**THE WOMAN AT THE WELL #1 *MM ONLINE***

**Were you at the Bible study on *Zoom* last night? Tim taught us all about when Nicodemus came to Jesus. Do you remember how he came at night (Jn. 3:2)? Listen to this story about someone else whom Jesus met at an unlikely hour:**

**Jn. 4:1-26**

**What time did this lady come to Jesus? It was *the sixth hour (v. 6)* after dawn – high noon. No wonder Jesus was thirsty! *Nicodemus* came specifically *looking* for Jesus, but *she* found Him when she was looking for something else. Nicodemus came at night: we wondered whether that was because he had something to lose – his reputation; she came in broad daylight because she had nothing to lose – her reputation was long gone. Oh, and there are two other differences between them: he was a man and she was a woman; and he was a Jew and she was a Samaritan.**

**Jesus had entered enemy territory by taking that route through Sychar. Rumours were spreading that John the Baptist and Jesus were rivals, so, to avoid that, Jesus went back to Galilee (vv. 1-3). The shortest route was through Samaria, but many Jews would take the long way home, such was the antipathy between the Jews and Samaritans. But we’re told here that He *had to go through Samaria (v. 4).* Why? To meet this woman, of course! You see, Jesus deals with individuals. No matter how big the congregation is, He speaks one-to-one. So an audience of five thousand or an audience of one is all the same to Him.**

**Both Jesus and the woman came looking for water, but neither of them got it. She never actually answered Jesus’ request to draw some for Him and in v. 28 we’re told that she left her jar behind and went back to town without it. But she got something far greater, or, rather, met Someone far greater, in fact, far greater than she could even suspect. Sychar is the same place as Shechem where Abraham first saw *God* (Gen. 12:7)*.* Jesus was quite right when He observed that she didn’t know *who* was sitting there before her (v. 10)!**

**We learnt last night that Nicodemus began to grow in faith as he spoke with Jesus. Do you see the progression here in this woman’s understanding? First of all she’s surprised (v. 9). She’s surprised that there’s *anyone* there at the well at noon. The fact that *she’s* there then is also surprising – people would usually go in the cool of the evening. Oh, and the women would go in a *group*. Do you remember how Abraham’s servant met Rebekah among the other women as they drew water in the evening (Gen. 24:11-13)? The fact that she was there alone reminds us that she wasn’t polite company. So she’s surprised to see Him.**

**But she’s also surprised that He spoke to her. As John helpfully tells us, *Jews do not associate with Samaritans (v. 9).* The literal translation is, *Jews do not use dishes Samaritans have used* (you may have that in a footnote). Yet here was a Jewish man not only associating with her, but asking to drink from her jar!**

**They talk about water. Now, water is vital, but it soon becomes apparent that Jesus is talking about something greater than the water in the well. He calls it *living water (v. 10).*****Jesus had asked her for some of *her* water and now she asks Him for some of this living water (v. 15). She has gone from surprise to supplication. When I came to Jesus, I was *surprised* that He was there: I’d prayed a prayer to Him just to see what might happen. But that surprise turned to supplication as I began to see that I could ask Him for things, not least for His *living water –* His Holy Spirit (Jn*.* 7:39).**

**Jesus observes the proprieties and tells her to fetch her husband (v. 16). Quite truthfully she replies that she *has* no husband (at the moment) (v. 17). If Jesus wants a bride, she is hinting, she’s available. But then Jesus moves her on in her faith when He reveals a deeper truth to her – she has *had* five husbands and is now living with another man (v. 18). Can I remind you that Jesus will never flatter you but will always speak the truth about you? But that is never done to *hurt* you.He must get you to acknowledge the truth in order that you can move *on* with Him – and *in* with Him.**

**She does move on – now she declares that He is a prophet (v. 19), someone who sees the truth and speaks it. But that causes another problem for her: she’s been taught not to trust the Jewish prophets. *They* say you have to worship God in Jerusalem, whereas her *fathers,* as she calls them, have taught her that she should worship God there in Samaria (v. 20). So - she’s disqualified. Except that *she* talked about her Samaritan *fathers*: *He* talks about the universal Father (v. 21). *She* talks about going to a holy place to worship: *He* says that she *will* worship God wherever she is, *in spirit and in truth (v. 21, 24).***

**And then she, in that place where Abraham met God, reveals that she is beginning to understand: she is longing for the Messiah to come and explain it all, she says (v. 25). *Messiah –* that’s a Hebrew word. In Greek it’s *Christos* and, in English, it’s *Christ.* There had been lots of *messiahs* – Isaiah tells us that even King Cyrus of Persia was a messiah (Is. 45:1) because *messiah* or *Christ* means *the anointed one*.**

***Messiahs* could be prophets, as when Elijah was told to anoint Elisha (1 Kings 19:16); kings were *messiahs* because *they* were anointed (do you remember how Samuel anointed David as king (1 Sam. 16:13)?); and priests were *messiahs* because they *had* to be anointed to be valid (Ex. 40:15).**

**She already knew He was a prophet and the wise men at His birth had declared Him to be *the king of the Jews (Mt.2:2),* so He was twice a *messiah* – prophet and king. But that means He could *never* be a priest because He was from the royal tribe of Judah while the priests were from the priestly house of Aaron. A *messiah* was either prophet, priest or king; possibly a prophet-king or a prophet-priest, but *never* a priest-king.**

**Yes, there had been many *messiahs,* but she, in faith, was waiting for *the Messiah.* And *Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he” (v. 26).* He *is* our *Prophet,* promised by Moses (Deut. 18:15) who speaks God’s truth like no other, as the woman found; He isour *King*, in fact*, King of Kings and Lord of Lords,* as John declared elsewhere (Rev. 19:16); but He is also, uniquely, not just our *priest,* but our *Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14).* He is Prophet, Priest and King our triple *messiah – the* Messiah!**

**But – hold on! - the Messiah must be anointed: when was Jesus anointed?**

**Lk. 7:37-8**

**Oh, Jesus the Messiah - Prophet, Priest and King - *was* anointed: He was anointed by a *sinful woman*. And it was to another sinful woman, this Samaritan, a foreigner, that Jesus first declared that He is the Messiah and He wanted her for His bride (Jn. 3:29). He is the Messiah of the outcast.**

***I won’t be doing a talk next week, but, please God, the week after, I’ll be asking the question, “What happened next?” You might like to read on….***