

John 4:5–26

March 29, 2020

“Life-Giving, Life-Forming Water”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

5th Sunday of Lent

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

COVID-19 has changed... it has changed, well everything.

Millions of Americans, Billions around the world are

Self-isolated, quarantined, imprisoned in their own homes
for 14 days or more.

Students studying abroad are back home.

In fact, all college students are home.

School buildings are closed and virtual classrooms are open.

Restaurants and stores were open for 24-hours,

and now they are closed and our church buildings are closed too.

No more going to the office, going to work.

No more going to the basketball court for march madness or the NBA.

No more trips to Disney World or any Disney park | as they are all closed.

Once we could say the sun never sets upon a Disney park,

but now we wonder if the sun will ever rise in our own world.

ALL we know as normal

has been stripped away,

and we are left asking, “Who am I?”

[Past]

So we look to the past...

We look to the past to identify who we are.

Our heritage and genealogy,

our family traditions,

and the events of our own lives,

they give us a picture of who we are **AND** where we have come from.

Some of us are from | a proud family dynasty

with the perfect picture of the patriarch and matriarch over the mantle.

Others are from | an alienated home

where certain members of the family—perhaps you—are never mentioned.

The self-perception of the family
affects the self-perception of the individual.

The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well was proud of her town's history.
After all, it's associated with the 2,000-year-old well of Jacob.

She was quick to assert the claim of her Samaritan people,
that they worshiped God on the correct mountain, Mt. Gerizim,
instead of Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

This woman at the well...
She comes across as a proud ambassador of a pious people.

She was not, however,
proud of her own life, of her past sins.
She tried to slide past the question of who her husband was,
how many husbands she had had,
or whether the man she was living with now
was indeed her husband.

Whether in pride or shame,
she was not prepared to hear the words
of a present Messiah and Savior.
But Jesus dealt with her in a loving manner.

[Present]

When asking, "Who am I?"
We look to the past and we look to the present.
We must recognize who we are in the present:
sinners in need of living water from Jesus.

In our lesson today, notice it is Jesus who asked for hospitality from a stranger.
He asked for a drink of water.
But in the end it was Jesus who offered hospitality to a stranger.

The woman at the well was a stranger meeting a stranger
And it is understandable
I mean just think about
It is understandable
that the woman was reluctant to explain her life to a stranger.
Jesus, however, wants her to open her life
in honesty to God, who is Spirit and truth.

To do this, Jesus had to confront her — with her sin.

The mirror shows us our sin.

The law always accuses.

And when Jesus showed her – her sin,
she did not deny what he said.

Instead, his words prompted her to call her neighbors:

***“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.
Could this be the Christ?”***

Let me be clear about this:

Jesus did not dredge up the woman’s past and present life in order to shame her.

Rather, he was there to offer her a new life, living water,

a life connected to him—which wells up to eternal life.

She was a woman who needed a Savior.

When Jesus came to tell her

she had a Savior,

a Savior who had come for her and for all.

[***Future***]

When we ask, “Who am I?” ...

We look to the past, we look to the present,

but it very important ...

very important that we look to the future.

As you are stuck at home asking, “Who am I?” ... look to the future.

For we have a certain future in Jesus.

We have **Peace**:

When Jesus took a cup of water from this woman

—a foreigner from the sect of the Samaritans, a sinner

—he showed how far he would go to make peace

with sinful men and women.

There are no outcasts beyond his reach or outside his concern.

We have **Forgiveness**:

In promising her the arrival of her Christ, her Savior,

the anointed Messiah of the Jews,

Jesus has once again committed himself

to the road that will lead him to the cross.

There he will pay for the woman’s sins and for ours,

and take them to death.

Jesus himself would die as the outcast,

the rejected Son of the Father,

crucified outside the city as unclean—all for our sake.

He took our uncleanness upon himself
in order to wash us clean.

We have **Salvation**:

We are washed clean in baptism:

In the waters of Holy Baptism,
forgiveness is bestowed on us;
our sins are washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

In Baptism, we receive the Spirit,
whom Jesus promised would be the source
of streams of living water within us,
quenching our thirst (Jn 7:37–39).

Through Baptism,
those who formerly were considered unclean outcasts
are made clean and incorporated
into the new covenant people of God.

We have **Eternal Life**:

Jesus has touched many lives.

And they are lives to which a promise has come.
That promise is not a dull, passive, lifeless thing.
The promise of God,
the promise of eternal life won by God's Son,
is a promise that comes to us
with the full power of God's Spirit.

The water that Jesus gives us
wells up to life
—an abundant life in Christ now, and eternal life that will last forever.
For never again will we thirst (v 14; Rev 21:6; 22:17)!

[Conclusion]

So in these days of COVID-19, which seem dark and uncertain...

We recognize our shameful past,
We acknowledge our uncertain present, and
We trust our hope filled future.

Eternal life. Salvation. Forgiveness of sins. That is God's Grace.
Knowing God's grace and mercy, gives us peace.
Which is ours in Christ Jesus!

Jesus quenched our thirst with waters that become a life-giving life-forming
spring within us. AMEN!

As followers of Christ, "Keep loving one another earnestly
And show hospitality to one another without grumbling." AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)
