



Sunday, March 8, 2026  
John 4:5-18, 25-29 (Third Sunday in Lent)

Ascension Lutheran Church  
Pastor Tony Acompañado

In today's Gospel reading from the Gospel of John, we encounter one of the most remarkable conversations Jesus ever has – one that takes place at a simple well, in the middle of the day, with a woman society had pushed to the margins.

The story begins with Jesus traveling through Samaria and stopping at Jacob's well. It's the hottest part of the day and he's tired and thirsty. A Samaritan woman comes to draw water, and Jesus asks her for a drink.

At first glance, it might seem like just an ordinary moment but let me assure you it was anything but ordinary. It may not sound shocking to us today, but in that time and place, what happened was radical. Because in this moment, Jesus breaks every barrier his culture had built. He speaks to a *Samaritan* – not to mention a *Samaritan woman*. And he does so *not* with judgment—but with grace.

In Jesus' day, Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other. Their relationship was full of suspicion and hostility. They *worshipped* differently. They *lived* differently. Each group believed the *other* was wrong. And men, especially respected teachers like Jesus, did not publicly speak with women they didn't know.

But Jesus ignores those dividing lines. He asks her for a drink. It might sound simple, but it's deeply intentional. Jesus chooses to start a conversation with someone society would rather ignore. And this tells us something important about the heart of God – that God moves *toward* people others move away from.

God crosses barriers we create – social, racial, cultural, gender, economic, and personal barriers. The grace of God doesn't stop where our human divisions begin. In the kingdom of God, everyone is welcome at the well.

Jesus tells the woman something surprising, “*Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.*” Jesus is talking about **living water** – the life of God flowing into a thirsty soul. And here's the truth Jesus reveals – All of us are thirsty. The problem is that we try to satisfy that thirst with so many other things that won't quench our thirst.

Our culture tells us that fulfillment comes from success, money, achievement, control, recognition, or power. If we just work harder, climb higher, or earn more...then we'll finally feel complete. But Jesus gently exposes the reality – all those wells will run dry. Money runs out. Careers end. Status fades. The approval of others changes like the wind. None of those things are bad in and of themselves – but none of them can give us what **only God** can give.

We long for something deeper. To be known. To be loved. To be forgiven. To be welcomed. To be accepted. To belong. And that's exactly what Jesus offers.

At one point in the conversation, Jesus says to the woman, “*Go and get your husband.*” And she responds honestly, “*I don't have a husband.*” Jesus replies, “*You're right! You don't have a husband – for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now.*”

But take a moment to notice what Jesus **does not do**.

He does not shame her. He does not condemn her. He does not turn away from her. Instead, he reveals that he already knows her story. Every broken chapter. Every complicated relationship. Every place where life has not turned out the way it was supposed to. And yet, he stays in the conversation. **This is grace.**

Grace isn't pretending that our past doesn't exist. Grace is God meeting us where we are while fully knowing the whole truth of who we are and loving us anyway.



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One of the most beautiful moments in this story happens when the woman realizes who she's speaking to. She says, "*I know the Messiah is coming.*" And Jesus responds simply, "*I am the Messiah!*"

She may have come to the well carrying a water jar – but she leaves carrying a testimony. Scripture tells us that she ran back to the village and said, "*Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did!*" Her past, which once caused shame, now becomes the very reason she tells others about Jesus.

My friends, this is what happens when people encounter the grace of God. Our broken stories become witnesses to God's mercy. The places that we once hid become places where God's healing shines. The woman at the well – once cast aside by her community becomes the witness to her community.

And the Good News for all of us today is that Jesus still meets people at wells. He meets us in ordinary places – in quiet moments of prayer, in conversations, in Scripture, in the waters of baptism, in the bread and wine of communion. And just like that Samaritan woman, he comes to us intentionally. Not by accident.

Jesus knew she would be there at noon. He knew she was thirsty for more than water. And the same is true for us. Jesus knows our needs before we even speak them. He sees our loneliness, our struggles, our doubts, our regrets. And he says, come and drink from my living water and never be thirsty again.

One of the most radical truths in this story is that the invitation is for **everyone**. Not just the honorable. Not just the successful. Not just the religious. **Everyone**. Rich or poor. Insider or outsider. Confident or struggling. God's grace isn't limited by status or history. God's living water flows freely.

In the church we sometimes say, "All are welcome." But the gospel actually goes deeper than that. It says, **All are searched for**. Jesus didn't wait for the woman to come find him. He went to the place where she was. And he still does.

At the end of the story, the woman invites her whole town to "*come and see.*" That's the invitation of the church too. Not "come and be perfect." Not "come and have everything figured out." Simply, **come and see Jesus**.

Come to the well. Come with your questions. Come with your failures. Come with your hopes. Come with your messiness. Here you will find a Savior who breaks barriers, forgives sins, restores dignity, and fills thirsty hearts with living water.

Because the grace of God is deeper than our past, it's stronger than our divisions, and it's richer than anything the world can offer. And that living water – the love of Jesus – will never run dry. Thanks be to God! Amen.