

ST. LUKE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH-WELS

SERMON BY PASTOR ANTHONY E. SCHULTZ
LENT 1 MARCH 20, 2011 JOHN 4:5-26
(ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)



⁵So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 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 nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 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 now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." ¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 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 is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

People of God – precious in His sight for Jesus' sake:

Some of you, I know, heard about Henry. Henry is 84 years old – as old as my dad. Henry was driving through the desert in Arizona when he got lost. Do you know how that feels – to be lost – literally in the middle of nowhere? Henry tried to make a u-turn and went into the ditch! He got stuck! Henry had a little pasta to eat. Surely someone would come along and find Henry – and call for help. But they didn't! 24 hours went by – and nobody! It got cold at night – down into the 30s! Henry used the floor mats like blankets to keep warm. The real problem was – Henry needed something to drink! All he had was windshield washer fluid. Can you drink that? I always thought no – but that's all Henry had. In desperation – Henry smashed the wiper-fluid container with a rock – and used a napkin to filter it! Two, three, four, five days – before some hikers came by and found Henry. He said they looked like angels – when they came to his rescue! *Can you imagine?* Have you ever been that thirsty? There are of course – worse thirsts than being parched from not having a glass of water to drink. There's the thirst

that comes from sin and guilt! Jesus came to relieve that thirst – by the power of the Gospel! What a miracle of God’s amazing grace – that we are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. Today we will consider the probably very familiar account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. Today God’s Word very simply reminds us:

Jesus Gives Us Living Water

1. How parched our thirst
2. How refreshing His Gospel!

Context: the Gospel of John. ¹ **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** ² **He was in the beginning with God.** ³ **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.** ⁴ **In him was life, and the life was the light of men.** ⁵ **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.** ESV. The Gospel of John – the Gospel of the disciple Jesus loved – is not like Matthew, Mark and Luke – which stress very much what Jesus *did*. The Gospel of John concentrates on who Jesus is – and what Jesus *said*! There are chapter after chapter of red letters – the words Jesus spoke. There are chapter after chapter of what Jesus said in the Upper Room and on the way across the Brook Kidron and in the Garden of Gethsemane and when Jesus was on trial. John was the disciple who knelt at the foot of the cross – when Jesus died to forgive us. And John writes about what Jesus said that first Easter. John was the one who wrote, ³⁰ **Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** John 20:31,32 ESV John of course is the one who wrote the Gospel in a nutshell – the sign you see in the end zone of the football games, John 3:16. Jesus told Nicodemus – **For God so love the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** John 3:16 ESV. The 3rd Lenten Vesper – this Wednesday with Jesus’ permission Pastor Clark Schultz will preach about Christ crucified – in the light of *Nicodemus, the silent believer*!

As we catch up in spirit with the Lord Jesus this second Sunday in Lent God’s Word says: ⁵ **So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.** ⁶ **Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.** Jesus was passing through Samaria – a place carefully avoided by almost every Jewish person. Samaria – that band of land between Galilee to the north and Judah to the south was full of Samaritans – people who were not purely Jewish – not physically pure and not spiritually and religiously pure! Samaritans were part Jewish and part – whatever occupying army soldier or mercenary was their physical father. Their religion was part Old Testament – part Law of Moses – and part whatever fertility cult or worse religion their father brought from his homeland! No self-respecting Jew wanted anything to do with Samaritans – and no love was lost on the Samaritan side either. Which is what makes the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well all the more powerful. It’s this same racial and religious prejudice and racism and bigotry that makes the story of the Good Samaritan all the more powerful, too! It was to the village of Sychar – today’s village of Askar that Jesus came about the 6th hour – about high noon – as the Romans reckoned time. Jacob’s well – a place where a fresh stream of underground water could be reached. Jesus of Nazareth – true man as well as true God – was tired from his journey and so sat down beside the well.

⁷A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."...⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ...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 nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again." This is a classic case of what has been called "talking past one another"! Jesus is talking about the living water of the Gospel – the Samaritan woman is talking about well water! Well water only refreshes you for a little while. The Gospel is refreshment for a parched soul! How thirsty is your soul? There is no time like *Lent* – to refresh your soul – in Church – in Lenten midweek Vespers where we hear about Christ crucified. Adult Bible Class where we are studying the glory of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. What could be better than that?

