

Third Sunday of Lent 2023 A  
Exodus 17.3-7///Romans 5.1-2,5-8///John 4.4-42

→this past week...I was looking at the want ads and came across the following in the For Sale section....it read: For Sale...sleeveless wedding gown, white, size 8, veil included. Worn only once....by mistake!”

→today we hear about a woman in Samaria who had five husbands...and we might ask...was she a person who made five mistakes or a woman who unfortunately had buried five husbands.

→we really aren't told and nor does Jesus tell her...that she needed to get her life in order...instead Jesus was more interested in bringing her from where she was...to a deeper relationship with God

→so he starts off with a simple request....he asks for a drink of ordinary water.

→now on the surface...it's a simple request but there are a lot of unusual underlying aspects about this whole episode...

→first of all...the Samaritans and the Jewish people hated each other.....they would have never used each other's cups or dishes...

→secondly.....the men, at that time, would have never talked to women in public like Jesus does...

→and thirdly...Jesus meets her at the well in the middle of the day...even though...in that culture....it would have been customary for women to come to the well early in the morning....

→now...not paying attention to any of these cultural taboos...Jesus asks for a cool drink of plain water

→the woman obliges and thus begins her encounter with Jesus as we hear...

PAUSE

→the woman...Jesus meets today most likely had a reputation of being a sinful person...

→and as we know...Jesus was often criticized for associating with sinners, but that didn't keep him from reaching out to her for a simple favor ~ all the while being aware that he wanted to do a greater favor for her....

→[and] little did she know **what** this encounter with Jesus would be mean for her

→in the middle of the day...she goes out to get some water from the town well and before she knows it...she is recruited as an apostle...announcing to her whole town about this person she meets...inviting the townspeople to come out to meet him.[as well]

→Jesus throughout his life accepted and embraced those whom others wouldn't even give the time of day to

→[and] how often do we find Jesus caring for and reaching out to those who seem unlovable --to everyone else and even to themselves?

→the Gospel accounts are littered with such stories..... and today we hear of another instance of where this is the case....the familiar story of the woman at the well.

→so what happens today...what is this story actually about?

→.....[well] perhaps most profoundly is that Jesus simply accepts the woman for who she was....

→even though she was a Samaritan...an enemy to his people...a person not even worthy of such a conversation.....he speaks to her about the love of God in her life

→even though she debates and questions his statements...he offers her his blessing.

---and that is why, [as we hear], she sings his praises in her village and to her neighbors

→it wasn't because he knew her past or because he could tell her things that no stranger should know that she spoke of him to her friends and neighbors

→but rather...it was because of his acceptance of her...his recognition and his message to her...

PAUSE

→in spite of knowing her past...her nationality...her religious attitudes...and the mixed history of her marriages.....Jesus, nonetheless treats her as if she was an equal...worthy of love, affection, dignity, and respect.

→and that is the point and lesson of this story for you and me today

PAUSE

→when we treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated

→when we can be with the wealthy and the poor.....and not show preference to either

→when we can debate with sinners and with saints --and have both feel respected

→when we open our homes to both friends and strangers --and they are welcomed

→[and] when we can encounter people without judging them,

→it is then that we know of the fullness of God's love in our lives and we are able to share it with others...

→this is at the heart of our Lenten season....our path in the wilderness

→to experience....the fullness of God's presence and love in our lives and to share it with others.

→and so...as we continue to move through this season of Lent...may we do so with the same courage and resolution as the woman encountered in today's gospel

→similar to the surprise of the woman in today's gospel...we never know what is around the corner...however with strong faith...a powerful belief, and an unchanging, fervent hope in God...we can be assured that it will always be something good.

→in many respects...with all the different challenges, trials and tests we face as we maneuver through life....it's Jesus's way of asking us for a glass of water...

→we might consider how willing and open we are.....to give **Him** one and answer his call...not only during Lent but in all the days of our lives.