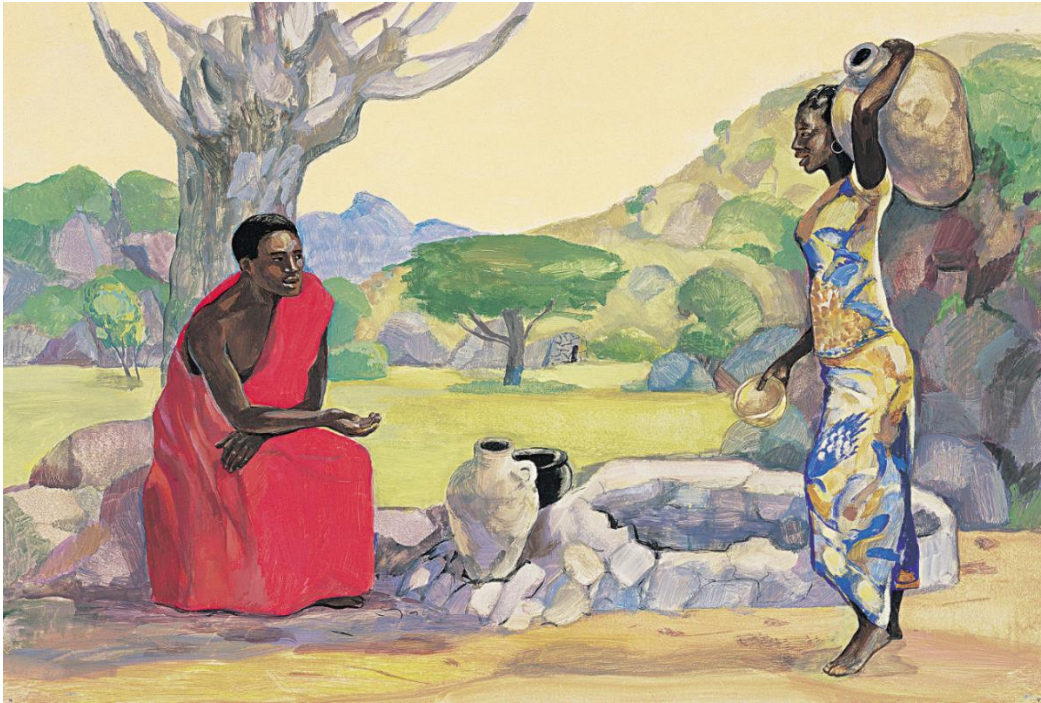


The Woman at the Well

“She is of mature age, and has had a not altogether reputable past. She is frivolous, ready to talk with strangers, with a tongue quick to turn grave things into jests; and yet she possesses, hidden beneath masses of unclean vanities, a conscience and a yearning for something better than she has, which Christ's words awoke and which were finally so enkindled as to make her fit to receive the full declaration of His Messiahship, with which Pharisees and priests could not be trusted.” The Gift and the Giver, Alexander Maclaren.



JOHN 4: 5-30

⁵Jesus came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans!)¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."¹¹"If you please," she challenged Jesus, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"¹² Are you greater than our ancestors Leah and Rachel and Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it with their descendants and flocks?"

¹³ Jesus replied, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to Jesus, "Give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband! ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "I can see that you are a prophet." answered the woman. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you people claim that Jerusalem is the place where we must worship." ²¹ "Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship Abba God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You people worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jewish people. ²³ Yet a time is coming - and is already here - when real worshipers will worship Abba God in Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers Abba God seeks. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and God's worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that the Messiah - the anointed One - is coming and will tell us everything." ²⁶ Jesus replied, "I who speak to you am the Messiah."

²⁷ Just then the disciples returned and were surprised to find Jesus talking with a woman. But no one dared to ask, "What do you want of him?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come and see someone who told me everything I have ever done. Could this be the Messiah?" ³⁰ At that, they came out of the town and made their way toward Jesus.

FOR REFLECTION

1. The Samaritan woman is the first disciple in John's Gospel to recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah. As an LGBT person or ally, when did you recognize that Jesus was a Redeemer for you?
2. The Samaritan woman brings the whole town to see and hear Jesus. What has been your experience as an LGBT person or ally about bringing your person and gifts to the church? What has been your experience in bringing others to the church?
3. Unlikely disciples who live on the edge of society become models of faith. As an LGBT person, do you see yourself as an "unlikely disciple?" How?
4. "*You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?*" In biblical times, Samaritans were among the most despised people in Judea. No

- Jewish person would have any contact with them. As an LGBT person, do you feel marginalized because of sexuality and/or gender identity? How does the story of the Samaritan Woman challenge you to rethink your identity and dignity?
5. In a village culture where women normally drew water together only at dawn and dusk, the Samaritan woman journeys alone at noon to draw her water. LGBT people have often been ostracized from society and left alone and isolated. How does Jesus address loneliness in this passage or elsewhere in scripture?



PRAYER

Gracious and holy God, please give me:
intellect to understand you,
reason to discern you,
diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you,
words to debate you, a spirit to know you,
a heart to meditate upon you,
ears to hear you,
eyes to see you, a tongue to proclaim you,
a way of life pleasing to you,
patience to wait for you, and
perseverance to look for you.

Attributed to St. Benedict of Nursia (ca.480-555)