

I had a sermon all written out for today. This is not it.

I had a certain way of understanding the church, PoP This is not it.

I thought I knew what I'd be doing this Sunday morning. This is not it.

How are you doing?

If you had to pick one word to describe your feelings today?

What would it be?

If you have a writing utensil and paper handy, write down the word.

Then later today, send to it me, as an email or in a letter,

Or post it on my FB page.

I want to know how you are doing.

My word is *thirsty*

It is the same word in this story about Jesus at a well, talking to a woman.

I am *thirsty*, *thirsty* for water that satisfies,

*thirsty* for that which gushes up to eternal life.

Do you know what I mean? Have you ever had that kind of thirst?

Sometimes I go on and have a swig or two of bottled water, a sip of coffee,  
a class of wine or a pitcher of beer.

But no matter what I swallow I still remain thirsty.

Do you know what I mean? Have you ever had that kind of thirst?

I don't think it is by accident that my one word  
and this story from John's gospel meet this week.

I don't think it is by accident that this story intersects with your word,

What is it? Say it outload?

Hold on to it as we delve a little deeper into this amazing story.

Let's put some clothes on your word.

Let's dress it up with a back story, a present, and a future,  
just like the woman.

The encounter begins as Jesus comes to rest about midday by Jacob's well.  
He speaks to a woman he ought not speak to,  
telling her all there is to know about her - the good, the bad and the ugly-  
and where she can find water that satisfies.

Where does your word begin?

Is it a word you carry around with you for times like this?

Is it a word you bring out when you experience uncharted territory?

Something new, something unanticipated?

What is your relationship with the word? What does it reveal about you?

My thirst comes and goes, but it is always there.

At times, like our present, it is more pronounced, obvious.

My throat is dry, my steps search for a cup, my heart longs for a companion.

At times, it is neatly folded up and properly placed in a safe spot,  
easily assessable at a moment's notice.

So, if ever out of sight, never out of mind.

Do you know what I mean? Does your word work like that?

Jesus initiates the dialogue with the woman, *Give me a drink!*

Oh, there is so much in this story for my thirst

So much here for your word as well.

What is it? Say it again out loud.

You will agree, sometimes we make choices that separate us not only from God, but also from other people.

Some of those choices are intentional, like the *social distancing* we are experiencing to flatten the COVID19 curve.

Some are unintentional, hidden, inherited, handed to us from those who decided for us in times of decisions past.

Some of those choices are political, some geographical, some spiritual.

In this story we see not only how God reaches across that vast valley of decisions made and inherited, fostered and taught, that keeps us from God.

But also how God's Messiah leads one person across many of the obstacles created and maintained by those decisions.

This is a story about the making of peace, building community, responding to our – fill in your word – responding to our - \_\_\_\_\_ thirst – centered in the belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

What would happen if you say to Jesus  
what He said to that woman: *give me a drink?*

What would happen if you were to ask Jesus  
for what you need to address you feeling today?

What is your word? Say it again out loud.

In the midst of my thirst and your \_\_\_\_\_,  
there is a well filled with water: the water sought by Jesus,  
tired and thirsty on the way.

The water drawn by the Samaritan woman in her daily task  
becomes the water that quenches thirst, the water that makes the desert bloom,

the water in which we were baptized, the water over which the Spirit of God was hovering, the water given by Jesus springing up to eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

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What would it be?

If you have a writing utensil and paper handy, write down the word.

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Or post it on my FB page.

I want to know how you are doing.

Let us pray... O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (Evangelical Lutheran Worship Additional Prayers pg. 72-87)

<sup>1</sup> THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY, JANUARY 18–25, 2015, **An Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God: Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (John 4:7)**