

Sunday, 19 Mar 2017 – Third Sunday of Lent  
*"A spring of water welling up to eternal life"*

**Reading 1:** Exodus 17:3-7

**Responsorial Psalm:**

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

**Reading 2:** Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

**Gospel** :

John 4:5-42

**Meditation:**

Would you do a favor for someone who snubbed you or treated you like an enemy? Jesus did just that and more! He treated the Samaritans, the sworn enemies of the Jews, with great kindness and respect. The Samaritans who lived in middle region of Israel between Galilee and Judaea and the Jews who lived in the rest of the land of Israel had been divided for centuries. They had no dealings with one another, avoiding all social contact, even trade, and inter-marriage. If their paths crossed it would not be unusual for hostility to break out.

When Jesus decided to pass through Samaria he stopped at Jacob's well because it was mid-day and he was both tired from the journey and thirsty. Jacob's well was a good mile and a half from the nearest town, called Sychar. It wasn't easy to draw water from this well since it was over a hundred feet deep. Jesus had neither rope nor bucket to fetch the water.

When a Samaritan woman showed up at the well, both were caught by surprise. Why would a Samaritan woman walk a mile and a half in the mid-day heat to fetch her water at a remote well rather than in her local town? She was an outcast and not welcomed among her own townspeople. Jesus then did something no respectable Jew would think of doing. He reached out to her, thus risking ritual impurity and scorn from his fellow Jews. He also did something no strict Rabbi would dare to do in public without loss to his reputation. He treated the woman like he would treat one of his friends - he greeted her and spoke at length with her. Jesus' welcoming approach to her was scandalous to both Jews and Samaritans because this woman was an adulteress and public sinner as well. No decent Jew or Samaritan would even think of being seen with such a woman, let alone exchanging a word with her!

Jesus broke through the barriers of prejudice, hostility, and tradition to bring the good news of peace and reconciliation to Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles alike. He demonstrated the universality of the gospel both in word and deed. No one is barred from the love of God and the good news of salvation. There is only one thing that can keep us from God and his redeeming love - our stubborn pride and wilful rebellion.

What is the point of Jesus' exchange with the Samaritan woman about water? Water in the arid land was scarce. Jacob's well was located in a strategic fork of the road between Samaria and Galilee. One can live without food for several days, but not without water. Water is a source of life and growth for all living things. When rain came to the desert, the water transformed the wasteland into a fertile field.

The kind of water which Jesus spoke about was living, running, fresh, pure water. Fresh water from a cool running stream was always preferred to the still water one might find in a pool or reservoir. When the Israelites complained about lack of water in the wilderness, God instructed Moses to strike the rock and a stream of fresh living water gushed out. Even though the Israelites did not trust God to care for them in the wilderness, God, nonetheless gave them abundant water and provision through the intercession of his servant Moses.

The image of "living water" is used throughout the scriptures as a symbol of God's wisdom, a wisdom that imparts life and blessing to all who receive it. "The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life". "Living water" was also a symbol for the Jews of thirst of the soul for God. The water which Jesus spoke of symbolized the Holy Spirit and his work of recreating us in God's image and sustaining in us the new life which comes from God. The life which the Holy Spirit produces in us makes us a "new creation" in Jesus Christ. Do you thirst for God and for the life of the Holy Spirit within you?

**Questions for Community Faith Sharing:**

1. Who are the Samaritans today?
2. Is Jesus the 'living water' sufficient for me or do I have to look elsewhere.

*"Lord Jesus, my soul thirsts for you. Fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may always find joy in your presence and take delight in doing your will."*

Source: [www.dailyscripture.net](http://www.dailyscripture.net), author [Don Schwager](#)