

## Third Sunday in Lent March 15, 2020

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

# Living the Lutheran Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.*

*An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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<http://www.davidlgray.info/2014/03/23/a-fresh-perspective-on-the-woman-at-jacobs-well/>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 823/4 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 500**

**“May God bestow on (embrace) us (with) His grace”**

“After Luther was declared an outlaw by Emperor Charles V in 1521 (meaning anyone could kill Luther without fear of punishment), Elector Frederick the Wise spirited Luther away to Wartburg Castle near Eisenach. Luther returned to Wittenberg in 1522 to restore order within the congregations. He also soon began writing hymns for the people to sing. Today’s hymn is one of the first in that outpouring of new hymns in German...

When Martin Luther (1483–1546) wrote in 1522, “recently many islands and lands have been discovered, to which the grace [of God] has not appeared for these 1500 years,” he wrote of the discovery of the Americas (AE 16:135n 7). The next year Luther wrote our hymn for today, “May God Bestow on Us His Grace,” a hymn of thanksgiving for the rich blessings of God. This paraphrase of Psalm 67 is also a hymn for missions; in fact, it was the first mission hymn of the Reformation...”

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies>

Es woll' uns Gott genadig sein is the tune for LSB 823 and TLH 500. “Elvet Banks” is the alternate tune for LSB 824. “Elvet Banks is a modern hymn tune, in the somewhat unusual meter of 87.87.87.87.7, set in the Lutheran Service Book (LSB) of 2006 for the hymns: *To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord (and) May God bestow on us His grace*, recommended for use in Lent and set as an alternative to the older tune *Es Wolle Gott uns gnädig sein*. The tune was selected for the LSB specifically to make some of these unsung hymns more accessible...”

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elvet\\_Banks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elvet_Banks)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQZso1\\_X7E4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQZso1_X7E4) Tune: TLH 500, LSB 823 [Andrew Remillard](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arTnMeK0GR4> From a festival setting of Divine Service, Setting Five of Lutheran Service Book, designed for churches with smaller musical forces; it is arranged for two-part choir, organ, trumpet, and congregation.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgBtWTP01vg> One of very few examples of the melody for Elvet Banks. [Steve Hohnstadt](#), organist at Calvary Lutheran Church, Kansas City, MO, Concordia Publishing House, 2013

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

**O.T.**– “you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it”

**Psalm** – “let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!”

**Epistle** – “justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ”

**Gospel** – “**and he would have given you living water**”

**Exodus 17: 1-7; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next week: Isaiah 42:14-21; RCL, 1 Samuel 16:1-13)**

*At first glance, Exodus 17 may seem like just another story of Israelite bellyaching about leaving Egypt. It appears to reveal nothing new about Israel or her journey toward the land of promise’s freedom.*

*As you might expect of people traveling through a wilderness that has no fast food restaurants or rest areas, our text’s Israelites are thirsty. At Marah’s earlier campsite, they’d at least found water, though God had to miraculously transform it to make it potable. Here, however, at a mysterious place called Rephidim, Israel doesn’t find any water. And so, not surprisingly, she not once, but twice loudly blames Moses for her quandary.*

*Of course, Israel has already spent much time grumbling against Moses. Trapped between her thirst and Marah’s bitter water, she grumbled against him, asking him what she could drink. In the Desert of Sin all of Israel groused to Moses and Aaron because everyone was hungry.*

*This time, however, Moses appears to recognize that the Israelites’ whines have become potentially deadly. So he pleads for God’s advice. In almost the same breath, however, Moses also tries to put the angry Israelites’ thirst into some kind of perspective. “Why do you quarrel with me?” he asks them in verse 2. “Why do you put the Lord to the test?”...*

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/lent-3a/?type=old\\_testament\\_lectionary](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/lent-3a/?type=old_testament_lectionary)  
Doug Bratt, Pastor of Silver Spring (Md.) Christian Reformed Church.

