

Rev. Derek Fairman

3rd Sunday in Lent A

In the Gospel, the Lord Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. When the Lord Jesus meets the Samaritan woman, she is initially hostile. However, a change takes place and she ends up inviting the other people of the town to see the Lord Jesus themselves. The Lord Jesus speaks of thirst, but His true desire is for the woman to begin to have faith. Eventually that faith begins to blossom. The Samaritan woman changes her attitude towards the Lord.

Eventually the Samaritan woman tells the other people in town, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Messiah?" Now, perhaps the Lord Jesus and the Samaritan woman spoke further, and that is not recorded. Based on the Gospel, however, what the Lord Jesus told her was that she had been married five times and that the one she was with was not her husband. That knowledge was enough to help her begin to believe. It is not just the Lord's knowledge of her situation that struck her faith, but how He treated her.

There were probably a number of people who knew her history. The woman came to draw water at noon, at the time when it would have been very warm. Normally, if you were going to draw water from the well, it would have been in the morning or the evening, when it was cooler. So, what does this mean? It means that the woman was likely shunned by the rest of the town. The other people in the town knew her history, and probably because of her history, they looked down upon her. They used their knowledge about her as a way of excluding her. They used that knowledge to her disadvantage and discredit.

The Lord Jesus knew her situation too, but instead of looking down upon her, He chose to show sympathy and to elicit her faith. He told her what she had done, not to lecture her or injure her. His initial kindness to her, in spite of her initial hostility, had made it clear that He was not there to cause her harm. He told her what she had done, so that she could see that He had knowledge that only God could have. He told her what she had done, so that she could understand that He had walked with her during those times.

We might imagine that this woman had suffered much. We do not know how she ended up in the situation she was in. What we can imagine however is that her life must not have been easy. What the Lord Jesus demonstrated was that He knew what she had been through, and how these experiences had shaped her life. We might imagine that He wishes to provide comfort and show her that although the other people in the town might disown her, He will not.

