

Jesus Gets Us

John 4: 5-42

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Rev. Donna Vuilleumier

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So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common 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 no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." 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 have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 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 seeks such as these 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" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the

woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

In Jesus' day, children were not regarded the same way they are today. This made his teachings around the value of being childlike countercultural. Jesus taught that "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." And he lived it out — childlike in humility, compassion, and gentleness. What can we learn from his example today?"

And another consideration: "We see conflict all around us. We align ourselves on different sides of the fight in battles of politics, religion, justice, and too often, we let that conflict morph from a dignified defense of something good into a dehumanizing attack on the people we don't agree with. It's tearing us apart.

But Jesus offered us an alternative as an example — and his solution wasn't to grow apathetic and avoid the conflict altogether. He showed us something else entirely, a third way. His response to the ever-increasing volume of hate and conflict was love. Not just any love — confounding sacrificial, selfless love. Jesus still stood up for what he believed in. He defended the defenseless, spoke up on behalf of the voiceless, even flipped a few tables, but in everything he did, he first moved with love toward the people he disagreed with. What if we tried to love our enemies the way Jesus loved his? How would it change the tenor of our conflicts and our conversations?"

These two messages—one on Being Childlike and the other on Loving Our Enemies sound like sermon prep notes or a bible study lesson, but they are two Super Bowl commercial ads built on the theme of 'Jesus Gets Us,' as a way to introduce—or reintroduce Jesus--- to millions of people who do not know—who have never thought about—Jesus in their life.

These commercials have mixed reviews. Is it genius or ridiculousness to spend millions of dollars to turn Christianity into a product like tires, cereal or sneakers? Is this ultimately the best way to reach unchurched and searching Millennials, Gen X and Gen Z? Who is behind this and why did they choose to spend 7 million dollars for 90 seconds rather than use that money for the actions and hands-on ministries of feeding, housing and healing that they talk about?

However you feel about the commercials---and maybe you're undecided like me since I genuinely see a long list of pros and cons—the message that 'Jesus gets us' can be reassuring, comforting and encouraging.

When we have doubts, struggles and questions we want to hear Jesus' words of understanding not judgment. When we have times of failure and faults, we want to hear Jesus' words of forgiveness not accusation. When we work against injustices and hostilities, we want to hear Jesus' words of acceptance for our efforts, not just concern that there is more yet to do.

The technology of today wrapped in the bold, bright, vibrant energy of the Super Bowl showed us that Jesus gets us. A 2000 year old conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman also shows us that he gets us.

A tired and thirsty Jesus was resting by Jacob's well in the heat of the day, a time when he could have expected to be alone for a few restful, quiet moments. This is not a time when anyone would be coming for water. It is too hot to be carrying a heavy bucket back home. It is a

task for the cooler early morning or evening hours, yet for an unmarried woman this time kept her away from the gossip of other women at the community well. She took great efforts to avoid their words, their stares, their finger-pointing. But on this day, things did not go as planned for Jesus or this unnamed woman.

As they begin to speak, Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” 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 have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” All of her efforts at hiding the way she was an outsider among her own people was suddenly on full display with this stranger. If those who know her reject her and her lifestyle, how much more so will this stranger, this unknown man, this prophet?

But Jesus did not reject her, and went as far from any judgment or rejection as possible. Jesus got her, got her worries and her concerns. He felt her pain, her humiliation, her desire to fit in. He accepted her for who she was, and in that grace she led many from her city to Jesus. He accepted her for she was and in doing so he healed her relationship with her community.

The tired and thirsty Jesus who rested at Jacob’s well was an unexpected Jewish man in Samaritan territory. Once a people of the same traditions there was a split as Samaritans came to hold a Torah-centered faith focused on the patriarchs and looked for a messiah who would be a prophet like Moses, while the Jewish people included the prophets in their faith focus, centered worship in Jerusalem, and looked for a messiah-king in the line of David. Although they once shared the same allegiance to God, they now only shared animosity towards one another. Jews would even travel to Galilee by taking the longer route across the Jordan through the more Gentile region rather than the shortcut by way of Samaria, but Jesus intentionally did not. When the woman came to the well, Jesus completely caught her off-guard by asking for a drink of water. She asked how he, a Jew, could ask water from her, a Samaritan woman. It was as though Jesus had lived in the days of black-white segregation as a white boy and had asked to drink from the “colored” water fountain. He quickly shifted the conversation from the mundane to the spiritual despite the history of animosity between their religious beliefs and traditions. At the well where they had once shared a mutual tradition and history, Jesus asked for the water that would temporarily quench his thirst while offering the woman and the Samaritans living water—water that Eugene Peterson in *The Message* describes as, “The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life.”

Jesus got them. Jesus got the Samaritan woman and all of those in Samaria. The artesian well of endless life was for them just as much as it was for the Jews. He got their need to know and receive the gifts of God’s grace just as much as any other person created in the image of God.

Jesus gets us. He gets every doubt, worry, concern and question we have. Jesus has always gotten us. When we are feeling vulnerable, holding onto something about ourselves that doesn’t quite fit in, Jesus meets us there with grace, acceptance and encouragement. When we are holding onto our Christian beliefs, values, ethics and morals in the midst of competing Christian beliefs, our values, ethics and morals, Jesus meets us there with grace, acceptance and encouragement. Jesus gets us. Amen.