## **Water from the Rock**

**17** All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” <sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” <sup>4</sup>So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” <sup>5</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in

your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7And he called the name of the place **Massah**<sup>[a]</sup> and **Meribah**,<sup>[b]</sup> because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

## Israel Defeats Amalek Verses 8-15

- a. [Exodus 17:7](#) *Massah* means *testing*
- b. [Exodus 17:7](#) *Meribah* means *quarreling*

“So, the Almighty tells his prophet to take his staff and strike a particular outcropping. A crack develops, and water begins to pour out for the people. The boulder, which he hits, releases a stream to satisfy the physical needs of those weary travelers.

Later, centuries later, another rock is struck to supply the water of life for thirsting souls. The Apostle Paul reveals the Rock is Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4), pierced for you and me.

So, when did others strike Jesus like Moses struck the sizable stone, and when did the water outpour from Him? The scriptures tell us. At His crucifixion, Roman soldiers “came to Jesus and found out he died earlier, so they didn’t break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, punctured his side with a spear. At once, blood and water gushed out” (John 19:34).

The prophet Moses cuts the rock in front of the people, Jesus allows others to slice Him on the stony slope of death. The Rock, Jesus, is punctured to provide for all people, to release salvation’s waters, on a dark Friday long ago...

The hymn writer, Toplady, links the rock and Christ’s spear-pierced side with such insight. “Let the water and the blood, from Thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure: cleanse me from its guilt and power” (*LSB* 761, stanza 1).

So, where do we find the water and blood, the double cure for sin, from Christ’s wounded side? The scriptures speak of blood and water pouring from our Savior’s side. Why? To show us He died—but also more. The gush of water and blood point forward to how the salvation of the cross will come to us, here today.

Those blessings flow to us in the moving stream of Baptism and come to us in Jesus’ blood of the Supper. From His side pours out the purifying cleansing from above, bringing us the treasures of eternity. The “washing of water by the Word” cleanses us, removing every stain, spot, and wrinkle (Ephesians 5:26). The Holy Spirit bring us life, giving us a birth from above through such a heavenly washing (John 3:5)...

Do not miss how Jesus calls baptism a birth from above, from heaven.

Not finished, the Crucified also prepares a meal for our spiritual strength. From the cross gushes His blood, which nourishes us as we journey to the Promised Land of glory. The Supper feeds us and, through Jesus and what He supplies, we live the life He gives us to live.

Also hiding in this hymn is something else for us to discover: “let me hide myself in Thee.” Those words point us to our sanctuary in the storms of life. The Psalms also tell us as much, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in distress. So we do not fear when the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas” (Psalm 46:1-2).

The Lord shelters us in this wayward and sin-corrupted world, like a cave in a mountain protecting us when the biting winds come our way... Yes, in the wounds of Christ, we receive our refuge, for what He provides completes us and makes us whole.”

- <https://kimberlinglutheran.com/2017/02/07/exodus-171-7-the-rock-is-christ/> “Our pastor, Rich Futrell, was born in Alaska and raised in Washington state. His spiritual journey is a bit atypical, maybe even sordid. He was raised Southern Baptist (he is, after all, a first-generation Yankee!), but during his teen years, he became an atheist and was so for about a decade. After being prompted to read the Bible through circumstances in his life, he was brought back to the faith. He eventually became a Lutheran based on his reading of the Bible without his previously preconceived notions...”

**Psalm 95:1-9; RCL, Psalm 95 (Psalm 142; RCL, Psalm 23)**

The Venite from Matins, LSB 220-221 or Morning Prayer, LSB pg 236-237

*“This article uses the Hebrew (Masoretic) Psalms numbering. Psalm 95 in Septuagint/Vulgate numbering would correspond to Psalm 96 in Hebrew numbering.*

*Psalm 95 (Greek numbering: Psalm 94) is part of the biblical Book of Psalms. It is one of the Royal Psalms, Psalm 93-99, praising God as the King of His people. Psalm 95 identifies no author, but Hebrews 4:7 attributes it to David.[1] In the Greek Septuagint version of the bible, and in its Latin translation in the Vulgate, this psalm is Psalm 94 in a slightly different numbering system...*

