

14. NEVER THIRST AGAIN (JOHN 4:3-15) 04/29/12
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

FOR WHAT DO YOU THIRST? A CUP OR TWO OF COFFEE IN THE MORNING? OR IS IT TEA? MANY IN THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS GO FOR A COKE, PEPSI OR DR. PEPPER. THE DOCTORS MAKE IT EASY FOR US BY JUST SAYING, "DRINK MORE WATER!" ARE U THIRSTY?

JESUS TAKES US TO ANOTHER DIMENSION - THE DROUGHT OF THE HUMAN SOUL. WE HAVE EACH IN OUR WAYS BEEN THERE - A THIRST THAT WATER WOULD NOT QUENCH. PERHAPS YOU ARE THERE TODAY OR YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS? EMPTY LIVES, WITHOUT MEANING & PURPOSE, LIVES PARALYZED WITH FEAR & ANXIETY, LIVES EMPTY OF LOVE & HOPE - PARCHED - UNSMILING FACES. THE DROUGHT OF THE SOUL IS WHEN DESPAIR & DEPRES-SION, AIMLESSNESS & WANDERING HAVE SET IN. THERE IS A DAN-GER TO A PERSON'S SURVIVAL WHEN THE DROUGHT RUNS TOO LONG & DEEP.

IN THE SCRIPTURE LESSON FOR TODAY, WE FIND JESUS AT JACOB'S WELL. SOMETIMES WE FORGET THAT JESUS WAS FULLY HUMAN - HE WAS TIRED, WEARY & THIRSTY FROM HIS DAY'S JOUR-NEY. HE & HIS DISCIPLES WERE ABOUT HALFWAY ON THEIR 3 DAY JOURNEY TO GALILEE - ON FOOT - OVER DUSTY TRAILS. PASSING THRU SAMARIA WAS A SHORT CUT, YOU'D BETTER KEEP YOUR WINDOWS ROLLED UP & YOUR DOORS LOCKED AS YOU PASSED THRU THAT PART OF THE COUNTRY. ESPECIALLY A JEW. IT WAS ABT MID-DAY & THE GLARING SUN WAS PARCHING JESUS' DUSTY LIPS. HOW DIRTY & DUSTY A 3 DAY WALK CAN BE OVER DIRTY, ROCKY PATHWAYS. THRU THE GLARING SUN JESUS SAW A LONE FIGURE APPROACHING THE WELL. A CHANCE FOR COOL, COOL WATER. WHY WOULD SOMEONE BE COMING TO THE WELL AT MID-DAY? TO AVOID THE HEAT, WATER WAS USUALLY DRAWN BY THE WOMEN IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS.

THE 1ST OF 3 THINGS THAT STRIKES ME ABOUT THIS PASSAGE IS THAT JESUS BROKE THRU SOCIAL, CULTURAL & SEXUAL **BARRIERS** THAT PREVENT PEOPLE FROM RELATING TO PEOPLE AS PERSONS. PEOPLE ARE NEVER THINGS TO JESUS. PEOPLE ARE NEVER A MEANS TO AN END TO JESUS. PEOPLE ARE NEVER OBJECTS TO JESUS. JESUS DID NOT PUT PEOPLE INTO CONVENIENT

CATEGORIES. TO JESUS, PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS PERSONS TO BE LOVED & CARED FOR AS PERSONS, NO MATTER THEIR SEX, RACE OR WAY OF LIFE.

JESUS BROKE THRU SOCIAL, CULTURAL & SEXUAL BARRIERS TO DIG THE WELL DEEPER, GIVING US LIVING WATER. YOU SEE, THE WOMAN WAS THERE AT MID-DAY BECAUSE SHE WAS APPARENTLY THE OBJECT OF HUMAN SCORN & REJECTION - HER LOOSE LIVING HAD MADE HER AN OUTCAST OF SOCIETY - PEOPLE WERE POINTING THEIR FINGERS AT HER WITH NOT SO KIND WHISPERS - PERHAPS YOU HAVE FELT LIKE AN OUTCAST BEFORE? OR BEEN A FINGER POINTER? SHE SAID TO JESUS, "HOW IS IT THAT YOU, A MALE JEW, ASK A DRINK OF ME, A WOMAN OF SAMARIA?" JEWS HAD NO DEALINGS WITH SAMARITANS & THE FEELING WAS VERY MUTUAL!

WHEN THE DISCIPLES RETURNED THEY MARVELED THAT JESUS WAS TALKING WITH A WOMAN IN A PUBLIC PLACE. **HUGE, I MEAN, A HUGE TABOO!** (EVEN TODAY.) AND A SAMARITAN TO BOOT! AND A WOMAN OF ILL REPUTE! IT WAS & STILL IS JESUS' WAY OF LIFE TO BREAK DOWN ANY & ALL BARRIERS THAT HINDER PEOPLE FROM TOUCHING, LOVING ONE ANOTHER AS PERSONS. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL DID NOT TREAT JESUS AS A PERSON BUT SHE TREATED HIM AS A HATED, DESPISED JEW. THE DISCIPLES WERE COWARDLY INDIGNANT ABOUT JESUS BEING SO PUBLIC WITH A WO-MAN. LABELS UPON BARRIERS UPON BROKENNESS UPON SEPARATION UPON THE DROUGHT IN PEOPLE TO PEOPLE RELATIONSHIPS. **WHY CAN'T WE JUST ALL GET ALONG?** IT IS THIS BROKENNESS & SEPARATION THAT YIELDS LIVES OF DESPAIR & LONELINESS. WHEN ALL ALONG WHAT IS NEEDED IS FOR US TO LET JESUS DIG OUR WELLS DEEPER - LOOK BEYOND THE PRETENSE & SELF-RIGHTEOUS POWER STRUCTURES, EXPLORE DEEPER THAN THE PAIN/LONELINESS, MELT AWAY THE DEFENSIVE SCARS & KNEE JERK REACTIONS - THERE LIES THE SOLUTION, PERSON TO PERSON. THE WELL RUNS DEEPER & THE WATER IS LIVING.

