

## ***At the Well (Water of Life)***

*Sermon at St. Luke's Chapel, 19 January 2020 by Ari Savuoja*

*Translation into English by Bastian Fähnrich*

### ***John 4:5-26***

*So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.*

*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

*The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'*

*'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?' Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'*

*He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.'*

*'I have no husband,' she replied.*

*Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'*

*'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'*

*'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'*

*The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'*

*Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you – I am he.'*

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ovjqsHW6kE> 00:50 – 4:40

*So now Jesus is said to have arrived with his disciples in a village called Sychar in Samaria. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as a heretical and mixed people. Therefore they would not pass through Samaria, which is located between Galilee and Jerusalem. But Jesus also went there together with his disciples – to find the lost sheep.*

*According to today's gospel text, Jesus has a conversation with a woman from the village of Sychar. Jesus asks the woman for water. Again, Jesus transgresses the social boundaries of his time. At that time, it was not appropriate for a man to talk to a stranger, lest to a woman alone. But Jesus began to talk to the woman, even to the "heretical" Samaritan woman. Asking for water was also exceptional, for the Jews thought the Samaritans' water jars were unclean.*

*During their conversation the Samaritan woman begins to wonder about Jesus. Eventually, she gains confidence and faith in Jesus, as he reveals the condition of her marriage life. The woman had been married five times and had been rejected each time. The man she is with now is not her husband.*

*What's touching is that the woman's disrupted, painful life story is known to Jesus. It is especially comforting that Jesus does not abandon or condemn her. Jesus sees her heart's quest, sincerity and openness. And Jesus entrusts her with a secret of himself; he reveals to be the Messiah. Jesus revealed this to only a few, and when he did, he did so in surprising circumstances.*

*The woman has sought love in her life but failed to do so and only broke her heart. Now the woman finds the source of true love in her life, Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah. Jesus shows her unconditional love. That love then began to heal the wounds of the woman's heart. The gospel has God's changing power!*

*And when this woman was assured of Jesus, she put her own life at stake without questioning or calculating. The woman immediately went to tell the other people in the town, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" In this way, this once despised, heartbroken Samaritan woman was enabled to lead many other people to Jesus. She was despised in the eyes of men, but precious in the eyes of God.*

*Jesus says, "The truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Here we see a good example of how the truth sets us free. Even if the truth of our lives is painful, its coming to light is the realisation that God does not forsake us – thanks to Jesus. Revealing and confessing the truth requires faith, courage, trust.*

*The love of the all-knowing God cannot be gained by denying the truth because He knows everything – but thank the Lord, the love of God in Christ cannot be taken away, as we reveal something wrong or too sinful: “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13).*

*Let’s pray:*

*Thank you dear Jesus for wanting to meet us with your truth and love. Give us the comfort and power of your Holy Spirit that we dare to bring to light also the black and shameful parts of our lives and our past – because you want to forgive them all and you want to give us life and joy.*

*Thank you that we may receive and rejoice in the freedom and trust, just as the Samaritan woman. Fill us ever more with your Holy Spirit so that we may rejoice ever deeper in the life you have given us; and, increasingly, share this joyful gospel to one another. We thank you now and always and pray this in your holy name, Amen.*