

**3/8/26**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent**  
**For Group Meetings from March 1<sup>st</sup> – March 7<sup>th</sup>**

**OUR MISSION:** As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

**Prayer of the Day:** Merciful God, the fountain of living water, you quench our thirst and wash away our sin. Give us this water always. Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of your truth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:**

**Share:** How did last week's scripture (John 3:1-17) work in your life this week?

**Mission:**

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

**Hear:** John 4:5-42

**Explore Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. Where does this encounter take place and why does that location matter?
2. How does the Samaritan woman respond to Jesus initial request? What seems to surprise her?
3. What is Jesus' response when the disciples urge him to eat something?

**Connect Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. Share a time when an ordinary moment became unexpectedly holy for you.
2. How has your understanding of Jesus changed over time?
3. What is one small step toward living water you could take this week?

**Memorize this verse:** But [Jesus] said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." (John 4:32)  
What fills you up spiritually?

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:**

**Obey:** During this week follow through on your intentions.

**Meditate:** Meditate on Psalm 95. How does this speak into your life?

**Reflect:** What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

## Notes for ChristCare leaders:

How does someone come to faith? Not simply “faith” that agrees with ideas or doctrines like “Jesus is the Son of God.” But “faith” more in its biblical sense of trust. A living and active trust that makes it possible to take significant risks. I ask this question because this week’s lengthy reading from John offers a vivid portrait of one such person coming to this kind of vibrant, trusting, risking-taking faith. I notice three things that I think are essential in cultivating such faith. First, the relative vulnerability and openness of the characters. Jesus asks for a drink and so shows his need. Asking someone for anything exposes a certain vulnerability, as we typically don’t like to show our need. In return, and perhaps in response to this demonstration of vulnerability, the woman neither simply grants his request nor ignores it but shares her surprise and discomfort. That, in turn, invites a deeper conversation about life and faith that may never have happened absent this initial note of vulnerability.

Second, Jesus doesn’t just talk to her, he sees her. Jesus’ words describing her marital history and present circumstances are not condemnation for past or present sins, but rather recognition that she has lived a tragic and difficult life. Abandoned five times, now dependent on someone who will not marry her, she is in desperate straits. Yet rather than ignore, critique, or pity her, Jesus recognizes and names her challenges and so sees and values her. In doing so, he conveys to her that she exists for him. She is not invisible. She has worth and value. And all of this may have been rather new to her. In light of Jesus seeing and valuing her as a person, she is emboldened to risk asking the central question that has divided Jews and Samaritans for centuries: Where is the proper place to worship. Third, in response to her question, Jesus issues a surprising invitation. An invitation to imagine that even our most cherished practices matter little if they do not facilitate a relationship with the living God. An invitation to recognize that it is the very Messiah and Son of God who is speaking to her and affirming her worth and value. An invitation to leave behind her burdens and share with others the joy she has encountered in their meeting. These invitations are surprising in that they come from a man to a woman, a Jew to a Samaritan, and a rabbi of relative power and authority to someone who had neither. They are also surprising because each invitation also involves challenge. The challenge of getting over one’s piety as an excuse for keeping a distance from God. The challenge of accepting the new identity Jesus offered. And the challenge of imagining that God could and would use her to share the good news.

In response to all this, the woman leaves her jar behind, goes out to her neighbors to tell what Jesus has shown her, and brings them to Jesus. Every element of that is risky. Yet she is, in almost every way, a completely different person and so able to take risks. Or perhaps she is simply the person God created her to be but that she had difficulty embracing because of the tragedies she had experienced. And it is discovering who God created her to be that gives her the capacity for risking herself. The Gospel is often like that. Creating something new that is really what God had hoped and intended for all along, and that gift of identity and regard is always empowering. A willingness to be vulnerable. Truly seeing each other. Offering invitations that take seriously the gifts, worth, and potential of another. And all of this leading to greater faith, love, and action.

## Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

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### *Traditional version:*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us  
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

### *Contemporary version:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen