

Sermon – 2nd Lent- 3/17/2019. Our Saviors Lutheran Church
Text John 4:5-26

God's Miraculous Interruptions

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. A lengthy Gospel today involving a two person dialogue between Jesus and an unnamed woman. The dialogue takes place at a well, a place where the residents of the town by necessity had to frequent. Water an absolute necessity for survival.

I could preach on multiple themes. First, the Samaritan issue. The samaritans were a minority population. Their minority status occurred during the Babylonian invasion centuries before this dialogue. Jews were deported during this invasion and samaritans were not. The samaritans remained in their own homes, kept their jobs, intermarried with the Babylonians and gained some semblance of a normal life. When the Jews returned, they developed a hatred of these samaritans. Think about Nazi Germany and their occupation of Norway. That's how Norwegians felt about quislings. Samaritans knew they were hated and knew that they were a minority. Unless you are a minority, you don't know how that feels.

I remember the time we were visiting our son in the Big Apple. Jumped into a cab at LaGuardia and made small talk with our driver, a woman, on the way to midtown Manhattan. On the way she said "by the way, I am a triple minority. I'm black, I'm a woman and I speak English." She made her minority status a joke, but I guarantee that it doesn't feel good to be a minority. I could preach on how we treat minorities but I won't.

Or, I could preach on what most preachers do. Preach on the Liz Taylor theme. You know, being married multiple times and now living with some guy. But, that's kind of silly. We don't really know why she was married so many times. She could have been widowed multiple times. In that case, she would then have needed to marry the brother of the deceased. She could not have worked on her own. Or maybe all of her former husbands were Viking fans. We simply do not know enough. I could preach on that, but I won't.

Or, I could preach on how Jesus changes the cultural norm of the day, namely the issue of women in general. What was the cultural norm about women? I'm glad you asked. Don't talk to women, they are second class citizens, separate area for worship, they can't own property. You get the idea. Jesus not only talked to women, he had many women as friends and disciples. I could preach on how Jesus upsets our cultural norms and turns them upside down, but I won't.

Rather, I will focus on what I call "God moments", God moments that interrupt our routines. And that these God moments move us to different priorities in our lives.

The woman in the story no doubt had a routine, each and every day. In the morning cleaned the hovel, made breakfast for everyone, sent the children out to play or got them out to religious school, walked a great distance to the well at noon. Hot then, nobody else would be there, no one there to look down at her, no gossips, carry the water back to the Cabrini housing, prepare meal for the children and the live in guy, again getting the children out the door so she could work in peace, serve the dinner, eat standing up, serving in silence, wash the clothes, and then hit the sack exhausted.

And then at the well, God interrupts her routine. She meets God in the form of Jesus who talks about living water. Life changing water. She now understood that she was an accepted child of God, and, because of this acceptance her priorities would change. She was now loved by God. For the woman it was a Wow moment.

And that is true for us as well. We are also routine people. From the time we awaken our lives settle into a routine. We are creatures of habit. If we have children, everything, all of our routines settle around them from school, sports and beyond. If we are employed that also follows a routine. If we are retired, I guarantee that our lives settle upon a fixed schedule. That's true for me as well. My routine- I arise early- have to have my coffee- Starbucks- read the NY Times, CNN, Post Crescent on my iPad. Do a mini devotional- get to the office- review the next few days with Kasey- check in with staff- hit the hospitals and maybe a few shut-ins- eat lunch at always the same time- write stuff, sermons etc- eat dinner at the same time- always watch Jeopardy and David Muir- have a few evening meetings and go to bed early with a best selling novel in my hand.

But, in the midst of these routines, very often, God interrupts. Years ago our youngest son played football for Appleton West. Very good inside linebacker. Would play at college level for sure. Most days I only saw him at dinner and football games. Remember worrying about what he believed in. Oh, he came to church. But what did he care about besides hitting the opposing quarterbacks? Would he be OK in life? I remember picking up his baseball cap that he wore constantly one morning. Inside the cap he had written- In God I Trust. For me it was a God moment. He would be OK.

You all have your routines and you all have your God moments where your priorities are changed. Might be when you get the results of a biopsy or CAT scan. What was important before is now trivial. The God moment is that together with Jesus you will experience his presence and you will make it through the night.

Maybe you lost a loved one. Small stuff is no longer important. God interrupts your routine and showers you with his peace and presence. Maybe it was the funeral service where you realize that your loved one is looking down on you. Living water. Maybe you're sitting at church with your loved ones. You have been arguing about stupid stuff- most arguments are about stupid stuff- and then during the confession of sins, or walking up for communion, God interrupts. Let's you know that you are loved and cared for and you see again that life has so many more important facets to it. Priorities are changed. It becomes a Wow moment.

You know exactly what I mean and you know exactly that is how God works. God interrupts our routines and we realize that we are loved and cared for. Now, we have different priorities. Life is changed. Small things are now unimportant and we see the big picture.

It worked for the woman at the well.
The same is true for you and me.
Amen- Let it be so.