*In the Latin Psalters used by the Roman liturgy it forms the invitatory which is sung daily before matins. It may be sung as a canticle in the Anglican and Lutheran liturgy of Morning Prayer, when it is referred to by its incipit\* as the Venite or Venite, exultemus Domino (also A Song of Triumph)...*

*\*The incipit (/ˈɪnsɪpɪt/)[1] of a text is the first few words of the text, employed as an identifying label... The word incipit comes from Latin and means "it begins". Its counterpart taken from the ending of the text is the explicit ("it ends").*

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalm\\_95](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalm_95)

## Let Us Sing Songs of Praise

**95** Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

<sup>2</sup>Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

<sup>3</sup>For the LORD is a great God,

and a great King above all gods.

<sup>4</sup>In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.  
<sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he made it,  
 and his hands formed the dry land.  
<sup>6</sup> Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
 let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!  
<sup>7</sup> For he is our God,  
 and we are the people of his pasture,  
 and the sheep of his hand.  
 Today, if you hear his voice,  
<sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts, as at **Meribah**,  
 as on the day at **Massah** in the wilderness,  
<sup>9</sup> when your fathers put me to the test  
 and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.  
<sup>10</sup> *For forty years I loathed that generation  
 and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart,  
 and they have not known my ways."*  
<sup>11</sup> *Therefore I swore in my wrath,  
 "They shall not enter my rest."*

"The readings from the Psalms for this season of Lent are carefully and well chosen. We began our Lenten journey with Psalm 32, which sets the penitential tone of Lent while still calling us to rejoice in forgiveness. Psalm 121 gives Lenten pilgrims the deep assurance that Yahweh is watching over us as we make the difficult journey into God's presence. And now to that call to rejoice and that assurance of belonging to God, Psalm 95 adds a sober warning. Indeed, the second half of Psalm 95 is so stern that it seems to call into question all the joyful certainty of Psalms 32 and 121, and even of the first half of Psalm 95.

In fact, the jarring shift in mood between the first and second halves of Psalm 95 led some earlier critical scholars to speculate that Psalm 95 must have originally been two separate Psalms artificially glued together somewhere in history. It's easy to see why someone might come to that conclusion. Verses 1-7a are a joyful call to worship and bow down before our Creator and Covenant Partner, while verses 7b-11 are a somber warning not to harden our hearts lest we lose the rest God has promised his people.

But taking a critical scalpel to this beloved Psalm will keep us from hearing its powerful message. It reminds us that the most joyful worship is of no value if we don't listen to God's voice. Psalm 95 moves us beyond verbal praise and physical submission to the heart of discipleship, namely, listening to God with open hearts and then trusting and obeying God. If we harden our hearts when we hear God's voice and refuse to trust and obey what God says, our singing and our kneeling are empty. If we continue to worship that way, God will be angry, and we may well miss the rest God has promised to his people...

God deserves both song and submission, because, says the Psalm, he is both good and great. God is “the Rock of our salvation” and “the great King above all gods.” He is the mighty creator of all that is, from the “depths of the earth to the mountain peaks, the sea and the dry land.” And he is “our Maker, our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.” Psalm 95 roots our worship in creation and covenant, in election and redemption.

That theme of redemption is highlighted in the second command of verse 1. “Let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.” Though verses 8 and 9 refer to those episodes in which God gave his thirsty people water from a rock as they wandered in the wilderness, verse 1 is rooted in Deuteronomy 32 where Moses reminds Israel that throughout their history Yahweh himself is The Rock. “He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God, who does no wrong, upright and just is he.” (Exodus 32:4) No wonder Psalm 95 is so exuberant in its call to sing and so earnest in its command to bow down...

As a result of such long term, deeply ingrained, profoundly ungrateful, distrustful disobedience God was justifiably angry with “that generation.” From the beginning to the end of their pilgrimage through the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land, they did not trust and obey “the Rock of their salvation.” And in the end, they did not receive their promised rest. Not one of that original generation of Israelites entered the Promised Land. They all died in the wilderness. Their children and grandchildren entered that rest; God’s covenant remained firm, because he is faithful. But because of their terminal hardening of the heart, that first generation did not receive the rest toward which they had journeyed all those years.

