



Devotional Guide for the Season of Lent 2017

As we journey together through the season of Lent, this devotional guide is meant to serve as weekly preparation for the Sunday to come. Email subscribers will receive each week's devotion early in the week prior, giving them several days to study the Scripture passage for the week and meditate on the questions, hymns, and prayers provided.

You are encouraged to spend the days leading up to each Sunday in prayer and meditation with the Scripture, opening your hearts to hear what message God may have for you. We hope that this guide will be a blessing to you, and that your season of Lent may be a time in which you are renewed and refreshed.

We suggest that you use this guide in this manner:

Day One: Read the Scripture and commentary. Circle words and underline phrases that speak to you. Reflect on them.

Day Two: Read the Scripture again and focus on one of the questions.

Day Three: Read the Scripture again and focus on another of the questions.

Day Four: Read through the hymn lyrics, and sing them if you so desire. How does the hymn deepen the message of the Scripture?

Conclude each day by praying the prayer.

March 19th, 2017 - Third Sunday of Lent

John 4:5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying 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 no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here,

when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

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?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

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The woman at the well. A story we've heard time and again, it demonstrates that Jesus wasn't just interested in one set of people, but all. As a Jewish man who was acknowledged as a teacher among his people, he shouldn't have even been anywhere near a Samaritan woman who had been divorced repeatedly, but yet, there he was, where he "didn't belong", carrying out the ministry for which he was sent to earth.

We have to remember that this was not a "one-and-done" sort of thing for Jesus, either. He often associated with the outcasts, the marginalized, the forgotten of society. Whether they were lepers, tax collectors, Roman centurions, or prostitutes, Jesus made time for everybody with whom he came into contact. His love knew no bounds, and his ministry was for all people.

If we are to live our lives as Jesus did, then we, too, must minister to those people with whom we would not commonly associate. Don't let societal pressures hold you back - be like Jesus at the well, and don't be afraid to bring the good news to all.

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Questions to Consider

- 1) Living lives modeled after Christ can often call us to do things with which we're not ordinarily comfortable. How might God be stretching you beyond your comfort zone?
- 2) Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman of "living water" that would quench our thirst forever, yet so often, we forsake the living water in favor of the things of this world. What changes can we make in our lives to seek out God's living water first?
- 3) What constitutes living water for you?

Hymn for the Week - "Woman in the Night"

Woman in the night, spent from giving birth,
Guard our precious light; peace is on the earth!

*Come and join the song, women, children, men;
Jesus makes us free to live again!*

Woman in the crowd, creeping up behind,
Touching is allowed, seek and you will find!

Woman at the well, question the Messiah;
Find your friends and tell; drink your heart's desire!

Woman at the feast, let the righteous stare;
Come and go in peace; love him with your hair!

Woman in the house, nurtured to be meek,
Leave your second place; listen, think, and speak!

Women on the road, from your sickness freed,
Witness and provide, joining word and deed!

Women on the hill, stand when men have fled!
Christ needs loving still, though your hope is dead!

Women in the dawn, care and spices bring;
Earliest to mourn; earliest to sing!

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Prayer for the Week

O God, you know the ways of our hearts, and you know that far too often, we both ignore the Samaritan woman at the well and seek for the water that this world provides, rather than accepting the living water that you give to us. We ask that you grant us the wisdom to drink deeply of the living water, that we may thirst no more, and the grace to be as Christ to the marginalized, the outcast, and the downtrodden. Let our hearts be after the one in whose name we pray, our Lord, Jesus Christ, AMEN.