

Lent Devotion for Thursday, March 23

John 4: 5-15

JESUS: THE SOLUTION, NOT A SUBSTITUTE!

“...but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

One of the universal experiences of human beings is thirst. Every human shares the design, desire, and determination for hydration. Our bodies and brains send signals that warn us of our deprivation, and we in turn respond by seeking out a drink. The reality of thirst is that it is both inevitable and inconvenient. Often this causes us to seek satisfaction in whatever might be available to curb the strength of our appetite. Unfortunately, our insatiable desire can lead us to rely not on the solution but substitutes—substitutes that temporarily satisfy our feeling but leave us unfulfilled. It is not until our bodies are replenished with water, the very thing that helps to make us who we are, that our thirst is truly satisfied.

In our passage, Jesus reveals his inextricable connection to the human experience. Much like us, experiencing the weariness of life resulting in his need for rest and replenishment, he asks a Samaritan woman for a drink of water. Unlike us, however, we see that Jesus' intentions transcend the temptation to meet our needs with substitutes and provides for us the solution.

Like the woman Jesus encounters, we become so reliant on substitutes that the solution may seem impractical or impossible. However, Jesus' response proves how relentless the love of God is, as he persists in pursuit of this woman's freedom from temporary relief. This season reminds us that the brokenness of this world causes us to experience the inevitable longing for a drink of something that can satisfy us, something that can save us and satiate our thirst for acceptance and absolution. Jesus, in turn, offers us himself, the

living water, the very thing that makes us who we are, and he gives us connection to a loving and forgiving God.

As we turn our desires away from the substitutes and toward the solution, may our appetites be forever changed, and our request be like that of the woman Jesus encountered as she stated simply, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not be thirsty."

Lord, thank you for providing for us the living water that we both desire and need.