**That is an historical fact. We may not like it, but it happened. The Bible tells us so...**

But speaking of doctrine, my ultimate answer to the challenge presented by the “Today” of Psalm 95 is the assurance offered by Paul in Romans 5:6-8. “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners (even God’s enemies, according to verse 10), Christ died for us.” So, let us warn our hearers not to harden their hearts against God’s voice. But let us trust that the God whose grace pierced Paul’s hard heart can still rescue the most hardened sinners and bring them into the eternal rest promised to all God’s children.”

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/lent-3a/?type=old testament lectionary](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/lent-3a/?type=old%20testament%20lectionary)  
Stan Mast “In 2012, Stan retired and then promptly un-retired to return to Calvin (Theological Seminary) as Adjunct Professor of Preaching.”

**Romans 5:1-8; RCL, Romans 5:1-11 (Ephesians 5:8-14; RCL, the same reading)**

*“As Christians we can be certain of any number of things that we read in the Bible. We know God created the world in just six days. We know Jesus was the Son of God who walked on water and fed the five thousand. We know Jesus died and rose again from the dead. We know that He will one day return to judge the living and the dead. We know that we are going to heaven. We take these things on faith. Sometimes though we come across things in Scripture that are harder to take on faith. Today’s text is a perfect example of that where Saint Paul says that we are to rejoice in our sufferings. Rejoice in our sufferings? Why are we to rejoice in our*

sufferings? This can be a little hard to swallow because it just doesn't make sense. But it's true! As Christians, we rejoice in our sufferings..."

- <http://lakeviewemmanuel.com/multimedia-archive/rejoice-in-suffering-romans-51-8/>

Pastor Donald Peterson III "was ordained in 2005 after working in Legal Publishing and Information Technology. I had ignored the feeling that God was leading me into the ministry, but God used some special people to encourage me to become a Lutheran pastor." Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Lake View, Iowa

## Peace with God Through Faith

5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we<sup>[a]</sup> have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> Through him we have also obtained access by faith<sup>[b]</sup> into this grace in which we stand, and we<sup>[c]</sup> rejoice<sup>[d]</sup> in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... **Continues through verse 11**

## Death in Adam, Life in Christ Verses 12-21

"We often talk of hope as wishful thinking: "I hope it won't rain"; "I hope I win the lottery"; "I hope my team wins the Super Bowl" but Paul's concept of hope in Romans is different.

He introduces "hope" in the story of Abraham's faith (Romans 4:18), and develops the concept in chapter 5. For Paul, hope isn't wishful thinking, but absolute certainty about the future because it is grounded in God's faithfulness to keep his promises. That is, what God *will do* for the believer in Christ is grounded on what God *has done* for the believer in Christ.

In Romans 5:1-8 Paul explains the benefits of his gospel (see 1:16-17) for those who are justified by faith and stand in a new relationship to God. Two verb phrases govern the passage and provide the substance of these benefits: *We have peace with God* (verse 1) and *we boast in our hope* (verse 2). Although the lectionary limits our passage's scope to verses 1-8, the content suggests a wider field to verse 11. The verb "boast" acts like a set of bookends in verses 2, 3 and verse 11 to enclose the passage's subject matter: the believer's great hope. In verses 12-21, Paul shifts to the story of Adam and Christ..."

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=3297](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3297) Elizabeth Shively

Lecturer in New Testament Studies, University of St. Andrews, St. Andrews, Scotland, UK

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We forget it most of the time when we read Romans but the fact is that Paul was writing to a group of Christians for whom hope was no doubt in short supply. They lived in the heart of Roman darkness, right under the nose of the Caesar himself. They lived in an empire in which that same Caesar was declared *Deus et Dominus*, God and Lord, on every coin in their pockets. What's more, the regime was increasingly hostile to the then-new Christian faith and before too much longer would flex its muscle in trying to get rid of this new band of believers, putting to death even the very apostle penning the letter to the Roman Christians.

