

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

March 18, 2018

Scriptures: John 4:5-42

5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 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.) 10 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." 11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" 13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water which I give will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 15 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." 16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." 17 "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 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." 19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 25 The woman continued, saying, "I know that the Messiah" (called the Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26 Then Jesus declared, "I, who speak to you, am he." 27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him. 39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the

Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers. 42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."

Message: "God's Great Gifts -- Graciously Given, Gratefully Gained"
Introduction -- How Great to Get a Gift

- A couple once found something on the sidewalk. The man who picked it up had been without work for a long time. Handing the object to his impoverished wife who was also in need of food and clothing, the homeless couple were undoubtedly shaking. They had just found a wallet, and it was full of money, \$2400.00. No doubt they were tempted to keep that wallet, to use it as they needed. Yet they, homeless, in need of food, clothing and other necessities of life, realised that the money was not rightfully theirs. After handing the wallet to the authorities, the newspapers published their story of courage and selflessness. Then the real gifts began pouring in. Job offers, food, clothing, money, offers for free rent, and other gifts poured into this couple because they had performed this amazing act of doing what is right.
- For many of us, finding a wallet full of money would have seemed to be a gift from God, especially if we were as desperate as this couple. Yet that couple found that the real gift from God comes from doing what is

right and living your life as God wants you to.

- God gives us all wonderful gifts all the time. God is generous and loving and gracious, and wants to give gifts to His beloved children - the right gifts, gifts that will help our lives.
- Today, let's recognize three things about gifts

Part 1. Recognizing a gift from God

- Did you know that from a rock, came water -- from A ROCK? This is just one of many gifts that God gave to His people over time. From a rock came water. Numbers 20:11 says: (New International Version):
"Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank." What a gift! To the thirsty, needy people, God gave the gift of water.
- What other gifts did God give the Israelite people of old? Rescue from the enemy; Safety; Food falling from heaven; Protection; Salvation from enemies; And in this story from John 4, we have a woman who is being read like her life is displayed before her, and she is about to be offered the gift of life eternal by the Saviour of the world, by the Christ, by Jesus the Lord.
- All these gifts which were given by God to His beloved people - and

more! How could they not see the gifts that God had already given to them? And yet, how come we have a problem seeing the gifts which come to us from God? The dramatic recovery from illness; the finding of the lost treasure that we have prayed about; the times that we have found ourselves absolutely powerless; as did these Hebrews in the desert -- AND God has come through for us. And yet we TOO fail to see the times that we have been taken care of by God. We too fail to see the many ways that God has lavished gifts upon us, leading up to this point in our lives. We fail to recognize the gifts that come from God.

- Don't you get tired of hearing that lifeless phrase, "Oh, its only a coincidence?" Coincidence nothing! God is involved with His creation. God is constantly giving gifts. But we often, just like the people in the desert, fail to recognize them as gifts from God.
- What about the gift that Jesus presented to the Samaritan woman in John 4? Think of it -- here is the world's greatest gift -- God's only begotten Son, sent to mend a broken world and ultimately to die for all of us. And He stops to offer a gift to a stranger. He starts by asking the woman for a gift -- *"Will you give me some water (v. 7)."* Now remember that this is a Jew talking to a Samaritan -- already the woman is undoubtedly

feeling that something either wrong OR that something exciting is about to happen. Why is this? Do you remember that the hatred between Jews and Samaritans was very intense and had been for generations - each thinking they had the right God?

- Not only that, but here is Jesus, a man, talking with a woman. Women were not regarded highly in the Ancient Near East. There are even prayers of men thanking God that they were not born as a woman.
- On top of that, this woman, as we find out later, has a long history (v. 18). She has a past. She has lived a terrible, sinful life, and is stuck in that rut now. Maybe this is where you are today, too - you too have fallen deeper and deeper into a lifestyle of sin and pain, and hurt. Know this: you do not have to stay stuck. Know this: you can step free from your life of pain. Know this: God loves you deeply and truly, as Jesus is about to show to this woman in John 4.
- Jesus knows her past (v. 18). Jesus knows her pain. Jesus knows her heart. He knows that she would, no doubt, have been ostracized by her own community as a woman living out of wedlock. So a sinful, foreign woman from a hated nation is standing before Jesus, and yet Jesus talks to her. And He gave her a gift. He offers her the gift of eternal life (v.

14). And she is excited -- she knows the value of this gift, and so she immediately runs to share it with others (v. 28, 29). And the village is saved, rescued, and finds new life (v. 41).

