

## Lent Devotional March 17, 2025

### Scripture

#### John 4:27-42

*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?" 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."*

### Devotion

#### The Rev. Dr. Jennifer L. Stroud '18

Jesus is exhausted by the thousands thirsting for God's presence. Our Lord sits by a well in shunned Samaria. A woman enters to draw water. Women were the least of society, unvalued and invisible, their only worth was found in bearing children for their masters/husbands.

When Jesus speaks to her asking for a drink, she replies, "Why are you talking to me? You are a Jew and I am just a woman—and a Samaritan as well!"

Jesus values women and enters into a theological discussion with her, even though both Samaritan and Jewish women were often prohibited from studying the Torah.

Christ tells the woman that if she knew Him, she would be asking Him for living water. She asks Him for this special water not understanding that what Jesus offers her, and all of us, sates us beyond our earthly needs. Christ offers us the gift of salvation and spiritual power.

Jesus then tells the woman to call her husband. The woman tells the Lord the truth. She has had five men in her life who have been her "Baali," which is Aramaic for husband but also for master. This woman's entire sense of self-worth was found in the man/master who possessed her as wife.

Jesus commends the woman for her honesty. He was not demanding a confession. Christ was testing her for her openness to truth. For if we cannot be honest with ourselves, we cannot be honest with God. Jesus tells her of the good news for all those who wish to "worship the Father in Spirit and truth." This woman, who has sought to know God, even though it has been forbidden her, tells Jesus a Messiah is coming, and Christ, in truth, tells her, "I, who speak to you, am He."

We, all of us, are the woman at the well. We have drifted from one idol, one master/husband to another, yearning to quench our need for self-worth in societies' mandates of success. But, even as we achieve them, we still find ourselves thirsting.

The Samaritan woman's honest heart discerns the truth and runs to tell the townspeople that she has found "The Chosen One!" The people cannot deny that something, someone has changed her. For standing before them is an empowered person—one whose sense of self-esteem is now grounded in her relationship with the Creator of all things. She has found her true Master—the One who elevates rather than subjugates. The people enthusiastically follow her to meet Jesus. May we do the same! Amen!

### **Prayer**

Lead us, Lord, to be honest and open as we lay our hearts bare to Your presence and truth. Fill us with the same excitement as the woman at the well. Transform us through Your living water, so all who see us will be drawn to You! In Jesus' holy Name we pray. Amen!