

Kiama Jamberoo Uniting Church
Lent 2
9.30am, Sunday 8 March 2020
Kiama

International Women's Day

Note: the Readings for Lent 2 & 3 have been swapped to enable us to reflect on the woman at the well on International Women's Day.

Reading: John 4:5-26

⁵So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷A 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.) ⁹The 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.) 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 no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' ¹³Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but 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.' ¹⁵The 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.'

¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' 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 have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' ¹⁹The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' ²¹Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 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 worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these 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' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' ²⁶Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

²⁷Just 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?' ²⁸Then 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?' ³⁰They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' ³²But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' ³³So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' ³⁴Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵Do 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. ³⁶The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds

true, "One sows and another reaps." ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

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 for 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 Saviour of the world.'

Reflection

So the disciples have been off finding something to eat.
When they get back, they find Jesus talking to a woman from a different culture!
Outrageous!

The woman takes her leave - she returns home to tell everyone about this man she has met.

This person, who seems to come from the wrong side of town, is the wrong gender to have any influence, she recognises Jesus for who he is - the Messiah, the Christ! And she issues an invitation to her friends and family, to her community - "come and see" (4:29)

When she has gone, Jesus reminds the disciples of the urgency of his work - we are not waiting 4 months for the harvest, now is the time - "the fields are ripe for harvesting" (4:35).

The last few verses tell us that many in the village came to believe in Jesus that day - "because of the woman's testimony" (4:39). And Jesus stayed there for a couple of days, in the Samaritan village. "And many more believed because of his word." (4:41)

We come here today to worship a God who reaches out to us and offers us Living Water. Many of us know what it is to receive the kind of grace and embrace from Jesus that this Samaritan woman received. Who then are we going to tell? We know that most people come to church, most people come to an encounter with Jesus, at the invitation of a friend or family member. Who are you inviting to "come and see"?
As we drink Living Water, as we know what it is to have our thirst quenched, how can we share that experience with people we share our lives with?

Let us pray...

God, you offer us the water of life. We turn to you in trust, knowing that your faithful provision can meet all our needs. May our gratitude propel us into your world to share the good news of new life with other thirsty people. Amen.

Rev Kath Merrifield

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