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經文：約 4:1-26

題目：井旁相遇

主旨：當耶穌遇見我們時, 我們可以經歷生命的更新.

引言:

當您在很忙碌的生活中, 您想歇一回的話, 您就到 **Star Buck** 咖啡店去坐一下! 您叫了一杯咖啡, 準備享受咖啡的同時, 有一個人問您可不可以坐同您一個桌子? 當然您會說: 「可以!」結果一看, 原來是一位很久沒見的朋友。那您有單獨的時間與這位朋友坐在一起談談最近有關工作, 家庭的事件等等。如果這位朋友是耶穌的話, 您會怎麼樣? 當然, 憑著您的想像力, 到底耶穌是怎麼樣的? 不一定是我們所謂的圖畫裡的耶穌, 是另外一個樣式, 不論如何, 您認識, 您知道是耶穌, 您會怎麼樣?

上個禮拜, 看到約翰告訴我們說: “有很多人要跟耶穌, 可是耶穌不相信人, 因為祂知道每一個人的心” 那句話之後, 在第三章的第一節馬上就有這樣的一句話: 有一個人——是尼哥底母, 夜間來到耶穌面前, 尼哥底母與耶穌有一番的對話, 他想更加瞭解天國的事情。今天, 也是一段很熟悉的經文, 是講到耶穌和撒瑪利亞婦人的相遇。我相信我們當中熟習聖經的弟兄姊妹, 特別是當您帶查經的時候, 大概您會用不同的角度來看這一段的經文。有人會從這段經文裡找出如何向人傳福音、如何做個人的佈道? 也有些人從這段經文裡來看如何敬拜! 如何叫做敬拜神! 等等。

我今日會用講故事的角度來看這段記載, 看看這個故事在這段經文裡, 如何一步一步的向聽眾面前來展開? 既然是故事的話, 我們就注意裡面互相的對話, 並且也要注意, 任何的故事一定有它的衝突和矛盾的地方。然後有了矛盾之後, 就有了解決! 當您在讀福音書、帶查經的時候, 也注意一下故事——這是記敘的方式, 要從這一個對話、衝突、解決來看這段經文。我們先看這一段話、這一個故事的背景。這是猶大地, 也是耶穌所在之地——耶路撒冷附近, 這段經文說: 祂要往加利利那裡去, 您記得這是迦南第一次的神蹟, 變酒的地方。祂要從這裡去那裡, 在當時的猶太人來說, 若要從猶大到加利利的話, 他們必須要過約旦河往東邊走一下, 然後再回來, 因為他們不願意經過撒瑪利亞。在這段經文裡面括弧裡的字告訴我們, 猶太人和撒瑪利亞人沒有任何的交往! 所以, 要去加利利的話一定要過這個約旦河, 然後再兜一個圈子, 這個圈子是蠻大的。猶太人自稱是亞伯拉罕的後裔, 然而, 撒瑪利亞人乃自稱是雅各的後裔, 撒瑪利亞人他們也是猶太人, 但是在他們的歷史有個階段裡, 他們跟外邦人 (非猶太人) 通婚, 所以就被猶太人認為是一個不潔淨的一個群體, 所以不願意與他們有任何的來往, 在猶太人當中有這樣一句話說: 一個撒瑪利亞人用過的碟子, 猶太人絕對不會用。我們可以體會到猶太人那種的仇視的心態, 撒瑪利亞人是一個被害的受害者, 是人家不喜歡的、也是猶太人最不喜歡的一種人。當耶穌來到這個地方的時候, 也就是今天這個故事所發生的區。來到這裡時, 經文告訴我們, 耶穌來到這裡, 祂疲倦了!

在約翰福音書裡，有個蠻特別的一點，就是在整本書信裡，都是強調耶穌是神的兒子—耶穌就是神！但是，在這個記載裡面，剛開始的時候，說祂疲倦了，在這裡給我們看見，已經帶出來，這一位耶穌的確是神！是神的兒子！同時，祂也是一個人，祂像人一樣的會疲倦、也是想喝水。

I. 信徒要體會到個人心靈的需要. (7-15)

然後，在這段經文裡，也特別的指出耶穌來到這個井的旁邊，大約是正午，剛好是我們的十二點鐘左右。您也記得，上個禮拜的故事，尼哥底母是晚上、夜間來的。現在這件事情的發生，是在正午，耶穌就坐在井旁，對一個猶太人來說：熟悉舊約的猶太人來說：「井」在舊約裡往往是與人見面、相遇的地方。您也記得亞伯拉罕的僕人在井旁邊，遇見了亞伯拉罕的兒子以撒將來的妻子。接著下來，雅各也是在井旁遇見了他的妻子—利亞。同樣的，摩西在井旁遇見了他未來的妻子。所以，在舊約的傳統裡面，「井」是一個相遇、見面的地方。然後來到這裡，耶穌坐在井的旁邊，熟悉舊約聖經的猶太人，他們聽到這個故事，一開始時，他們就會期望，要看看下面有什麼事情發生？既然「井」是一個相遇的地方。耶穌要跟誰相遇？接著下來，就有一位撒瑪利亞婦人來到井邊取水，在這時候，門徒們都離開了去找食物。所以，她剛好來到這裡取水，您一看到這個描寫時，您馬上知道這個圖畫裡的一些問題？是相當嚴重的。當然，按著他們的傳統，打水都是婦女做的、責任，而且那時候的打水，是一清早起來就去打水的。為了要避免白天的太陽的照射力及嚴熱的天氣，所以，都是一清早的來了。但是，這位撒瑪利亞婦人卻是在中午嚴熱的時候，可能是因為她聲譽（以下會看到的）。她中午來為得是避免人的，這個井本應該是一個與人相遇的地方，但是，對撒瑪利亞婦人，卻是要孤獨自己一個人來的地方。然後在這個井的旁邊，耶穌就和這位撒瑪利亞的婦人遇見了。當我們再繼續看下去的時候，就發現這個故事裡面，只有他們二個人在對話。然後仔細看這對話時，發現裡面有三個回合的對話。首先讓我們看一下第一個回合的對話。