So if you are going to preach hope to people living under those conditions, you had for sure better know what you are talking about... They cannot tolerate false hopes because those have a way of making already bad situations much, much worse...

But Paul was not selling false hope—he was proclaiming a hope that could not die because it emerged FROM the death of God's own Son. The hope that was forged in the fires of death cannot itself then die when suffering and persecution come because this is a Gospel hope that transcends all suffering on account of having been born out of hell and death and the worst suffering ever... And this is a hope that has given us access to grace—a grace that, Paul colorfully pictures for us... We stand in hope and this hope, Paul says, cannot disappoint.

How do we know all this for sure? Well, we can't prove it (but then, if we could prove it, we would not call it "hope," would we?). But we can testify that it is true because the love of God has been poured into our hearts. Telling a skeptic that God's love is inside you will ultimately prove to be as fruitless as trying to explain why you are head over heels in love with another person. You can't prove that you are nuts over Joanie or George or Sarah but you can bear witness to your heart-pounding love for that person and that's about as far as you may be able to go. But you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this love is inside you. And it's no different with God's love by the Holy Spirit: it's undeniably there and it anchors the hope that we will see it all fulfilled one day too..."

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/trinity-sunday-c/?type=lectionary\\_epistle](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/trinity-sunday-c/?type=lectionary_epistle)  
"Rev. Scott E. Hoezee is an ordained pastor in the Christian Reformed Church in North America ... In ... 2005 Scott ...(became) the first Director of the Center for Excellence in Preaching."

**John 4:5-26 (27-30, 39-42): RCL, John 4:5-42 (John 9:1-41 or John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39; RCL, John 9:1-41)**

*"The lection assigned for the Third Sunday in Lent provides something of a study in contrasts with John 3:1-17.*

*If you suspect that these contrasts convey a unifying theme in the gospel of John, you would be right.*

*According to Lamar Williamson Jr., the Nicodemus story provides the backdrop for the happenings in chapters 4:1 through 12:50. These stories, according to Williamson, are designed to reach different kinds of readers who will, in turn, come to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the lamb who removes the sin of the world.<sup>1</sup>*

*Of course, the gospel is in the details and this text is no exception, especially with regard to the contrasts between the Nicodemus story and the story of the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Among those contrasts: Nicodemus comes as a person in authority, as a man and a*

Pharisee. He plays the role of an insider, a person accustomed to being included in the loop, and one who represents a community's best judgment.

By comparison, the woman comes to Jesus without even a name. Instead, her identity is obscured by markers of her exclusion. As a Samaritan woman, she lives her daily life in the shadows of her own marginality. She may live in the shadows of her marginality, but she speaks to Jesus under the sweltering heat of a midday sun..." (continue to read the complete commentary to see other comparisons between Nicodemus and the woman)

➤ [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1984](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1984)

[Robert Hoch](#) Pastor, First & Franklin Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland

## "The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 4th Chapter"

### Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

4 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John<sup>2</sup> (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples),<sup>3</sup> he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. <sup>4</sup> And he had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>7</sup> A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, **"Give me a drink."**<sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, **"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."**<sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, **"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.<sup>[b]</sup> The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**<sup>15</sup> 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."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, **"Go, call your husband, and come here."**

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to

her, ***“You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”*** <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, ***“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*** <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, ***“I who speak to you am he.”***

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” <sup>28</sup> So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” <sup>30</sup> They went out of the town and were coming to him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, ***“I have food to eat that you do not know about.”*** <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, ***“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. <sup>36</sup> Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”***

<sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

*<sup>43</sup> After the two days he departed for Galilee. <sup>44</sup> (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.)  
<sup>45</sup> So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.*

### Jesus Heals an Official's Son Verses 46- 54

1. [John 4:6](#) That is, about noon
2. [John 4:14](#) Greek *forever*
3. [John 4:48](#) The Greek for *you* is plural; twice in this verse
4. [John 4:51](#) Or *bondservants*
5. [John 4:52](#) That is, at 1 p.m.

### “This is the Gospel of the Lord”    “Praise to You, O Christ”

“The much-loved story of the Samaritan woman at the well is the second of four encounters with Jesus in John this Lent.

