



Sermon, June 19, 2016  
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Coburg and Junction City United Methodist Churches

## **Come Meet Jesus: “Living Water, Living Worship”**

### **Scripture Reading**

### **John 4:1-27**

4:1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John” 2 —although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— 3 he left Judea and started back to Galilee. 4 But he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus 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.” 11 The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” 13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” 19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

27 Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?”

### **Comments**

### **Story of Samaritan woman and implications**

It has frequently been noted that Jesus broke social norms of his day by speaking with women and by treating them as equals. This was not

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something peculiar to his personality. Rather it was part and parcel of his spirituality. Jesus proclaimed as a statement of his mission that "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10 NRSV). As such, the spirituality of Jesus was manifested in his treating each person in the way that benefited and blessed them the most. This was as true of the women as of the men.

Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well in Samaria is illustrative of this. Several things are significant in this passage. First, Jesus speaks with the woman and expresses his need of water to her. It was the custom of his time for men not to speak with women in public, and it was further the custom of Jews not to fraternize with Samaritans. There was long-standing antipathy between the two groups such that neither acknowledged the other in public, nor risked being rendered unclean through contact. The Jews observed the same treatment of other gentile groups, although that practice was hard to observe strictly in Galilee. But here Jesus transgresses both boundaries. In order to live out his spirituality of blessing, he relates to this woman as a fellow human being rather than as a particular gender or ethnic group. It is not that her gender or ethnicity was insignificant. Jesus simply looked straight to the human person at the core.

The second thing of significance is that he was willing to have her minister to his needs before he ministered to hers. This is not to be overlooked. It is not uncommon for people in the helping professions to be unable or hard-pressed to receive the assistance or care of others. This can be a problem especially for men. Call it ego or pride, the fact of the matter is that refusing the care someone else wishes to give us or is able to give us sets us apart from them and works against the possibility for entering into meaningful relationship. Relationships of blessing are based upon relationships of meaning, and require the establishment of relationship first. Jesus establishes such a relationship with the woman at the outset by addressing her in her full humanness.

The third thing of significance is that he is free and ungrudging with what he offers her. He is not concerned that she might not be worthy or

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receptive. He has come that she might have life and have it abundantly. So he offers spiritual counsel and teaching in such a way that her life is touched and blessed.

*"Everything in this life passes away—only God remains, only He is worth struggling towards. We have a choice: to follow the way of this world, of the society that surrounds us, and thereby find ourselves outside of God; or to choose the way of life, to choose God Who calls us and for Whom our heart is searching."* – Fr. Seraphim Rose

Take a moment to reflect: "What is it that you thirst for deeply in your life?"

- Invite people to share a word or two.

### Scripture Reading

### John 4:28-42

28 Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 29 "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" 30 They left the city and were on their way to him.

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. 36 The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

39 Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

### Comments

### St Photini's story

At Pentecost Saint Photini received baptism, along with her five sisters, Anatole, Photo, Photis, Paraskeve, Kyriake, and her two sons, Photeinos and Joseph. She then began a missionary career, traveling far and wide, preaching the good news of the Messiah's coming, His death and resurrection. When Nero, the emperor of Rome, began to persecute

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Christians, Photini and her son Joseph were in Carthage, in Africa, where she was preaching the Christian gospel. After Jesus appeared to Photini in a dream, she sailed to Rome. Her son and many Christians from Africa accompanied her. Photini's arrival and activity aroused curiosity in the capital city. Everyone talked about her, "Who is this woman?" they asked. "She came here with a crowd of followers and she preaches Christ with great boldness."

Soldiers were ordered to bring her to the emperor, but Photini anticipated them. Before they could arrest her, Photini, with her son Joseph and her Christian friends, went to Nero. When the emperor saw them, he asked why they had come. Photini answered, "We have come to teach you to believe in Christ." The half-mad ruler of the Roman Empire did not frighten her. She wanted to convert him! Nero asked the saints their names. Again Photini answered. By name she introduced herself, her five sisters and younger son. The emperor then demanded to know whether they had all agreed to die for the Nazarene. Photini spoke for them. "Yes, for the love of Him we rejoice and in His name we'll gladly die."

Nero then proceeded to administer all sorts of awful tortures to St. Photini and her family.

After this Nero had her brought to him and asked if she would now relent and offer sacrifice to the idols. St Photini spit in the face of the emperor, and laughing at him, said, "O most impious of the blind, you profligate and stupid man! Do you think me so deluded that I would consent to renounce my Lord Christ and instead offer sacrifice to idols as blind as you?"

Hearing such words, Nero gave orders to again throw the martyr down the well, where she surrendered her soul to God (+ ca. 66).

- Share stories with one another, share one or two with whole church: "Who has planted seeds of faith in your life? What harvest are they yielding in your life?"

### **Closing story**

There's a story about a proud young man who came to Socrates asking for knowledge. He walked up to the muscular philosopher and said, "O great Socrates, I come to you for knowledge." Socrates recognized a pompous numbskull when he saw one. He led the young man through the streets, to the sea, and chest deep into water. Then he asked, "What do you want?" "Knowledge, O wise Socrates," said the young man with a smile.

Socrates put his strong hands on the man's shoulders and pushed him under. Thirty seconds later Socrates let him up. "What do you want?" he asked again. "Wisdom," the young man sputtered, "O great and wise Socrates."

Socrates crunched him under again. Thirty seconds passed, thirty-five. Forty. Socrates let him up. The man was gasping. "What do you want, young man?" Between heavy, heaving breaths the fellow wheezed, "Knowledge, O wise and wonderful..."

Socrates jammed him under again. Forty seconds passed. Fifty. "What do you want?" "Air!" he screeched. "I need air!"

"When you want knowledge as you have just wanted air, then you will have knowledge." (M. Littleton in *Moody Monthly*, June, 1989, p. 29.)

When we desire the abundant life that Jesus makes possible for the entire world as much as we desire air, then we will have it.