

As I sat down to write this sermon, I must admit to you that I was struggling with what to preach to you this morning. I didn't know if anyone would be watching. I didn't know what to say to you all this morning. This is the first time I've preached to an empty congregation. I know that many of us are struggling to figure out what is going on with this whole Covid-19 virus. You might be wondering if the Session was wise in cancelling church. The truth is, we don't know for sure, because there is so much still up in the air. But you didn't turn in on Facebook to hear your pastor tell you that what he doesn't know. So, here is what I do know. I know that the Deacons, the Elders, and I spent time praying for wisdom yesterday. I know that we spent time discussing and debating many different options for how our congregation should respond to this epidemic. And I know that the decisions we made were with you all in our mind. We would rather err on the side of caution rather than unintentionally exposing some of the more vulnerable members of community to illness. So, that being said, I refuse to let Covid-19 prevent me from praising God and preaching God's Word. Our congregation will endure. We will endure. So, let us turn our attention now to the Scripture from the Gospel of John.

In today's passage, we get this wonderful interaction between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at the well. We never learn her name, probably because women were not valued in the same way men were in Jesus' time. Not only is the person Jesus is interacting with a woman, but she's a Samaritan woman, and good Jewish men did not talk to Samaritan women at the wells. That was scandalous. The Gospel writer tells us as much. This is actually the second interaction in a row with Jesus where someone is initially confused by what he is preaching. Last week, Nicodemus could not understand how someone could be reborn. At the end of the story, we are left thinking that Nicodemus still doesn't understand what Jesus is saying. And today, we get the woman at the well who initially wants Jesus' bucket so she can get some of the living water. One of the main differences between Nicodemus and this Samaritan woman is that it doesn't take the Samaritan woman long to figure out that Jesus is not speaking literally. While Nicodemus couldn't get past how a grown man can be reborn, this woman quickly picks up that Jesus is talking about something more than just plain old water. Leave it up to a simple, unimportant, foreign woman to understand what Jesus is saying, while the learned, Jewish male teacher walked away confused. Scripture has a way of turning our expectations on their head, doesn't it? This morning, I want to take a few moments to talk about how Jesus Christ is the living water that can restore us, even when we are thirsty and tired.

In today's passage, Jesus teaches this Samaritan woman that he has a special type of water that can make you never thirst again. At first, Jesus sounds a little bit like one of those people who sell you the miracle cure. Living water that never makes you thirsty again! Sounds too good to be true, the Samaritan woman says. How can I get my hands on that living water? Where's your bucket? However, we know that Jesus is much more than that. He can actually deliver on what he is promising. Jesus tells this woman that the living water that he is offering comes not from a well, but from the living God and that he is the one they have been waiting for. Many people came to believe in Jesus because of the testimony of this Samaritan woman and their interaction with Jesus.

I wonder sometimes how often we miss telling people about Jesus? We hesitate to share the good news that there is a living water out there that quenches our deepest thirst, and I wonder why? This woman did not hesitate to share the good news that she has found the Messiah. Her words were enough to bring them to meet Jesus, and Jesus was more than enough to meet their spiritual needs. I think we hesitate to share the good news sometimes because we are afraid that we will embarrass ourselves, or because we live in a culture that tells people not to talk about religion. Whatever the reason, I think we're afraid to share the good news that we have found the living water that quenches our deepest thirsts. Maybe we should be more like this Samaritan woman and go out and share the good news with everyone we meet. Maybe we should let the words of our mouths and actions of our lives show the world that we have found the Messiah and we know where to find some really good water.

Over the next several weeks, I know that many of us are going to be fearful as we watch the news. Things can be pretty scary if you watch the news all day. We haven't faced a pandemic of this proportions in well over a century. There are a lot of unknowns right now. It can be pretty scary. We don't know where to turn or where to go or what to do. Things are being closed left and right and that only adds to our stress and anxiety. And so, many of us are going to be out searching for something, trying to find something

that can provide us with some peace in the midst of all this. And so, we venture to the well known well, looking for some water. And while there, we encounter a strange man telling us about a living water that quenches our deepest thirsts. I encourage you, in this time, to turn to the Scriptures to find the living water that fills our needs. And share that water, literally and figuratively, with people who are struggling now. Give them some extra supplies if they need it. Maybe give them an extra roll of toilet paper. Maybe offer someone a prayer for comfort in the midst of all this stress. Whatever you do, share the living water with all those people you meet at the well. Amen and Amen. And PS) keep washing your hands with the water that comes from the taps. Amen