

Devotions - November 12-18, 2006
by, Pastor Bonny Kinnunen
First Lutheran Church, Iron River MI

Going to the Well

This week's meditations reference John 4:1-26 the Samaritan Woman at the Well

Sunday, November 12

"Now he had to go through Samaria. When he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well." John 4.4-6

The Weariness

Jesus left Judea- Jerusalem area for the 38 mile trek to Samaria.
He crossed through the West Bank as we now know it to be called
He arrived at 12:00 noon, the heat of the day

Could it be that Jesus was tired?
I mean,
My Savior,
Your Savior,
The one who came to
Save us from our sins
Tired?

It nearly seems impossible
It almost seems like Jesus
Should be the energizer bunny
Never tiring
Never being weary
Never anticipating that he would be exhausted

He had traveled and was weary, I have traveled and I am weary.

Lord,
I am so exhausted
My spirit is parched
How can I pray
For the hurt is so dear to my heart
The words don't even come

I feel so alone
And overwhelmed
I feel like I am the only one who hurts
The only one whom
You have ever asked to bear this burden that I carry.

Let us Pray: Jesus, I never understood if you knew what it is to be weary. I see now that you do. Even in your weariness, you gave the Samaritan woman comfort, rest and new life. Could you please spare some new life for me? Amen.

Monday, November 13

7 *When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"*

8 *(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

9 *The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[a])*

The Woman

The Woman

An outcast, coming to the well at 12:00 noon
Obviously she was not one of the in crowd
She came in the heat of the day!
Was it to avoid the jeers and sneers
of the women who came at the break of the day
in the cool of the day?

Then there was this Jewish male
Resting
At the well
He was too tired
It was obvious on his face,
His demeanor was one of exhaustion
Then he asks the woman for a drink

It must have been a new day
Could it be real that a Jew would be asking her for a drink?
It was true, he was asking her for a drink
He once spoke to Nicodemus, a male person in the Jewish religious establishment
Now he speaks to a Samaritan woman without a name and of a people who were considered enemies.

Let us pray: Lord, you cross over many barriers of culture, race and creed and you offered new life. Could you please cross over into my world through the barriers that I have so vigorously placed to keep myself safe and give me new life? Amen.

Tuesday, November 14

The Environs - The Lay of the Land

Judea is located in central Israel. The main city in Judea is Jerusalem.
Samaria is directly north of Judea, The village of Sychar was located in Samaria.
Galilee is the country directly north of Judea. Nazareth and Cana are located there.
Jesus began in Jerusalem, heading north on the main road...crossing through Samaria
going toward Galilee.

The location of Samaria is important to the story, Jesus was in enemy territory and he should be cautious.

The Jews and the Samaritans hated each other.
It was no ordinary hate; it was centuries of hate.
The issue was "where is the right place to worship?" (John 4.20)
The Samaritans said it was on Mount Gerizim in Samaria.
The Jews believed the proper place was in the Temple in Jerusalem.

This disagreement can be traced to 721 BCE (2 Kings 17).
The rivalry intensified in 200 BCE.
In 128 BCE the Jewish troops stormed Mt. Gerizim and destroyed the shrine.
The schism continued (John 4.9)

The people were stuck, not only geographically, but stuck in their attitudes of hatred. Their attitudes and opinions of each other were deep and were not going away easily. Only a miracle could interrupt the animosity between these warring countries.

Let us pray: Lord, help me to know when to let go of my own walls of resistance and when to let the historical battle conclude. Allow me Lord to fill myself with you rather than the hatred towards the other. Amen.

Wednesday, November 15

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The puzzle

Jesus offers her living water,
she hears/understands running water - how can he offer her running water
He just asked her for a drink.
She has the equipment to get the water from the well.
He has none - how can he offer anyone living water?

The reader hears the irony
The woman who has running water believes this stranger is not greater than Jacob
We, the crowd, hear the living water message and know that Jesus is greater than Jacob
and he will fulfill what he said.
Jesus responds to both of the suppositions.
The permanent effect of the two waters on thirst
Jacob's gift may have been miraculous and its abundance legendary (v12)

But it could not satisfy thirst permanently (v13). Jesus' gift of living water, will quench thirst permanently (v14). The contrast between the two waters recalls Isaiah 55.1-2 "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters." Jesus description of his gift of water in (v14) clarifies the meaning to the expression "Living water": Jesus offers water that gives life. Those who drink from Jesus' water "will never be thirsty again".

Literally, the water within them will be water gushing up to eternal life.

Let us Pray: Lord, I am so parched, my spirit is parched, my soul is desperate, my wits are at their end. Comfort would be nice, a drop of water would be grand. But this, this Living water, could it be as you say it is? It quenches the thirst beyond all knowing not just for today, but forever? Amen

Thursday, November 16

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

The Asking

The woman who had been a student of the scriptures knew in that moment that she wanted what this person at the well offered. In relationships one may fall in love at first sight. The two individuals know within an instant that they shall be together forever.

In this situation, the Samaritan woman knows that Jesus had what she had been seeking. He offered her life everlasting. She wanted that life that would gush out of her soul, and give her the assurance of eternal life. And all she did was ask. "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

Let us pray: Lord, when we are parched and you present your answer in front of us let us go forward in confidence knowing that you have provided the answer. Amen.

Friday, November 17

The Fulfillment - pulling it all together

Water in the scriptures is very similar to that of the Upper Peninsula. It is everywhere.

Many significant events take place in the water and by the water. Consider the Samaritan woman, the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, the many ventures across the Sea of Galilee.

The Water and the Word has the power to change people. Water cleanses the body. Water and the Word cleanse the soul.

Jesus was invited to come to the Samaritan woman's house, and he stayed there for three days. He taught her and her friends. The Samaritan woman became one of the first evangelists. The news of new life was so overpowering, so overwhelming, that she could not had to spread the news.

Let us pray: Lord, we know that you are ever more powerful than we are willing to believe. Increase our unbelief, encourage us to rely on you for all that you have. Amen.

Saturday, November 18

Resources for the Journey

When you are parched and it is difficult to find the way, carry on, pray hard, immerse yourself in the scriptures and allow the Lord to fill you with the everlasting water that leads to eternal life.

Isaiah 40

- 28 Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.*
- 29 He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.*
- 30 Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;*
- 31 but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

Isaiah 43 Israel's Only Savior

- 1 But now, this is what the LORD says-
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.*
- 2 "When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.*
- 3 "For I am the LORD, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
Cush [a] and Seba in your stead.*
- 4 "Since you are precious and honored in my sight,
and because I love you,*

*I will give men in exchange for you,
and people in exchange for your life.
5 "Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west."*

Verses 6-17 are omitted for the length of the article.

*18 "Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
19 See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert
and streams in the wasteland."*

Lord, fill me, move me, love me, create me. Amen