

JOHN 4 : 3–30 and 39-42**ADVENT: JESUS MEETS YOU WHERE YOU ARE**

“Advent” means “He Comes.” Jesus, a Shepherd, doesn’t just hope the lost sheep find their way home. He goes to get them--ADVENT--He comes. He comes to you in many situations and times in life to show you He is your Savior. JESUS MEETS YOU WHERE YOU ARE.

1. John 4:3-9 *He [Jesus] left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?”-- For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.*

In these verses, Jesus was traveling through Samaria. (Jewish people would often travel around Samaria; they thought little of Samaritans.) We read, *He needed to go through Samaria.* He was searching-out a particular soul. In God’s Kingdom there is no accident, chance, luck, or fate. God weaves even the devil’s schemes into His own will, and so defeats the devil at the devil’s own game!

He and the disciples came to the Samaritan e city Sychar. Its special well and history went back 1500 years to Jacob. Jesus rested at the well; the disciples left to buy food. A Samaritan woman arrived to draw water. She was alone—perhaps a bit of an outcast. Yet she was quick-witted, not shy, able to manipulate conversations and events for her benefit. Jesus asked her for a drink. She did not lose the opportunity to put the stranger back on his heels. She asked why He, a Jew, would want to ask a Samaritan and a woman at that for a drink. Although Jesus didn’t say it, she was the one He had come find, for her benefit, in a way she couldn’t see. The Lord works through events and circumstances in your life too, even this Advent and Christmas. Are there some things that don’t seem to fit, or that come out of the blue? Why?

2. John 4:10-15: *Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says 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 nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”*

Jesus did not retreat at her remarks. He had come to get her to look deeper at her life, to grasp the real Truth—God’s gift of mercy and forgiveness for sinners. He said, she should be asking Him for even better water, fresh moving, living water. The woman thought He was talking about physical water and the well. [It seems water could be drawn from a reservoir not so far down, or from a moving vein of water very far down]. How was He going to do that? Did He think He was even greater than forefather Jacob who dug the well? Perhaps she felt with Jacob as her forefather, she was OK. Do you ever think that if you have the right connections you’re OK in life, even in Advent? Jesus wanted this woman to see that the important connection is not physical—like water from a well. Jesus was leading her to desire a different water to quench thirst forever, water of everlasting life! That’s where Jesus leads you in this life, and in this Advent season—to the water for eternity—a cleansing in His blood. The woman still thought Jesus was talking about a one-drink-satisfies-forever water. She wanted it; then she wouldn’t have to come back! If Jesus fixes all earthly needs, especially at Christmas, then you’re happy right?

3. John 4:16-18 *Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”*

Jesus finally got the woman to think about spiritual things, her sinful standing before God. The easiest thing is to deny the facts, to lie, , to cover up. “I don’t have a husband,” she said. She didn’t want Jesus to know about her sinful life, but He already knew. She had disrespected and violated God’s will for marriage! Even today if someone has been married and divorced five times, we are repulsed. Further she was either now “living with” a sixth man; or perhaps Jesus was saying, “You don’t even know what marriage is anymore—I don’t even call this sixth one a marriage.” Do you try to steer thoughts away from your dismal spiritual condition?—at Advent and Christmas? Bury yourself in the extra’s of the holiday so that the facts don’t bother you? a bumpy situation at home, a bad habit—perhaps an addiction, a sly sin?

4. John 4:19-24 *The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

The woman saw that Jesus was a man of God, a prophet. She still didn't want to talk about her sin, and deftly turned the spiritual discussion to a debatable spiritual topic—Where to worship? Rather than dealing with sin, it's a lot easier to turn the discussion to what's wrong with St. Luke's, with the pastor, with the former pastor, with the CLC; or, at Advent and Christmas, “Did Jesus had half-brothers and sisters, was Mary fifteen, was Joseph thirty-five, was the manger in a shed-type stable or in a cave-type stable? “ Then we don't have to talk about sin—my sin. With God it doesn't work; Jesus brought the woman back to the real discussion. Spiritual help and forgiveness are only in the true God—not in the Samaritan substitute, not in other look-alike substitutes, not in self-help messages or self-worth theology, which all try to make one feel good but do not address sin. Spiritual help is in God who sent His Son to die and rise again, and sends His Spirit to lead your heart to trust in the Son. Those who worship Him, worship Him in spirit and in truth. It's not about place, even at Advent and Christmas—“going back home.” It's about spiritual relief from sin through trust in Christ.

5. John 4:25-26 *The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”*

She was no longer so self-sufficient, but recognized her need for the Promised One of God. “The Messiah--when He comes He will get all of us straightened out.” She was looking to the One to come. Jesus surely shocked her with the words, “I am He.” She was suddenly on the re-acting end. He had tipped her back on her heels. “He knows all about me and my sin. He does not deal with me as with a bad dog, but He is a gentle shepherd seeking lost sheep. He has a soft heart filled with love and forgiveness even for me. My salvation is not a matter of keeping other people off guard, or a matter of connections, or of place. He is my new life, my real life now and forever!” Rarely did Jesus tell people straight-out that He was the Messiah. He would let His words and actions lead them to that conclusion. In this case He told her straight-out. She did not dispute it or despise it. At Christmas, the refreshing truth is straight out—“Unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord!” (Luke 2:10-11). Let it reach your heart. It's not the Christmas message that much of society promotes and celebrates. Jesus, the Savior, is Christmas!

6. John 4:27-30 *And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?” The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city and said to the men, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” Then they went out of the city and came to Him.*

Jesus had hit “paydirt.” The timing of all this was not luck. She did not need to get into a discussion with the twelve other Jewish strangers who just showed up. She was ready to leave because she was bursting at the seams inside, “The Messiah, the forgiving, loving Savior, has come for us all!” This was Christmas! She left her water pot; it was not important! When a person “gets it”—that the world's Savior, your Savior—has come—the worldly side of Christmas really doesn't matter anymore. And this Good News is for everyone. She told the “men” in the city. We need not think that she still had a “thing” for the “men” of the town. “Men” can also be translated “the people.” She didn't force the truth on them, but pointed out the facts fully, and suggested, “Could this be the Christ!” They believed. They headed out of town to Him. Likewise for you. The real truth of Christmas is something to share, not just “We won't talk about that, lest we spoil a good time here.” She went to tell about the Messiah who knows about each one's sins and who brings forgiveness.

7. John 4:39-42 *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”*

Jesus sought out the Samaritan woman; and through her, He sought out the others. Salvation by faith in Christ comes through Jesus at Advent and Christmas. Jesus meets us where we are. Do not hinder the message or conceal it **Jesus has come to meet each with the help they really need!**

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---