Each reveals something about who he is, some gift he brings to us on this year's Lenten journey. Where last week the gift emerged out of the Father's love given in the Son, this week it gushes forth as Jesus' gift of the Spirit, poured into the hearts of believers.

This encounter begins with social boundary-crossing, typical of Jesus in all of the gospels, when he asks the Samaritan woman for a drink. She is surprised that he is interacting with a Samaritan, and the narrator explains why her surprise is justified. Then the disciples will later be particularly concerned that he is talking with a woman.

The encounter between the two can be read in **three movements**. The **first movement** is all about water: Jesus' thirst, then the ensuing conversation with the woman, a bit wary of him and his boundary-crossing, and then the living water gushing up to eternal life that he will offer her and for which she will ask.

The **second movement** is the conversation about the woman's private life, which is the moment on which the encounter seems to turn. The **third movement** is the conversation about worship in Spirit and truth, which leads to her wondering about the Messiah and his revealing to her that it is he.

The reference to living water is a play on words in Greek, in that the phrase refers to water that is flowing rather than still "fresh rather than stagnant" while also actually meaning "living," linking it to the gift of eternal life gushing up in the believer who receives Jesus' gift. Like Nicodemus' misunderstanding in 3:1-12 when he is unable to look beyond the earthly (physical birth) to the spiritual (birth from above) and the disciples' misunderstanding of Jesus' references to food in 4:32-34, the woman here first understands Jesus to be referring to water from the well and asks how he will give her this without a bucket, furthering the irony by comparing him to their great ancestor Jacob, who gave them the well.

But unlike Nicodemus, who doesn't seem to move beyond his confusion, the woman does move. She asks for this water, realizing that it is not ordinary water but not yet

understanding in what way, and she will go still further with and for Jesus as the narrative develops...

As soon as the woman asks for the living water, the conversation turns to her life, and Jesus will now tell her everything she has ever done, as she later puts it. Then, having been seen by Jesus, she sees him differently, and the conversation takes another turn. She immediately understands him to be a prophet and asks him a serious question about worship to which he gives a serious answer. This is the only sustained conversation about worship in John; the verb occurs 9 times in these five verses, and the noun for worshippers occurs only this once in all of the New Testament...

A trial motif runs throughout John from the introduction of John the Baptist in 1:7 as a witness. Giving testimony is something Jesus' friends are called to do (15:27). The woman testifies (4:39) to her city. As a witness, she is intriguing. She certainly cannot be said to overstate the case. She says only what she knows and then leaves the question with them in such a way that they are compelled to come and see him for themselves.

This text suggests in a number of ways that it is not about what we know but who we know. It is about having an encounter, experiencing the light of Jesus' truth and love shining on our past and our future, and then having the courage and the wherewithal to drop anything that isn't that and go share what we know (not what someone else knows, just what we know) as witnesses to his abundant grace gushing up to eternal life in us...."

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=905](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=905) **Meda Stamper** Leicestershire, England Meda Stamper, Presbyterian, has developed one-woman performances of John, Mark, Philippians, Jonah, and the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke. Meda is interested in how multi-dimensional engagement with texts (spiritual, creative, and intellectual) may help us embody the good news in our lives

