

Third Sunday of Lent – 03-20-2022

“In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled ...saying, Is the Lord in our midst or not?”

There is a real easy answer to this question but it may not be what everyone wants to hear.

The Lord is in our midst but just not always in the way in which we want him to be or perhaps think he should be.

In the gospel today Jesus, tired from his journey, was sitting at Jacob’s well in a town of Samaria called Sychar. It was noon and the day was most likely quite hot.

And there was this Samaritan woman who needed some water. Why hadn’t she come earlier in the day with everyone else when the sun wasn’t so high in the sky and the temperature wasn’t as hot?

She obviously had her reasons. As we heard she was an outcast of her own making and didn’t want to be glared at by the morning crowd at the well when people usually came to draw water.

I have to wonder how long she might have stood at a distance looking at Jesus wondering if he was ever going to leave.

What might have she been thinking. Perhaps it went something like this: “Who is this guy and what in the heck is he doing at the well without even a bucket. Why doesn’t he just do what he came there

for and get out. In her mind, Jesus was not supposed to be there – not at this hour.

Regardless, it was a hot day and she needed water so eventually she went to the well with the idea that she would quickly draw what she needed and get the heck out of there as fast possible.

And then to her great surprise, Jesus asked her for a drink.

So she said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” – The Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.”

Again, what was she thinking? Perhaps it went as follows: Who is this man who is looking at me so differently than all the rest?

And then he said those mysterious words to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

But still stuck on the physical level she responded, “Sir you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water?”

She wanted this water but Jesus first needed to prepare her body and her soul so he said to her, “Go first and fetch your husband.”

That had to sting a little. She didn’t have a husband...so she said. He answered her, “You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband.’ For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

That had to have stung a lot. At that point she knew she was a sinner and deserved the wrath of God.

It almost seems as if one is able to receive God's mercy most perfectly only after they realize in humility that they have trampled on the rights of God and justly deserve his condemnation.

Finally, she was ready to recognize Jesus as the Christ and receive the water that only he could give – his infinite mercy. Forgetting her physical thirst she dropped her bucket and took off.

This woman, who only a few minutes earlier was too ashamed to appear in public, now ran through the village streets and testified to Jesus and many came to believe in him through her.

Are we thirsting for the water that only our Lord can give us? Are we willing to go to the proverbial well with our sins and risk meeting Jesus there?

I hope so but first we must be willing to humble ourselves and admit that we too have trampled on the rights of God and justly deserve his condemnation.

Then Jesus will also meet us, wherever we may be, with his infinite mercy and we will know for certain, at least with as much certainty as we can know in this life, that the Lord of infinite Mercy is truly in our midst.