

March 19, 2017

“Wilderness Training: Living Water”

First Reading ~ John 4:5-42

On his way to Galilee, as he passed through Samaria, Jesus stopped at Sychar, a town in Samaria, near the tract of land Jacob had given to his son Joseph, and Jacob's Well was there. Jesus, weary from the journey, came and sat by the well. It was around noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The disciples had gone off to the town to buy provisions.

The Samaritan woman replied, "You're a Jew. How can you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?" — since Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans. Jesus answered, "If only you recognized God's gift, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him for a drink instead and he would have given you living water." "If you please," she challenged Jesus, "you don't have a bucket and this well is deep. Where do you expect to get this 'living water'? Surely you don't pretend to be greater than our ancestors Leah and Rachel and Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it with their descendants and flocks?" Jesus replied, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give them will never be thirsty; no, the water I give will become fountains within them, springing up to provide eternal life." The woman said to Jesus, "Give me this water, so that I won't grow thirsty and have to keep coming all the way here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband and then come back here." "I don't have a husband," replied the woman. "You're right — you don't have a husband!" Jesus exclaimed. "The fact is, you've had five, and the man you're living with now is not your husband. So, what you've said is quite true." "I can see you're a prophet," answered the woman. "Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you people claim that Jerusalem is the place where God ought to be worshipped."

Jesus told her, "Believe me, the hour is coming when you'll worship Abba God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you don't understand; we worship what we do understand — after all, salvation is from the Jewish people. Yet the hour is coming — and is already here — when real worshipers will worship Abba God in Spirit and truth. Indeed it is just such worshipers whom Abba God seeks. God is Spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Jesus, "I know that the Messiah — the Anointed One — is coming, and will tell us everything."

Jesus replied, "I who speak to you am the Messiah." The disciples, returning at this point, were shocked to find Jesus having a private conversation with a woman. But no one dared to ask, "What do you want of him?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman then left her water jar and went off into the town. She said to the people, "Come and see someone who told me everything I have ever done! Could this be the Messiah?" At that, everyone set out from town to meet Jesus. Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something." But Jesus told them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." At this, the disciples said to one another, "Do you think someone has brought him something to eat?"

Jesus explained it to them, "Doing the will of the One who sent me and bringing this work to completion is my food. Don't you have a saying, 'Four months more and it will be harvest time'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields — they're ripe and ready for harvest! Reapers are already collecting their wages; they're gathering fruit for eternal life, and sower and reaper will rejoice together. So the saying is true: 'One

person sows; another reaps.' I have sent you to reap what you haven't worked for. Others have done the work, and you've come upon the fruits of their labor.'" Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus on the strength of the woman's testimony —that "he told me everything I ever did." The result was that, when these Samaritans came to Jesus, they begged him to stay with them awhile. So Jesus stayed there two days, and through his own spoken word many more came to faith. They told the woman, "No longer does our faith depend on your story. We've heard for ourselves, and we know that this really is the savior of the world "God gives birth to the Chosen One as you, as me, as each one of us. As many beings – as many gods in God.

In my soul, God not only gives birth to me as a child of God, God gives birth to me as God, and God as me. I find in this divine birth that God and I are the same: I am what I was and what I shall always remain, now and forever. I am transported above the highest angels; I neither decrease nor increase, for in this birth I have become the motionless cause of all that moves. I have won back what has always been mine. Here, in my own soul, the greatest of all miracles has taken place – God has returned to God!

Second Reading - From Keith Boykin in
One More River to Cross: Black & Gay in America

We all must know that our minds are trapped in the prejudices of our society, for only through this knowledge can we attempt to resist these influences. Homophobia afflicts not only heterosexuals but also homosexuals, who internalize, expect, accept, and often believe the negative rhetoric directed at them. Racism also works its tricks on blacks and whites both. Before we can respond to the prejudices of racism and homophobia in others, we must first confront the internalized hatred inside ourselves. We must challenge the self-hatred that teaches us that our lives are less valuable than others merely because we are different and therefore despised.