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 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 now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." Jesus gently and firmly shared law and gospel. The law always comes first! It doesn't just bit or sting a little – it kills! There is no room for excuses – let me explain! There is no blaming other people – blaming circumstances – blaming our gene pool. We are responsible. We are to blame. We are without excuse. The Samaritan woman went through husbands like Kleenex. The latest person she was having "hugs and kisses" with – wasn't even her husband. He didn't even marry this one! This was embarrassing – which might explain why she was at the well getting water at high noon – the worst time of day – the time when she was least likely to bump into anyone! Again it would be easy to play the part of the Pharisee – to say, "I thank you Lord that I am not like some people I know – even this incredibly naughty lady! The fact is – though we may not have gone through 5 divorces – and now live in sin with someone else – we are all guilty before God. In our Good Shepherd Bible Class Tuesday night – one of the illustrations was a man who wanted unconditional forgiveness – no questions asked for the third week in March 1987. I dare say we need forgiveness for the third week in March – this year – and every year! We may be very careful what we say – although I was reminded again it would be best not to say words like heck and darn and worse – when we know very well what word they are substitutes for. While we might not be bothered – there are plenty of people who are! *We need to be reminded to show respect – because the 4th commandment says to show respect – to our parents, our teachers, police officers and fire fighters – people in positions of political responsibility in our Nation and in our State. In spite of their wickedness and evil – Jesus was never disrespectful of Caesar or Pilate or Herod!* The sins of the Samaritan woman had to do with "hugs and kisses" and marriage. While all sins are damnable – sins against the 6th Commandment are especially hurtful in this sense. Paul wrote to the Corinthians where "hugs and kisses" sins were everywhere! Paul wrote: **¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1** Corinthians 6:18-20 ESV "Hugs and kisses" sins – involve us completely – body, mind and soul. They are especially personal and hurtful and wrong. They cause terrible guilt and hurt and

shame. They do harm to our heart and to the person we sin with and the person we are unfaithful to! It is powerful comfort to see Jesus' compassion for this sinful woman and for us!

²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." Jesus is our Savior. He loves us and forgives us. He gives us a joy and happiness that will show itself in our day to day life. Last Wednesday was a wonderful day. The sun was shining. It was warm and still. It was spaghetti day at our Trinity St. Luke's School. There is a joy in getting high 5's from the littlest people on your way to get your spork—and you Styrofoam plate of spaghetti. On my way home from such a wonderful lunch—I had the convertible. I put the top down and all the windows down, too! There is an exhilaration that is contagious. Coming past the Upper Crust and the Pig I went past a neon yellow Mustang convertible full of young people. I waved out the top and they did, too! It was priceless. Coming back to Church at 3 p.m.—I thought well, maybe to play it very conservative—I would put the top back up. I was barely out of the subdivision—at the intersection of 4th Street and Highway 16 and the light turned red. I looked in my rear view mirror—and up behind me pulled a cranberry red Mustang convertible—with the top down! The light had just turned red—so I had about 3 minutes and I only needed a moment. Put the car in park. Pull up on the emergency break. Sun visors down—roof releases up and out. Push the little button and hold it down. Down goes the roof. The people in the car behind me cheered! How often does that happen? Off the emergency brake. Shift into drive—and the light changes. Down the road of life! Life is short! Jesus' love fills your heart and warms your life. We have reason—we of all people on this planet—have reason for a contentment—a warm child like confidence—hope and trust that Jesus' love and wisdom and power will not fail us. We are safe and we are secure for Jesus' sake! Because Jesus is the Messiah—the Christ—the promised one—my Savior!

It was about 4 ½ years ago—a guy named Eddie went jogging. He was 62 years old—and wanted to get in shape to run the Baltimore Marathon. He would go running during his lunch break—down in Florida by a thick woods and swamp. Eddie got lost—really lost—for five days Eddie was literally stuck in the swamp—with water up to his waist. Eddie got so thirsty he literally drank the swamp water. One of the searchers heard sloshing sound in the woods that didn't sound like a deer so he yelled, "Hello!" And a voice called back, "Help! Help! Help!" The searcher said, "Are you looking for Eddie?" And he said, "I *am* Eddie!" How happy—how thankful would you be—to be rescued—after being all alone in that swamp? We were in far more desperate circumstances—drowning in our sin, weaknesses, failures and mistakes! We were utterly lost and completely helpless. Still—Jesus came to rescue and refresh us with living water! We are refreshed—not just for a little while—but refreshed for eternity. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz