**“Living Water”**

Exodus 17:1-7

Romans 5:1-8

John 4:5-26

Lent 3

“Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

These days, the most direct route between Jerusalem and Nazareth is a town called Nablus. Sychar (the place of our Gospel account) is enfolded in the eastern portion of this town where a Greek Orthodox church has enclosed what still remains as Jacob’s well. 135 feet deep, still a 4-foot opening taps into a widening that goes down to what’s an underground river.

Today, Nablus is considered **the “heart” of the Palestinian West Bank mood and spirit and energy**. It’s a **militant** town, flags flying high with political signs and a buzz of movement **self-protecting** and **self-advancing**. **Palestinian nationalism** runs high in this place, and much of what becomes **embattled** between the Palestinians and Israelites finds its planning, often, **there**.

**Text**

It was **that way** 3,000 years ago. A thousand years in, a self-separation from Jerusalem separated them, also, from God. Pagan worship from self-chosen locations made them, and their places, places to bypass (not engage), never did Galilean Hebrews take straight paths to Jerusalem and back. Here (Samaria) was an **existence to** **avoid** and **walk “around”, not through**. …. **Jesus** **walked through**.

The ”Samaritan woman” represents every “Samaritan woman” that would ever follow her. She’s the 4-times divorced woman now living together with a man (abandoning marriage), pagan since birth and **knowing nothing different**. She’d heard **rumors** about other religiosity; hoped (somewhat) for a savior idea that filtered somewhat down her practice, so she had the concept of need and a “hero” in mind but knew no promises guaranteed of it … no steadfast line through **Judean** lineage and **Bethlehem’s** birthplace and a vow of **Presence** brought to **Jerusalem’s** temple.

Jesus asked her to **bare forth water**, then begins to interact with her discussing the **substantial difference** between a cup from out of Jacob’s well and what He could give in a **“living water”** as He called it.

First of all, **what that is** is **distinct from all other water**. We’ve got an Old Testament account of **miraculous (free gifted) water in a desert out of a rock** … and 2-Million people’s **quantity of it** for drinking and cooking and washing / pouring (provided) out of a **giftedly touched** rock in the middle of nowhere. This **hints at** “**living** **water**” of which Jesus offered, but **even that** was **just a** **hint**.

Probably context offers the most help. Coming immediately off of Jesus’ insistence with the Pharisee Nicodemus on a “rebirth by water and Spirit”, then a discussion with John the Baptizer right after that about Jesus’ and His disciples progressive baptizing people themselves, we come to the place (Jacob’s well)that’s historically rumored to be a place of a major amount of baptisms in the Christian movement and growth, **baptismal waters** have to be the water (but not, just, water) that Jesus refers to giving of Himself, a “water that quenches thirst forever and becomes (in His gift from it) a spring within a person that **wells up to eternal life**”. Jesus said later that “He that is baptized and believes **will be saved**”, and Paul tells about the “**newness of life**” that people can **walk in, baptized**, and Peter **says that it / “baptism now saves you”**. ….

**Who is this “rebirth of living water and Spirit” for? A Samaritan woman.** “I have no husband”, she admitted in confession. “You are **right in saying that**”, Jesus said, and told her that **He knew everything about her …** **then** **OFFERED THE GIFT**. ….

Jesus had an entire catechism lesson with this woman after the gift offer, but it began with the **GIFT OFFER**. “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews” (**One Jew** from the line of them was what He meant). “The hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and Truth” (the Holy Spirit and Him who is Truth), “for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him” (from every tribe and nation … and circumstance). “God is in His Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in that Holy Spirit and Truth that is Jesus” “’The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ).’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am **HE**.’”

“’Sir, **give me this living water that you speak of and offer’**, the woman said.” “**Baptize me into You and Your sacrifice, Messiah of mine / the Christ**” would have been another way (in the entire context of it all) that she could have **put that**.

**Application**

Then the “welling up to eternal life” begins in the growth that Paul refers in Romans 5. Just before His Romans 6 baptismal connection to Jesus described in the living waters of it, he says that “since we have been justified by faith in that rebirth by water and Spirit, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this gracious promise and connection in which we can say (as He does) that **we stand**, and we **rejoice in hope of the glory of God**. **More than that**, we **rejoice in even our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured (and there’s that living water, baptismal word, “pouring”) into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (water and Spirit)**.” ….

For the comfort of **any “Samaritan woman” like you or I or any seemingly on the outside of any deserved favor by God for actions or inactions or pagan worship or sinful living (or any societal or background reason for being apart from the seeming in-kingdom-crowd), God in Christ offers this wonderful news: “while we (all of us) were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (us to the very-least-acknowledging-one of us in lifestyle or situation). “At the right time the Christ, Jesus, died for us” … and each one of us no matter of what background or sin or situation. “One will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us” (and anybody) “in that while we were still sinners, Christ died FOR US … and us ALL**.” ….

I’m rather hoping that **you** know yourself as a good bit of a “Samaritan woman” as I do. And, if so (and in that humility and honesty, as you could hear it from her) the Lord Jesus, then, has the gift of “**living water**” to be **enjoyed in your baptism**. May **knowing that** be the **joyful and quenching** “spring consistently welling up in you to eternal life”. May that water be known as **“forever” refreshing**. **Receive Jesus as the Messiah (the Christ) of, then, all people in this world … including YOU**.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.