she said. “Could this be the Messiah?” They went out to see for themselves. So intrigued were they by him that they invited him to stay with them. He stayed with them for two days before moving on toward Jerusalem and the Cross that awaited him.

The disciples also went into the very same village that the woman entered. Yet, they didn't tell anyone about Jesus. They didn't tell anyone about how Jesus changed their lives. Their hearts were not yet set on fire.

This raises an interesting question for us to consider. When was the last time that *you* spoke to anyone about how Jesus touched your life? When was the last time that you were so excited about what Jesus was doing in this world, let alone your life, that you simply couldn't keep the good news to yourself? When was it?

The Woman and the Well; the Water and the Woman. To God be the glory. Amen.