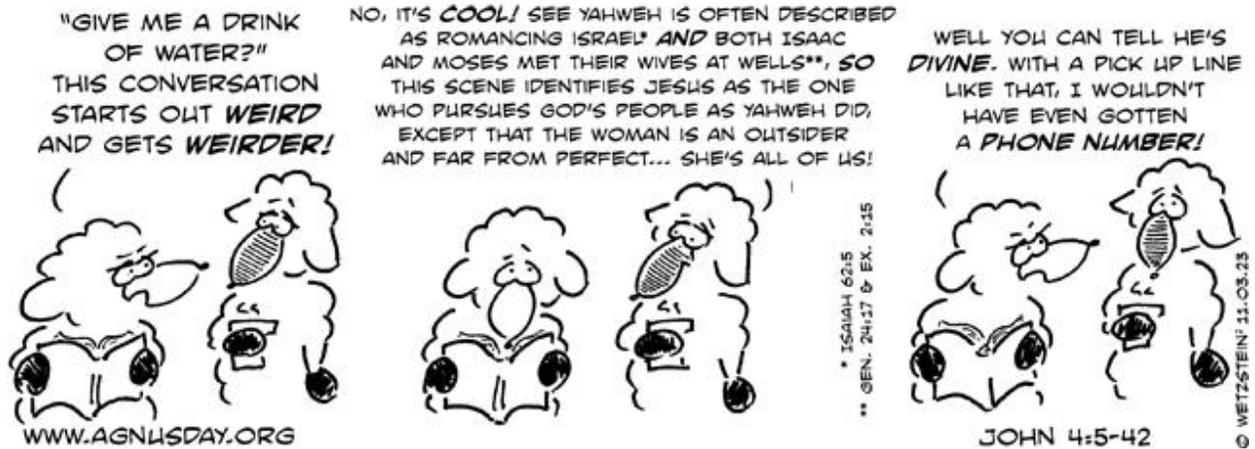
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**“Verse 10.** If thou hadst known the gift - The living water; and who it is - He who alone is able to give it: thou wouldst have asked of him - On those words the stress lies. Water - In like manner he draws the allegory from bread, chap. vi, 27, and from light, viii, 12; the first, the most simple, necessary, common, and salutary things in nature. Living water - The Spirit and its fruits. But she might the more easily mistake his meaning, because living water was a common phrase among the Jews for spring water.

**Verse 12.** Our father Jacob - So they fancied he was; whereas they were, in truth, a mixture of many nations, placed there by the king of Assyria, in the room of the Israelites whom he had carried away captive, [2 Kings xvii, 24](#). Who gave us the well - In Joseph their supposed forefather: and drank thereof - So even he had no better water than this.

**Verse 14.** Will never thirst - Will never (provided he continue to drink thereof) be miserable, dissatisfied, without refreshment. If ever that thirst returns, it will be the fault of the man, not the water. But the water that I shall give him - The spirit of faith working by love, shall become in him - An inward living principle, a fountain - Not barely a well, which is soon exhausted, springing up into everlasting life - Which is a confluence, or rather an ocean of streams arising from this fountain.”

- <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/notes.i.v.v.html> John Wesley



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“By and large, our people don't know the Bible. Some do, no doubt; but the vast majority don't. They don't know its overall plotline or many of the individual stories. Why does this matter? Because stories are the everyday currency through which we make sense of and share our lives. And if we don't know the Bible well enough to draw from its stories to help us think about our lives in the world, then after a while we will simply stop reading it and give our attention to the stories that matter to us.

And here's the second thing: they're not going to learn the Bible as long as we are the sole interpreters of Scripture's stories. While it may have been alright, even helpful, to have preachers take sole responsibility for handling the Scriptures when people learned the Bible at home, at school, and from the culture at large, it won't work to persist with this model now that the times have changed.

So am I suggesting that we involve our people more directly in the preaching of the Word? You bet! That may take many different forms, but today I want to explore one: inviting our people to talk about the passage they've just listened to during the sermon.

I know, I know, they might hate it. But who knows, they might like it, too. Here's the key I've discovered that usually makes the difference between those two reactions: *give your people the confidence that they really can read the Bible...*”

- <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1582>  
[David Lose](#) Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn

“Get set for some heavy-duty Bible reading from now till Good Friday. A whole chapter from John for ... 3 Sundays, then 2 from Matthew for Passion Sunday, and 2 more from John for Good Friday. Yikes. What were the Lectionary folks thinking?”

- <https://www.holytextures.com/2011/02/john-4-5-42-year-a-lent-3-sermon.html> George Hermanson

### How are you doing with The Matthew Challenge?

December	Chapters 1, 2, 3	68 verses	completed _____
January	Chapters 4, 5, 6	107 verses	completed _____
February	Chapters 7, 8, 9	101 verses	completed _____
March	Chapters 10, 11	72 verses	completed _____