

BEHOLD THE LAMB: TAKE-HOME 5

Living Water

John 4

What We Found

Jesus had to pass through Samaria, and the necessity, John hints, was more than geography. He sat down, genuinely tired, at Jacob's well at noon, an hour that may hint she was avoiding the other women, and he asked her for a drink. Then the Old Testament pattern fired: Jacob met Rachel at a well, Rebekah and Zipporah were found at wells, and the patriarchs' well scenes begin betrothals. The man the Baptist just called the bridegroom sat down at a well, and John bent the pattern until it broke our hearts: the bride is no maiden. Five husbands, five broken cisterns, and behind her, Samaria itself, read through Hosea 2's estranged bride, whom God swore to allure back and betroth to himself forever. Last week we asked who the bride is. This week we found the first answer: the one who broke faith, and he came for her anyway.

We read Jeremiah 2:13 and learned the anatomy of thirst: forsaking the fountain of living waters to dig broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jesus named her whole story without a syllable of contempt, praised her honesty twice, and she moved toward him instead of running. We weighed the worship question honestly: spirit and truth does not abolish liturgy, because in this Gospel the Spirit is the living water and the truth is Jesus himself, and worship was not de-located into vapor but re-located into the temple of his body. And then, to an audience of one discarded woman, Jesus said it for the first time: I AM, the one speaking to you. She left her water jar, ran to the town that shamed her, and preached the only sermon she had: come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Two days later her town called him the Savior of the world. Back at Cana, an official believed a bare sentence and walked twenty miles home on it, and we logged the second sign, the last one John numbers. The tally is ours now.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo, Tractates on the Gospel of John, Tractate 15

Augustine will not let us hurry past the tired man on the well curb. The strength of Christ created you, he preaches, and the weakness of Christ re-created you. The Word who made the seas sat thirsty beside a well he had made, because our rescue required not only omnipotence but exhaustion. And in the woman he sees the Church coming from the nations: she arrives with her bucket and her history, and leaves carrying what no jar can hold.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns on Virginity

Ephrem sings the detail everyone steps over: she left her water jar. She came to draw water and abandoned the errand, because she had become the vessel herself. She went down to the well a woman carrying a pitcher and came up a fountain carrying Christ to her city.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Teresa of Ávila, from her Life

Teresa was devoted to this scene from childhood and begged over and over, in her own rendering of the Samaritan woman's request, Lord, give me this water. RSV2CE has Sir, give me this water; the Greek carries both senses. The greatest teacher of prayer among the Church's women built her interior life on five words first spoken by a five-times-married outcast.

Live It This Week

- **Pray Teresa's prayer.** Every day this week, begin your prayer with the woman's own words: Sir, give me this water. Then be quiet for two minutes and let him answer.
- **Let him tell you all you ever did.** Jesus named her whole story and she felt loved, not condemned. Consider going to Confession this week: the sacrament where being fully known and being shown mercy happen in the same sentence.
- **One sentence to one person.** Her method is available to you: no arguments, just testimony and an invitation. Give your one-sentence testimony to one actual person this week.

Memory Verse

John 4:14 (RSV2CE)

But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Before Next Session

Read John 5. Session 6: The Son's Authority. Keep the sign tally and the new I AM tally going, and keep your guess sealed.

Catechism References

CCC 439, 728, 1179, 2560-2561.