

FRIDAY, MARCH 9

WOMAN AT THE WELL (JOHN 4)

The story of the woman at the well is the story of the holy encountering the unholy. The Holy Son of God, Jesus, meets a woman who is outcast by society, one considered “sinful.” Jesus approached the woman to ask for a drink, knowing that he is the one who can give her living water.

Jesus took the first step. Jesus spoke to the woman first. It is always God who comes to us. As 1 John 4:19 declares, “We love because he first loved us.” A holy, loving God chose to be revealed to us through Christ, though we are sinful. Jesus made the ground holy, the ground on which we encounter God, and we are commanded, “be holy as I am holy.”

But God’s step toward us does not complete the relationship. We must be willing to respond to God, to accept the living water that Jesus offers and to walk forward trusting that Jesus is who he says he is and will do what he says he will do. Did the Samaritan woman struggle with this? Consider her past, her life situation. As author Paul Louis Metzger notes, “A lot of men have made promises to her in exchange for something. No doubt she is a little jaded.” Jesus is offering grace to the Samaritan woman; this is neither a deal to be made, nor a promise in exchange for something. This is unearned, unfathomable, unmatched grace. And the result for the one who trusts? Freedom. A new life. A life lived in Christ in which one is no longer required to thirst or to search elsewhere.

For those who may have grown up in the church, who have been part of a movement that emphasizes holiness, we may, on occasion, need to be reminded of the how and the why. We are holy because God is holy. We are holy not for the purpose of earning a place in the kingdom, not because we can trade our “goodness” for a cup of living water. We are holy because God has made us holy, set apart for God’s purposes, according to God’s will, and only by God’s grace.

Lord God, the one and only Good Father, remind us today that we are sinners saved by your grace. We thank you that we can enter into your presence on holy ground and that we can drink from the living water only because of your sacrifice and your grace. Forgive us for forgetting that it is nothing we have done, nothing we have been, that has caused us to earn your grace. Instead, it is because of you that we live holy, changed, cleansed lives, committed to following your holy will. Help us to live into all you have called us to be. In the name of Jesus, Amen.