

THE FIRST 15

Monday, April 8, 2024

Today is Monday, April 8 and we are studying the Gospel of John chapter four.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, as a new day dawns I praise your holy name. Thank you for your constant presence in my life. I lift up my hands to rejoice in your love, care and companionship. Please provide your wisdom and guidance for today's comings and goings. As I read from your Holy Word and reflect on John's Gospel, speak to my heart through the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." John 4:4-14

REFLECTION

In the fourth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus was on the move. He left the Judean countryside and traveled to Galilee through the region of Samaria. He entered a town called Sychar near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph centuries earlier. There was an ancient well there called Jacob's well. The Patriarch Jacob gave his descendants the gift of water.

In the heat of the day a thirsty Jesus rested near the well after a long journey. He had no method of drawing the water. A woman came carrying a jar. This was likely a large pottery jug with a handle and a rope tied around it. On two accounts Jesus should not speak to her: she was a woman and she was a Samaritan. Jews did not associate with Samaritans. Not only did he speak to her, he asked her for a gift of water and intended to share her drinking vessel. This unlikely exchange under the noon day sun opened a conversation about another gift of water. A gift that comes from God. Living Water.

In this long-ago, well-side encounter Jesus was the one who was thirsty. Today I am the one who is thirsty. I am not necessarily physically dehydrated, but I am spiritually thirsty. Like most

people, I continually fill myself with the things of this world, which satisfy my inner cravings for a while, but eventually leave me dry and empty again. What I really seek, although I don't recognize my true thirst - is God. The psalmist, David understood. In Psalm 63:1, he writes, "O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

The gift of Living Water Jesus offered the Samaritan woman at the well was not physical water. An endless supply of water would be very convenient indeed. Jesus revealed the deep spiritual thirst of all human beings. The emptiness of the soul that can only be filled by God. Everyone who drinks a glass of ordinary tap water or chugs a 16 ounce plastic bottle of spring water will be thirsty again. But those who drink the water that Jesus gives them will never be thirsty. The water that Jesus gives becomes a living spring that bubbles over with joy and gushes up to eternal life. This water is a gift of God. Given freely. Available to all. Even to a lone woman living in the region of Samaria. Even to me.

Ask: When have I experienced a parched, thirsty, emptiness in my soul? When have I experienced the fulfilling, refreshing, abiding joy of the Living Water of Christ?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I seek you, I long for you, my soul thirsts for you. As you spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well about the gift of water, speak to me. Jacob gave his descendants a lasting gift of water that satisfied their thirst for generations. Yet you offer a gift that is far greater. Reveal the gift of Living Water God offers his children. Forgive me for continually trying to satisfy myself with the meager things of this world and not seeking the gift of Living Water you provide. Fill me full, to the brim. Amen.