

RECTOR'S MESSAGE – Sunday, March 8, 2026

"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

Let's break down Jesus' and the Samaritan woman's encounter at the well in John 4:5-42.

Context: Jesus, a Jewish man, travels through Samaria, a region with deep-seated animosity between Jews and Samaritans. He encounters a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. In His moments with this Samaritan woman, Jesus asks for water. Here He breaks social and cultural norms, showing He's more interested in her than tradition (vv. 7-9). We too might find ourselves in this kind of situation where we allow religious traditions to get us stuck with mundane things rather than allow the Holy Spirit guide our Christian and faith paths.

However, Jesus recognizes all these religious barriers as well as cultural nuances and offers "living water" – eternal life, not just physical hydration but for the spirit (vv. 10-14) - for the woman in her weariness of life to understand the true meaning of worship. And her story of the past life-style (five husbands) and present (living with a man) are exposed, yet Jesus sees her worth (v 16-18). We too might find ourselves in a similar space where our past life-styles, bad choices and decisions continue to hurt our physical and spiritual well-being; and we become so vulnerable to the whims and caprices of how our society sees and judges us. As Christians redeemed by grace, Jesus looks beyond our faults knowing who we are; He knows your name and what you do. He knows our worth as humans.

So here, Jesus declares true worship isn't about location (*Jerusalem* or *Samaria*) but spirit and truth (v 20-24). Worship isn't about church attendance; isn't about position of power or influence in the church; isn't about fame or accolades; ***it's about the very truthful state of our hearts!*** This is how Jesus reveals Himself to those who **"worship Him in Spirit and in truth."** Thus Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah to this thirsty soul of a woman longing for a new chapter of her life! This Samaritan woman recognizes Him as the Messiah; "I am", He too affirms this (vv. 25-26).

Who Jesus is:

- **The Messiah:** Jesus in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, who brings salvation to ***ALL people*** (not just a particular set of people). ***GOD IS GOD OF ALL PEOPLE: RACES, COLOURS, CULTURES, LANGUAGES, ETHNICITIES, etc.*** He has come to break the human, cultural and religious barriers that make us stand against each other. He offers us eternal life, by quenching our spiritual thirst to have more relationships with us like he does with this Samaritan woman, so that we all can have good relationships, reconciliation and peace among ourselves. Jesus is the **Bridge-Builder**, who breaks all cultural or religious barriers, showing His love for all people. He is the **Truth Revealer**, who exposes hearts, yet offers transformation and acceptance regardless of who we are and our unworthiness!

What's the impact of His encounter with this Samaritan woman?

- The woman's transformation from shame to becoming a life of impactful testimony as an evangelist, sharing the goodnews of Jesus with her community (vv. 28-30, 39-42). And through

this, many Samaritans come to believe in faith, recognizing Jesus as "Savior of the world" (v. 42).

This Lenten season, we are also called as Christ's disciples to be the mouth-piece for Him - in word and good deeds, in attitude and character. Let's look beyond our human limitations: cultural or religious differences, language and deeply embedded societal norms, values, and traditions that impede our behavioral changes in communications, or access to opportunities to see good things in each other to "*worship Him in spirit and truth.*"

Thanks be to God. Amen.

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