THE 2ND OF 3 THINGS THAT STRIKES ME ABOUT THIS PASSAGE IS THE GLARING **MISUNDERSTANDINGS** BETWEEN THE WOMAN & JESUS - WARNING US OF OUR TENDENCY TO NOT GET JESUS EITHER. THEY WERE RELATING ON TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LEVELS. THE WOMAN NEVER REALLY GOT THE POINT OF JESUS' MESSAGE. 1ST OFF SHE SARCASTICALLY PROCLAIMS JACOB, THE **JEWISH**

PATRIARCH, AS OUR SAMARITAN FATHER. THIS WLD HAVE STARTED A FIGHT WITH ANY OTHER JEW. FAMILY LINAGE WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TURF! 2ND WE SEE HER STATEMENT OF “GIVE ME THIS WATER THAT I MAY NOT THIRST” AS ONE OF FAITH WHEN IT WAS NOT. FROM US PERHAPS BUT FROM HER, A SAMARI-TAN, THE EQUIVALENT WOULD BE, “YEAH, RIGHT, YOU DO NOT EVEN HAVE A BUCKET WITH WHICH TO DRAW WATER, SURE GIVE ME WATER. HA!” IT WAS DEFINITELY A STATEMENT OF FAR EASTERN SARCASM & DOUBT.

JESUS TALKED & LIVED ON ONE LEVEL WHILE THOSE AROUND HIM TALKED & LIVED ON AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ONE. WE DARE NOT PASS LIKE TWO SHIPS IN A FOG BANKED DARKNESS. WE MIGHT EXCLAIM IN A FRIGHT, “HOW TRAGIC, CAN’T SHE SEE WITH WHOM SHE IS TALKING?” THEN WE CLOSE THE BOOK TO LIVE & ACT OUT HER STORY, NEVER REALLY SEEING & UNDERSTANDING JESUS. JESUS CHALLENGES THE WOMAN & HE CHALLENGES US TO DIG OUR WELLS DEEPER - TO STOP LIVING ON SUPERFICIAL LEVELS OF EXISTENCE. GOD HAS MUCH MORE IN STORE FOR US IF ONLY WE WOULD. JESUS THRU THIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE WOMAN AT THE WELL WOULD HAVE US NOT MARVEL AT HER DISBELIEF & CONTEMPT BUT AT OUR OWN. JESUS HAS FOUND US OUT - GET YOUR SHOVELS READY - JESUS WANTS TO HELP US DIG OUR WELLS DEEPER.

WHICH BRINGS ME TO THE 3RD OF 3 THINGS THAT STRIKE ME ABOUT THIS PASSAGE. IT IS THE MOST URGENT, TH MOST DEMAND-ING OF THE 3. THE QUESTION THAT KEEPS HAUNTING ME, THAT KEEPS BRINGING ME BACK TO THIS PASSAGE - WHY ARE WE AS CHRISTIANS STILL THIRSTY? WHY-WHY-WHY? WHY DOES OUR THIRST GO UNQUENCHED? WHY ARE OUR LIVES STILL THREATENED BY DROUGHT? WHY STILL WANDERING IN DESERT PLACES? IN SELF-HONESTY, WE CONFESS THAT WE SOMETIMES ARE.

TO DRINK IN THE LIVING WATER OF JESUS IS TO BELIEVE IN JESUS. JESUS SAID, “HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME OUT OF HIS HEART SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.” OUR REFRESHING, OUR QUENCHING CAN ONLY FLOW FROM AN EVER FLOWING FAITH IN JESUS. OKAY, BUT DON’T WE EA & ALL BELIEVE? DO WE - REALLY? WHY ARE WE SO OFTEN LIKE THE WOMAN AT THE WELL - ASKING FOR THE LIVING WATERS & THEN DOGGEDLY PURSUING

THE WATER FROM ANY OLE PIT IN THE GROUND? HOW EASILY, HOW IMMEDIATELY WE CAN QUENCH THE THIRST OF OUR BODIES WHILE OUR SOULS WITHER AWAY IN DROUGHT. WE HAVE NOT DUG THE WELL DEEP ENOUGH TO TAP THE LIVING WATER. WE CAN BE A LOT LIKE THE WOMAN - GETTING BY ON SUPERFICIAL ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS & EACH OTHER. NOT COMMITTED & DEDICATED ENUFF TO MOVE INTO THE DEEPER, MORE SATISFYING TIMES WITH JESUS & EA OTHER. THE DEEPER WATERS ARE SO MUCH MORE SATISFYING. WE MUST DIG THE WELL DEEPER THRU DEEPER COMMITMENT, SACRIFICE & INVOLVEMENT OF FAITH WITH JESUS. IN THE DEEP WATERS WE LAUGH AT DEATH & CRUMPLE UP LIKE WASTE PAPER FEAR & ANXIETY > BEGONE! LET THE LIVING WATERS FLOW!