

John 4:5-26 / Romans 5:1-8  
“What a Wonderful Savior”  
Lent 3

March 19, 2017  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction]**

The way God works is so, so, scandalous.  
Jesus does the unthinkable. The outrageous.

He dares to speak to a woman in public. That’s strike one.  
She’s a half-breed gone astray from God’s ways. She’s a Samaritan. Strike two.  
She’s a very naughty still-in-her-sins Samaritan woman.

    Been through five husbands.

    Now she’s with a sixth man. But he’s not her husband. Strike three!

Strike one! Strike two! Strike three!

Baseball season is upon us and you know what that means: You’re out!

**[Advice]**

“Want a little advice, Jesus?”

    Stay away from sinful women like that.

        She may just be brash enough to put the moves on even you!

        Don’t tarnish your reputation.

        Hang out with some reputable folks for gosh sakes.

        Three strikes and you’re out I always say.”

We – you and I – wouldn’t give her the time of day.

We believe that we’re better than her.

Compared to her we’re not so bad. We think.

    But you see, we’re not.

When you’re squared up before the Lord all the comparisons with others stops.

You, me and this naughty, sinner, Samaritan woman,

    we are all equally sinners before the Lord.

And yet Jesus deals with sinners. Ungodly sinners. He comes to them.

    To the naughty Samaritan woman at the well.

    To you.

    To me.

We're all in the same boat.  
Deadbeat sinners.  
Dead in our trespasses and sins.  
As the bumper sticker says:  
    No Jesus! No salvation!

If you keep Jesus safely at bay and all that's left is your dead sinful self.  
And you all know where you'll end up without a Jesus who ALWAYS has mercy  
on sinners.

So Jesus comes with forgiveness. Forgiveness for all your sin.  
    What sin do you have?  
    What haven't you done that needed to be done?  
    What did you do that shouldn't have been done?  
    What is the sin that you want to stop doing  
        but just can't muster the will and strength to quit?

It's all forgiven. Not counted against you. For Jesus' sake. He died. For you.

What love! What mercy! It's stunning.  
After all, "while we were still weak . . . Christ died for the ungodly."  
You. Me. This woman. The world.  
"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

And with forgiveness for Christ's sake, there's life and salvation.

[*Water*]

Jesus is the water. He's the drink. The elixir of eternal life.  
Drink from Jesus (believe in Him) and there's the true worship of God!

Yes, that's right. The highest worship of God is faith in Jesus!  
That's worshiping God in spirit and in truth.

So drink up! Drink deeply! As much as Jesus avails Himself for you.

Guzzle down His Word of Absolution with your Amen.  
Imbibe His most holy Body and Blood in the Sacrament.  
There He comes. In the divine service. For sinners like you and me.  
And there you see His glory!

The divine glory to always have mercy and to be gracious to you and me.

And so because of Jesus you have peace with God.

Everything is all right with God.

Everything is restored with God because of Jesus and His dying for you.

□

And now for some more amazing stuff from the Lord.

Now because of that Good Friday that Jesus did for you,

you can rejoice even in whatever sufferings you have.

That's right. Rejoice even in sufferings.

Why? Because the Lord uses your sufferings to strengthen your faith muscles.

Do you realize that?

What are your sufferings?

A broken marriage?

An illness?

The loss of a loved one?

Your everyday sins?

Well, when you're the lowest, when you're the weakest, there's Jesus.

Your sufferings teach you to trust in Him all the more.

To count, to trust, to pray and to rely on Him more than ever!

And when you're the weakest, then you're strong.

Strong in Jesus who died for you.

Now you know that God's cup of tea is working His power in weakness.

So you rejoice in your suffering

because the Lord uses them to strengthen your faith in Him.

And as the faith muscles are exercised through your sufferings

the Lord gives you endurance.

To trust in Him for the long haul.

Not just for the sprint! But for the marathon!

And then more giving from the Lord.

Endurance produces character and character hope.

Through your sufferings you learn that God's grace is sufficient.

That Jesus will not ever leave you or abandon you.

His promises are always certain and sure.

**[Conclusion]**

For the glory of God, Jesus always has mercy.

He is gracious to you and brings you back to Him

with penitent hearts and steadfast faith.

He did it with the Samaritan woman.

And He's done it with you. What a wonderful Savior! Amen!

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Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...  
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,  
for ever and ever! AMEN!