

January 30 2022

The Woman at the Well

John 4:1-42

Have you ever been in a place where you were just not welcome? It is a very uncomfortable feeling. Often times you pick up the feeling by the energy and the attitude of the people that are there. They just do not want you in their presence. Sometimes you may never know why you were not welcome. Many times we avoid or leave such people and attitudes and go where we are more comfortable. With people who are welcoming.

This morning's gospel is all about being welcomed by Jesus. I don't know if you noticed, but Jesus is very inclusive and draws all people to Himself. Jesus is very welcoming. He has good energy and a great attitude. The woman at the well is a perfect example of how Jesus kept this attitude during His ministry amongst us. However, by welcoming her into His company, Jesus breaks many cultural rules of His day. The first rule Jesus broke was speaking to a woman that was not one of His relatives or a friend. She was a complete stranger. A Jewish man of that time would never talk to a woman he did not know or was related to. We still see some of this attitude in Orthodox Jewish and Muslim cultures. The second cultural rule Jesus broke was speaking to a Samaritan. They were the traditional enemies of the Jews of Jesus's

day. Mind you Samaritans are actually Jews. They are Jews of mixed blood because they married with the Assyrians and Babylonians. So the pure blooded Jews looked down on them. They actually destroyed the Samaritan Temple in 128 A.D. The third cultural rule Jesus broke was that this woman was married more than once. So Jewish society would judge her very harshly. Most Rabbis would avoid her and not even speak with her. Yet Jesus does talk with her and has a great conversation with her. What could possible come out of being welcoming and kind to a strange woman?

The Samaritan woman at the well went that day just to draw water, as she did everyday. However, this day she met a stranger named Jesus who would change her life. She would be the one drawn in by Jesus and welcomed by Him. Jesus would reveal to her that He was more than the awaited Messiah. Jesus would reveal to her that He is the Son of God. He would offer her salvation and eternal life as He talked about the living water. This woman would become the first evangelist. She goes back to her village and tells everyone about her meeting with Jesus. She would later bring them to the well to meet Him.

This welcoming encounter with Jesus would change this woman's life. She would later be baptised and given the name Photini. Which means the enlightened one. Photini and her two sons and five daughters would go to Carthage in North Africa to spread the gospel.

All of this would not have happened if Jesus was not so welcoming. Many times in life hospitality trumps cultural rules. Great things can only occur when this happens. This morning's gospel makes a strong case for that. That is the great lesson to draw from this morning's gospel. The church seems to have learned this and adopted it as a

practice. How you ever noticed that almost all of our services begin with a greeting or a welcome. Have you noticed that people gather at the door of the church to chat and talk with family and friends? They usually welcome friends and strangers alike. Who would suspect that some were doing ministry at the back of the church!

Jesus welcomes all of us into His company. There is nothing that can stop us from coming to Him. The Samaritan woman is a great example. Neither our gender, ethnicity or our past can stop us from coming to Jesus. That is how powerful His welcome actually is. We just need to learn and realize that. If Jesus is that welcoming, shouldn't we do the same? Are we not followers of this great teacher who taught by example. That is the great challenge for us today. To be as welcoming as Jesus was. God Bless, stay warm and safe, Pastor D.