

Third Sunday of Lent 2020 A
Exodus 17.3-7///Romans 5.1-2,5-8///John 4.4-42

→this past week...I was looking at the want ads and came across the following in the For Sale section...it read: For Sale...sleeveless wedding gown, white, size 8, veil included. Worn once....by mistake.”

→today we hear about a woman in Samaria who had five husbands...and we might ask...was she a person who made five mistakes or a woman who unfortunately had buried five husbands.

→we really aren't told and nor does Jesus tell her she needed to get her life in order...instead Jesus was interested in bringing her from where she was...to a deeper relationship with God

→so he starts off with a simple request...he asks for a drink of ordinary water.

→now there are a lot of unusual aspects about this whole episode...

→first is that the Samaritans and Jews hated each other....they would have never used each other's cups or dishes...second....the men, at that time, would have never talked to women in public...and third...Jesus met her at the well in the middle of the day...even though...in that culture....it was customary for women to come to the well early in the morning....

→but ignoring all these cultural taboos, Jesus simply asks for a cool drink of plain water

PAUSE

→the woman...Jesus meets today most likely had a reputation of being a sinful person...

→Jesus was often criticized for associating with sinners, but that didn't keep him from reaching out to her for a simple favor ~ all the while being aware that he wanted to do a favor for her....

→[and] little did she know **what** that one day in her life would be like.

→in the middle of the day...she goes out to get some water from the town well and before she knows it...she is recruited as an apostle...announcing to her whole town about this person she met...and inviting the people to come out to meet him.[as well]

→Jesus throughout his life accepted and embraced those whom others wouldn't even give the time of day to

→how often do we find Jesus caring for and reaching out to those who seem unlovable --to everyone else and even to themselves?

→and our Gospel accounts are littered with such stories..... and today we hear of another instance of where this happens...the familiar story of the woman at the well.

→what happens today?

→.....[well] perhaps most profoundly is that Jesus simply accepts the woman for who she was....

→even though she was a Samaritan and an enemy to his people...a person not even worthy of such a conversation.....he speaks to her about the love of God in her life

→-- even though she debates and questions his statements...he offers her his blessing.

----and that is why, [as we hear], she sings his praises in her village and to her neighbors

---it wasn't because he knew her past or because he could tell her things that no stranger should know that she spoke of him to her friends and neighbors

→But instead...it was because of his acceptance of her...his love for her...his message to her...

PAUSE

---in knowing her...and in knowing her nationality...her gender...her religious attitudes...and the mixed history of her marriages.....Jesus, nonetheless treats her as if she was an equal

---as if she was a person worthy of respect, worthy of affection, worthy of love

---and that is the point and the lesson of this story for you and me today

PAUSE

→when we treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated

---when we can talk to the wealthy and the poor.....and not show any preferences to one or the other

---when we can debate with sinners and with saints --and have them both feel respected

---when we can open our homes to both friends and strangers --and have them both feel welcomed

---when we can encounter people and not judge them, not put them down, not patronize them

/

it is then that we will know of the fullness of God's love

it is then that we will be able to show God's love

---and it is then and only then, that we will achieve what we have set out to do this Lent and for that fact, every day of our lives

→to experience....the Lenten Blessings that Await.

→no doubt we are certainly in an uncertain time right now...

→the health circumstances we are facing have created a disturbing sense of anxiety, fear and distress among all of us...

→in some respects this represents a new type of existence...

→and the outbreak is stirring up anxiety, confusion and major inconveniences.

→it is a situation in which we can easily overreact or underreact...

→so....how can our **faith**....comfort and provide some relief in this troubling time...

→I think a good starting point is to remember the most repeated phrase in the bible.... “do not be afraid...have no fear.”

→I believe God probably sends us this message so frequently because fear is such a big part of human nature.

→and so....as we continue to move through this season of Lent...now in a very unusual and abnormal way...may we do so with the same courage and resolution as the woman encountered in today’s gospel

→we never know what is around the corner...however with strong faith...a powerful belief and a unchanging, fervent hope in God...it will always be something good.

→this too shall pass...and someday soon...Jesus will ask us once again for a glass of water

and before we know it...we will be once again singing his praises...thanking God for his goodness and living life to the fullest!