

March 23, 2014

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

"The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus and his disciples were travelling from Jerusalem to Galilee to continue Jesus' teachings.

They were faced with a dilemma. Should they travel through Pharisee - dominated Judean territory and expose themselves to the constant harassment and entrapments that the Pharisees have subjected them to on their previous journeys? Or should they travel through Samaria.

Why would Jesus risk himself and his friends in Samaria the homeland of the Jews' bitterest enemy?

The Samaritans had made a place, other than the temple in Jerusalem, the proper place for worship. In the Jews minds , this was in direct disobedience to God. Further this new place to pray was in Samaria, their land, on the top of their mountain. As a result of this single but most important of issues, Jews and Samaritans hated each other.

Jesus has already showed us on a number of occasions how well he was able to outwit, outthink and defeat the mental traps that Pharisees had previously set for him.

Having dealt with the Pharisees so well and considering most Jews had never and would never in their wildest of dreams set foot in Samaria.

Why then did Jesus and his companions travel through Samaria?

They stopped at noon in a small town in Samaria called Sychar. Jesus was tired and sat by the well outside the town while the disciples went to buy food.

A local woman comes to the well to draw water and Jesus asks her for a drink. They end up talking and in fact the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, as recorded in scripture, is considered to be the longest discourse that Jesus had in his life in this world.

Historians tell us this was not the usual time of day to go for water in Samaria. The woman probably came at that particular time because she did not want to meet people.

Later in the story we learn that she had lived a "bad life" based on accepted social standards for the time, maybe even "bad" for our time. She had been married five times. Now she lived with a man who was not even her husband.

It is easy to suggest that she was a social outcast and normally nobody would talk to her.... but our Lord Jesus spoke to her.

He asked the woman for a drink of water from the well. It surprises **us** that she did not refuse him. It surprised **her** that a Jew would ask this. She told Jesus that she did not expect his request. Then, Jesus replied:

Jesus said, 'You do not know the gift of God. You do not know who asks you for water. If you did, you could ask me and I would give you fresh, living water.'

From "The Message", a modern day translation of this story: Jesus said everyone who drinks this well water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst.....not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life.

This really got the woman's attention.: the woman said to our Lord, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus taught us that we are spiritual beings living in human form. That we need our spiritual thirsts to be quenched and he was the one to provide the water.

As an integral part of your process to call a new Rector here at Trinity, we will be asking the congregation to participate in a survey of what is most important to us as a community.

The document we will be using as recommended by the Diocesan office, is called "Conversations", specially designed for parishes around our size. I have worked through this document and the questions invariably ask us our priorities relating to our spiritual lives in this place.

They don't ask where we would like the well placed in this building so that we may draw physical water to satisfy our physical thirsts.

Rather the document asks us questions such as how does our work at Trinity help us to connect our faith to other aspects of our lives.

In the context of today's Gospel, I believe the mission of Trinity is to grow and become stronger by drinking from the cup of ever living water.

This gives us the spiritual strength and conviction to reach out to others in our surrounding community, even to places and people outside our comfort zone.....to reveal to them the love of Jesus Christ and what his Kingdom and the local branch office, Trinity, has to offer.

On Ash Wednesday, three of us took "ashes to go" to the Aurora railway station. Maggie, Linda and I found ourselves in unfamiliar territory. 6am on a dark snowy morning with earnest would-be travelers intent on boarding their trains: People with concern for the issues in their lives rushing through the train depot. In my mind at least the last thing on earth they wanted was do-gooder Christians interfering with their normal schedules.

The responses we received from the travelers was totally different. Virtually everyone was appreciative and many people welcomed the administration of ashes. The three of us were glad we ventured to travel through our Samaria that morning.

The story of the woman of Samaria teaches us that each and every person in the world matters to Jesus. The question I posed earlier..... Why then did Jesus and his companions travel through Samaria?

It seems that he went just to meet the woman at the well. He wanted to bring new life to her.

As a result, the town of Sychar heard about Jesus.

The story also teaches us this. Jesus offers to forgive everyone. He offers new life to all, even if they have been very "bad" in their lives.

Jesus also came for people from every nation. His kingdom is for everybody, from every country and every culture.

The world is full of people who need spiritual help. But Jesus can do nothing for people who do not know this.

Some people think that we are good enough and there is no need to confess our evil deeds to God. We fail to confess our wrong attitudes. and will not let Jesus save us from our sins. We either do not know or perhaps we forget that that he can give us hope.

We cannot have new life from Jesus until we ask for it, to ask to drink from the ever living waters.

and.....before we ask, we must want it. We must realize that we need it and then do something about it. No excuses or blaming of circumstances we find ourselves in.

Then our lives will be transformed just like the woman in Samaria.

Amen