

## *You will be found!*

*Psalm 95; John 4:5-42*

“Have you ever felt like no one was there? Have you ever felt forgotten in the middle of nowhere? Have you ever felt like you could disappear, like you could fall, and no one would hear?”

Before the Samaritan woman met Jesus these words probably crossed her mind. Day after day she would go about her routine as we heard. Probably went at a time when no one else would be there. She would get her water at the well. She would do what she needed to do to get through the day with as little interaction with others as possible. She faced judgment through looks, through pity, through whispers behind her back and looks. And then she is seen as if for the first time. Jesus was sitting at the well and when she arrived, he asked her for a cup of water. Jesus request is daring and risky. Jesus first of all should not be speaking to a woman, second of all she's a Samaritan. Jesus in that moment was crossing significant social boundaries of religion ethnicity and gender identity. When the Samaritan woman joined him at the well, he didn't see their differences. He simply saw that they were both seeking the same thing; they were both thirsty. What is so beautiful about this story is that Jesus asks for help from a woman. The Samaritan woman offers Jesus a drink and then she asked for living water and Jesus offers her the living water. It's a beautiful exchange between two people who should not have had any encounter.

It says in scriptures a Samaritan woman came to draw water and Jesus said to her give me a drink. His disciples had gone off to the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him how is it that you would you ask a drink of me a woman of Samaria and Jesus answered her if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying this to you give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

In the anthem that the choir will be singing soon it says,

“Well let that lonely feeling wash away. Maybe there's a reason to believe you'll be okay, because when you don't feel strong enough to stand you can reach, reach out your hand and always someone will come running. And I know they'll take you home, even when the dark comes crashing through when you need a friend to carry you when you are broken on the ground you will be found.”

You will be found. The Samaritan woman said, sir you have no bucket and the well is deep where do you get that living water and Jesus said to her everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again 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. The woman said to him, sir give me this water so that I may never be thirsty. It was at this point the Samaritan woman reached out, but she still doesn't truly understand what is being offered her. In that moment it's not just water like we get out of a tap. What she is being offered is compassion, friendship and the unconditional love of a stranger.

Jesus asked her to go and speak to her husband to which she admits she doesn't have a husband. She tells kind of a half-truth and Jesus then fills in the rest and says you're right you don't have a husband you had five and the person you are with now is not your husband. I can only imagine how red her face would have turned in that moment after that nugget of truth was shared from this very amazing powerful man who truly saw right through her. I'm sure she felt like he knew absolutely everything she had ever done and was probably freaking out. And in that moment Jesus didn't turn away. Jesus offered her living water; not the water from the well that quenches our thirst for that short time, but life-giving water that would feed her soul and change her life.

As she leaves Jesus and tells others about what just happened to her she begins to understand the deeper meaning of who she was speaking to as she calls out to others she says to herself he cannot be the Messiah can he? This text is good news for anyone who has ever felt the humiliation of stigmatization or the pain of being a nobody because Jesus did not turn away from this woman. On the contrary he engages her in conversation, takes her seriously and spend several days in her village. This woman her community and their welfare matter to Jesus. And as she goes to others she says come and see a man who told me everything I ever did and the unspoken words that said and he loved me anyways. In this moment in this time that we are living right now where we are practicing social distancing and self isolation, as we strip away the activities that bring us together, we need to remember that we are not alone. Our theme for lent is spiritual friendship and it's so important in this time that we reach out as spiritual friends. We need to keep connecting with each other especially if we are self isolating.

Brian McLaren, a well-known spiritual writer, reminds us that lent which is the season we are in is a season of accountability. It's also a way to practice our faith against our own impulses. Lent is about making space in our lives for God and for spiritual practices. Now for some of us this is going to be a great gift, for others it's going to be hard. But the Psalm reminds us about how necessary it is to praise God even in tough times. The psalmist writes do not harden your hearts sing to the Lord make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise. So, in the coming days and weeks we ask you to reach out to one another spiritual friends. Look around notice and see the people around you as if for the first time, as a gift, as someone that you can check in with. Exchange phone numbers if you're comfortable, find somebody to read scripture with over the phone or by facetime or even just promise that you both do it at the same time. Create your own prayer circle or your own prayerful practice. Check in with your neighbors. Meet them for the

first time if you haven't already. Take time to focus your energy on your faith and trust that God is with you drink of this living water. For all too often we are too busy and get caught up in our own lives and we forget to look around. We end up looking past each other instead of to each other.

“So let the sun come streaming in. Cause you’ll reach up and you’ll rise again, only look around, you will be found.”

The Samaritan woman was found. Jesus dared to face social persecution. He crossed the boundaries, but still maintained the social distancing. Spiritual friends look past our differences and are present with us without agenda, without a need to fix. Spiritual friends are with us and touch us spiritually, not physically. What Jesus offers the Samaritan woman is acceptance and love that surpasses our mistakes our past and our foibles. The question is will you drink of this life giving water and how will you reach out and spiritual friendship to one another so that all people are found and are known? Let us not be isolated from one another, let our spirits join. For this we give God thanks.