

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, March 12th, 2023, Lent III
Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42

Has anybody noticed that the readings are getting longer and longer? Maybe it's preparing us for the long Gospel on Palm/Passion Sunday and Good Friday.

With that in mind, I could say quite a bit about the readings today, but one part comes to mind. To worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

The question is what is truth? the reality is, our understanding of truth is partial. Therefore, none of us an absolute or complete truth. So what I am going to say is by definition not the whole truth, but one way of understanding truth in our lives and our relationship with God and each other.

The Samaritan woman at the well, she is a woman who was married five times and yet now not married. That is why she is at the well at that time of day, midday. It is the hottest time of the day when nobody else would be there. So Jesus talks to this Samaritan woman who is a woman, a Samaritan, and a social outcast among our own people. And this is who Jesus talks to.

What is true? That we are all in a sense part of a mystery and connected, all are weak and in need not as independent as we think we are. It is the illusion.

But we were created to be spiritual. That's why at Epiphany the gift of frankincense. That we too are spiritual, part of another dimension beyond space and time. Beyond what we can see.

It makes me think of roulette and the roulette wheel. You would think the odds of winning betting either red or black, or even or odd would be 50/50. 36 numbers, 18 of each. But we forget about 0 and 00. That's why the odds are less than 50/50 because sometimes the roulette ball falls on zero or 00.

As I mentioned at the beginning, there is a lot more to these readings today, but we can worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, realizing that we don't have all the answers, we don't have the whole truth on our own, but we can be in relationship with God and each other and there is a spiritual dimension to our lives which we often cannot see, touch, or fully understand, but the truth is there, and it is real.

Maybe that is what Jesus is talking about and in the prayers today. The idea of living water. That we are all being offered living water.

I am reminded of Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the assurance^{ab} of things hoped for, the conviction^{ab} of things not seen.² Indeed, by faith^{ab} our ancestors received approval.³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. Amen

So putting this all together, Jesus saw in this Samaritan woman more than what anybody else had seen. More than the disciples with Jesus had seen. They saw her as a woman, a Samaritan, and an outcast. They may not have known that she had been married five times and living with a man who wasn't her husband, but would have known she was at the well during the hottest part of the day for a reason and not out of choice.

Maybe like the roulette wheel, we only see in ourselves and others the 36 numbers. And we forget about the zero and the 00. Let us not forget or ignore 0 and the 00 in ourselves and others. That is the part which binds us together as members of the community and I believe where love mercy and compassion comes from. let us celebrate who we are, the paradox. At Max's first Lenten study session, we talked about dust. And we are Stardust. We are dust but the dust come from stars. It is the living water which binds the two together.

Amen

Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing ...