

WEEK THREE

MARCH 12 - MARCH 18

This week's reading: John 4:5-42

Sunday, March 12, 2023

Read: “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (John 4:9, the woman at the well to Jesus)

Reflect: This week we read the story of Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well. Some of the questions in this passage are explicit, emerging in the dialogue between Jesus and the woman. Later in the story, we read about some questions people do not have the courage to ask Jesus, or even each other. But the whole passage starts with this one question from the woman. It starts with a woman who could not understand why someone like Jesus would ask for help from—or even speak to—someone like her.

Who would never expect you to ask for help? Even more dramatically, who would never expect *you* to even *speak* to them?

Pray: Jesus, what do you ask of me today?

Practice: Enjoy a satisfying drink today while doing nothing else. A cold glass of water, a hot cup of tea, a milkshake, some warm cocoa.

Monday, March 13, 2023

Read: “Where do you get that living water?” (John 4:11, the woman at the well to Jesus)

Reflect: Jesus tells the woman at the well that he has living water—and that she *should* have known to ask him for some of it. Can you remember a time when you asked God for one thing, and God offered you something else instead?

Pray: Jesus, I have asked you for so much. What were you trying to give me instead?

Practice: Set a timer for three minutes. Go around the dinner table and share as many things as you can think of that you are grateful for before the timer goes off. Or write down as many things as you can think of during that time. Still have more ideas? How long can you go?

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Read: “Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” (John 4:12, the woman at the well to Jesus)

Reflect: As Jesus offers the woman something truly satisfactory, she compares Jesus to an ancestral source of pride—a story she tells herself about her family—and for a moment, it causes her to back away from Jesus. What stories do you love to tell again and again in your family? How often are those stories connected with the practice of your faith? How much does a particular denominational identity describe your family identity? For instance, do you proudly declare yourself one denomination, but feel in exile because you worship somewhere else? Has faith ever been a point of contention or division in your family?

Pray: Jesus, what can I do with the parts of my past that keep me from you?

Practice: Look around your home for a family photo. See if you can find one that was taken in church or at a life event that takes place in church (a photo from someone's wedding, baptism, or confirmation). Who's in the photo? How are they related to you? Do you know much about the faith lives of these folks right now? If there's someone in the photo you haven't seen for a while, give them a call and talk about the day the picture was taken.

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Read: "He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (John 4:29, the woman at the well to the people in her community)

Reflect: It was not the woman's certainty, but her doubt—her questions—that drove other people to seek out Jesus. What question drives you to seek out God? Has your faith ever been inspired by the questions of others?

Pray: Jesus, when my doubt affects our relationship, what do you want me to know?

Practice: Reflect on a doubt. Write something you have doubts about in steam on the bathroom mirror and then watch it disappear, or in chalk on the sidewalk and then hose it off, or in mustard on your lunchtime sandwich then eat it. When the doubt is no longer in front of you, what is left?

Thursday, March 16, 2023

Read: "Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?'" (John 4:27)

Reflect: Jesus' disciples were confused when they found Jesus speaking to the woman at the well, but they did not have the courage to ask their questions. When you encounter a situation you do not understand, do you ask questions? Or are you more likely to keep your questions to yourself?

Pray: Jesus, what do I do with my discomfort when you call me to love those who make me feel uneasy?

Practice: Put your feelings into artwork. After reading the reflection and praying today, how do you feel? Grab paper and pens, pencils, crayons or paint (or choose your own medium). Set a timer for at least three minutes. Draw how you feel, using the colors, shapes, and lines that feel right to you. Keep it abstract or make it concrete. Then step back to admire when the timer goes off. Does the artwork give you any new insights into your emotions?

Friday, March 17, 2023

Read: "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" (John 4:33, the disciples, asking each other about Jesus)

Reflect: Here the disciples gossip about Jesus, but they do not talk to him. Why do we gossip about others? What might change if we spoke to people directly instead?

Pray: God, can you please give me the courage to share my honest concerns with others?

Practice: Play two truths and a lie with your household, with friends, or post it to social media. Tell three statements, two of which are true and one of which is made up. Can others guess which is which? Can you detect others' truths?

Saturday, March 18, 2023

Question jar: Take time as an individual or with others in your household to draw and explore at least one question from your question jar today. Refresh your jar with some new questions.

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