- We too have been met by Jesus. We too who are full of our faults and short-comings. We have been met by Jesus, and we too have been offered a gift -- the gift of eternal life in Jesus, as He offered the Samaritan woman in verse 10. Jesus is offering to us today what He offered to the woman at the well -- the gift of completeness in our lives. This is a gift that is available for us all TODAY. Jesus has met US and offered to us the greatest gift ever. Life. Complete life for today. Complete life for eternity.

2. Acting on God's gifts

- So, many of us know that God have offered us this gift - a gift beyond compare for now and for ever. Being offered a gift is one thing, but have you ever been offered a gift, but you refuse to take it? Have you been given something great, but then let that wonderful gift remain unopened? Why would you not accept the greatest gift ever?
- It's not enough just to recognize a gift as coming from God, but then we are to act on God's gifts. God has given all of us many gifts and

opportunities. But we must do more than just see them -- we must begin acting on God's gifts.

- Let me ask again: what good is it to have a gift if we do not use it? Why have a gift if it is left unopened? Why would we see a gift as from God, and reject it?
- Think about the list of gifts that God has given to us: He has given us His grace - He died to give us life. He has given us ability and talent (Think about it: we are all made in His image (Genesis 1:27). to do good works (Ephesians 2:10)). We have been given people our lives - people to love and who love us. We have been given material goods - God does not want us to be destitute, but He also wants us to rely on Him. He has given us safety and protection, and joy, and hope, and peace, and encouragement, and courage, and patience.
- God has even given to us the gift of faith - faith to fully believe and to fully follow Him - all for the taking. We are to use the gift of faith to grow as a believer. Accept God's gift on faith, and your faith will grow, even as you ask it to grow.
- There is the story of the man who was lost in the desert. He comes upon an old well with a tired water pump and a container beside it. The

thirsty man grabbed the handle of the old pump, and using the last of his energy, pumped hard, awaited the flowing water. But nothing came out. Then he looks at the container and sees a note: "Use this water to prime the pump." Now he is faced with a dilemma: drink what he has in that container, or use the water to potentially receive more water than he could handle. What would you do?

- One has to have faith to grow the gift of faith. This is part of the dilemma we face. We do not know for sure that the water we put down the old pump will make it work, but we also have no reason to doubt. The man would have had only a mouth full of water if he had drunk the remains of the container instead of using it to prime the old pump. Otherwise he could have had water unlimited. What would you do?
- That is what Jesus promised the Samaritan woman in John 4. He is not offering a temporary fix of her need for thirst as He knew she would thirst again (v. 13). Instead Jesus is offering the woman the gift of living water. Let me read to you His own words from John 7:37-38: "*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the Scriptures has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.*" Jesus is offering God's true gift of life, as given through the grace of

Jesus Christ, and accepted through faith. Do you have a wee bit of faith?

Offer it back to Jesus, and more will come out, just like the man found out when his primed that old pump that day in the desert.

- Does this mean that once we accept Jesus that all will be easy? As Paul says in Romans 2:2-5: *"We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit"*
- This Church has a history of persisting in the face of adversity. This Church has a history of using its gifts well. This Church as a history of standing firm for Christ Jesus our Lord. We need to continue in perseverance. We need to continue to use God's gifts in this Church, in our homes, at work, at school, and in our community. This Church has had its share of frustrations and failures over its 184 ½ years, and yet there is hope --hope from the faith of a few of God's followers who have had the nerve to cling to God's grace and to follow God's leading. And, Lord willing, we shall continue to persevere, using His wonderful gifts.

3. Giving Thanks

- Lets not leave it there -- God has given to all of us gifts. We need to recognize a gift as coming from God, and we have to act on God's gifts, but let's not do as the Hebrews in the desert did, and leave it like that -- LETS GIVE THANKS. Lets make sure as a congregation and as individual believers in Jesus Christ that we continue to Give THANKS for God's gifts. Let's be thankful for the greatest gift -- for Jesus -- the MESSIAH -- the Great "I Am." Jesus is our Lord, our Saviour -- our Ruler -- our Friend -- the giver of Gifts -- the sustainer of life.
- Let's makes sure that we thank Him. Let's be sure that God knows that we appreciate the many gifts that He has given to us in our lives.
- When we give thanks for the gifts and talents which God has given to us, when we give thanks for the financial resources; thanks for the gift of our family; thanks for the gift of having a Lord and Saviour to trust; thanks for the gift of this Church; thanks for the gift of so many things, our lives change. In gratitude and in honour of what Jesus gave to us, our lives SHOULD be a living testimony of thanksgiving and praise to the Living God, the giver of gifts.

Conclusion:

- God loves us and so God gives us gifts. They come to us all the time.

Do you see them? Do you thank God for them? God's Great Gifts --

Graciously Given, Gratefully Gained.