

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We just heard the Gospel appointed for the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord, where Jesus was invited to celebrate the life-long union of one man and one woman.

There He takes what could have been an embarrassing situation, the lack of wine, and covers it with His first miracle, making plain old water into the best wine.

Our text for mediation this morning comes just two chapters later,

and we see that Jesus has met with someone on the other end of a marriage equation,

someone who has had a total of 5 husbands and is yet living with someone not her husband.

What will be Jesus tact with her?

Does He have any words for her... other than the judgement that she is expecting?

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*As follows in Jesus' name:*

And [Jesus] had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 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.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." (For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 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.) 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." 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? Are You greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 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 again. 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."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "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. 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. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." 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." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you AM He."<sup>(ESV)</sup>

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*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen.*** (John 17:17)

A lot happens behind closed doors.

After the wedding, the couple has the opportunity to get to know each other,

not just in what they say about themselves,  
but also in what they do, their habits, their outlook, the things that cause anxiety, insecurity, joy, etc.  
Some couples find it easier to navigate these waters than others, especially early on.  
By God's grace, the love and affection that first attracted the couple to each other is often able to help.  
There are often times of great personal joy for man and wife.  
But in all marriages, the waters get rough at times, it is bound to as two sinners deal with each other.  
Each spouse sins against the other.  
These offenses can either be forgiven, or grudges can start to take root.  
These offenses can range from slight careless, insensitive words all the way to... rage and anger;  
from neglect of sharing the duties of the house to abandonment;  
from withholding of affection to adultery; and so many others.

And we meet a woman that has traversed these rough waters multiple times with 5 different husbands.  
Presumably, it was not death that parted them.  
And even now, she was trying to find companionship in the home of another man – not her husband,  
maybe trying him out to see if 6 times is the charm,  
or maybe she had given up on the whole idea of marriage and this was the arrangement.

The other women of the city had come out in the cool of the morning.  
But what do you do when you feel ashamed, and you want to avoid unpleasant conversations?  
You avoid the water cooler scenario.  
You go out to get your water at a time when nobody else does.  
But as you walk out in the solitude of your mind, you look up and see someone sitting right there.

You can imagine her eyes rolling as she sees him in the distance... not only a man sitting by the well,  
but a Jewish man, who would look down on her just for being born a Samaritan...  
and surely he would recognize why she was making this mid-day trip to fetch water...  
So you can hear a little shock and even shortness with Him when He asks for a drink from her.  
"Are you daring to ask me, a Samaritan sinner, for a drink?" She seems to be saying.

But even more, He seems to have a little heat stroke,  
He's now talking to her as if she should know who He is, like He is some kind of "big deal."  
**"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is talking to you..."**  
and then offering living (or fresh) water to her... when He Himself has no bucket.  
... and had just asked her for a drink. "What a cuck!"  
But she is amused and plays along, **"Are you greater than our father Jacob?"**  
Ya, right, she thinks.  
Sure. **"sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."**  
"I mean, it's worth a shot, isn't it?"  
"If He can't, then I call His bluff and He goes away in disgrace and leaves me alone."  
"If He can, then I can avoid the judging eyes and wagging tongues."  
But little does she know what she is asking for, and she is going to get it.

...  
Oh, but then He went for the jugular, **"Go, call your husband, and come here."**  
— This conversation just got really real. —  
Now you can understand why He might say something like that...

it wasn't proper for a man to be speaking to a woman alone.  
Unlike the serpent in the garden of Eden, Jesus would desire to speak of such religious things with both her and the one whom God had given to be responsible for her soul.

But she has a way to dodge this, **"I have no husband."**

It has the virtue of being true, but it is not the whole truth, which she would have remain concealed.

But Jesus knows the whole truth, so much better than even she does.

He knows the pain incurred as each relationship ends.

He knows the lust and envy, the selfishness, apathy, bitterness, the fights, language, and rage.

He knows the feeling of crushed dreams, the guilt and shame of failure.

He knows the thirst for love, for belonging, for affection, for companionship,

that tempts one to be discontent with one's spouse and to seek such things from another.

He knows how hopeless, how dirty, how anxious one feels when trying

to avoid God's good and perfect will for marriage, seeking your own insatiable happiness.

But He also knows how unsatisfying it all is... like a thirst that cannot be slaked.

He knows how hard it is to try to keep such things a secret.

But even more, He knows the "secret."

Though we may be able to hide these inner feelings from our friends, or pastor, or even a spouse, nothing is hidden from Him.

King David knew the feelings, too.

He wrote of them after his affair and attempted cover up with Bathsheba had been uncovered,

**For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.**

**For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;**

**my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.** Psalm 32:3-4

But why did Jesus bring it up, if He knew that it would be a sore spot for her?

Why would He open up such a tender topic?

Because this is exactly what He came to redeem her from.

He exposed her guilt and hurt conscience so that she might acknowledge and repent of it, and to declare her sins... all her sins...forgiven.

And her attempts to change the subject, to start talking about where God was to be worshipped, only opened up the conversation more to point her to Himself.

The reason the Jews knew to worship in Jerusalem was because that is where God had put His name... where His temple was... where the sacrifices were to be offered...

where the Messiah would offer up Himself as the sacrifice for her sins... and the sins of the world.

"Oh, and that **Messiah** who is to **tell you all things, I who speak to you AM He.**"

He speaks to her to turn her unsatisfied thirst for happiness to a thirst for God's righteousness.

He points her to Himself, to His perfection freely offered and given to her.

He points her to His coming sacrifice for her sins at Jerusalem.

And in so doing, He has given her that living water He promised earlier, **welling up to eternal life.**

**"And it will be My blood that cleanses you from all sin."** 1 John 1:7

The thirst that she previously had for the waters of self-gratifying happiness

was changed into the wine of gladness that satisfied her desire for peace and a clean conscience.  
Where before she desired to hide her shame and avoid the townspeople,  
at this point in their conversation, she left her jar at the well and went to share Jesus' good news.  
**"Come, see a Man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"**

She couldn't keep her joy in, it was welling up within her; her cup was overflowing.  
Her previous shame and guilt were no match to the satisfaction of Jesus' forgiveness.  
And she knew that there would be others who would appreciate the refreshment  
of this living water of hope and joy, and the true satisfaction of peace in Jesus.

Your Bridegroom knows about the honeymoon stage and the rough waters that are tread in marriage.  
We cannot hide them from Him.  
He knows each and every one of them — remember, He suffered and died to pay for each one.  
Nor does He shrink from speaking to you about them,  
because they burden your conscience and drive a wedge between you and your Savior,  
and between you and your spouse.  
Instead, He desires to be part of them, to be part of the solution as you confess your offenses to Him  
and seek His forgiveness, righteousness, and peace,  
giving you the safe waters of your Baptism to tread in.  
And He gives to you the same joy, the same peace of mind and conscience, the same forgiveness,  
and strength to fight against temptation as He gave the Samaritan woman.

*Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.* Luke 2:14  
*Soli Deo Gloria*