耶穌主動說了第一句話：「請給我水喝！」一聽見這句話，馬上體會到很嚴重的問題，首先、一個猶太的男人是不能夠在公開的場合，跟一個婦女講話。第二、一個猶太人是不能夠跟撒瑪利亞人說話。跟談不上跟一個撒瑪利亞的婦人談話？所以，您看了這句話時，這裡有蠻嚴重的問題？有些事情要發生。所以，這一位婦人，看見耶穌問她要水喝時，就對祂說：祢是猶太人，怎麼能向我一個撒瑪利亞婦人要水呢？對她來說，這是一件不可思議的事情？然後，耶穌在第十節回應說：妳若知道神的恩賜，和對你說的是誰？如果妳知道我是誰的話，我就會給妳活水賜給你了。在第十節：妳會早已求祂！祂必早把活水賜給妳了。耶穌說：「活水」，那個婦人也聽見了。在猶太的文化背景裡：「活水」就是指著井的下面有一個泉源，所以水是不停的在那裡流動，不是死水、是一個活的水—不停的在那裡流動的。這是她以為耶穌所講的「活水」，對她來說，這個井也是他們的祖先雅各給他們的。但是，她聽見耶穌問她要「水」，要井裡面那一個不停在流的水，她非常的詫異？在她的思想裡，這一個「井」，下面有泉源，水是不停的在流動著，然後這個「井」是他們祖先雅各留給他們的。雅各將這個活水給了他們，所以他們來，然後用器具把水拿出來！但是，耶穌說：我要給妳活水。所以，她問祢沒有器具，祢怎麼

可以拿活水呢？難道祢比雅各更大嗎？雅各把這個水給了我們，然後我們有器具，難道祢比雅各大到一個地步，沒有器具也可以將這移動的水給我們？

首先我們注意她說：難道祢比雅各更大？對猶太人來說，他們不問是不是祢比雅各更大嗎？如果您繼續的讀約翰福音的時候，他們問的是：難道祢比亞伯拉罕更大嗎？是因為亞伯拉罕是他們的祖先，但是撒瑪利亞人是從雅各開始的。所以，她問：難道祢比雅各更大嗎？等於是猶太人在問：難道祢比亞伯拉罕更大嗎？然後耶穌說：我的水比這裡的水更好，如果妳喝了之後，妳不會渴的、乃是流到永生的。耶穌說得是是一個屬靈的水、是一個永生的水。這位婦人聽到的是一個永遠的水，喝了以後就永遠不渴，也不需要再來拿的，祢給我吧！耶穌在這裡講到：屬靈的那個水，生命的水。在以賽亞書說，是一個救恩的水，是能夠潔淨人的水，能夠給人永生的那個水。但是，這個撒瑪利亞的婦人不能明白，因為她所看見的，是那個可以看得見的水，她所關心的是那個解渴的那一個水。除了這個可以看得見、摸得到，她沒有辦法想像還有另外一個水？除了看得見的物質、身體上以外，她沒辦法看見一個屬靈的那個層面。

當我們看到這樣一個對話後，會不會也會想到我們自己呢？我想我們都知道自己的需要，我們對我們的婚姻不滿意、不開心。我們希望我們的孩子能更加多聽我們的話，我們感覺到我們非常的孤單，我們對自己的社交生活，也十分的不滿，我們深深的相信要有更多的錢、已經有了，還是要有更多！我們要更加的健康。所以我們這一個物質的需要的清單，是沒有結束的！是不停的一條又一條，有時看一下我們自己，教會、團契也好，一些代禱事項，裡面有百分之九十以上的，都是跟我們物質、生活是有關的！如果我們將過去十幾、廿、卅年的代禱的事，全部拿出來，一年一年的來看的話，您會發現是差不多的！都是物質上的需要。就好像在我們的裡面，一種沒有辦法能滿足的慾望，總是要有更多！更多！更多！但是，我們也知道，特別是當我們信了主！就算您還沒有信也好，您也知道，我們生命裡的需要，遠超過我們所能夠看得見。

在耶穌出來一段很短的時間之後，撒旦引誘祂時，如果祢是神的兒子的話，祢可以將石頭變成食物，耶穌的回答是：「人活著不是單靠食物、麵包，乃是要靠神口所說出來的每一句話。」意思就是說：除了物質、身體上的需要，還有另外一個同樣重要的、更重要的是您的心靈屬靈的需要。這個心靈的需要，包括了永生，包括與神的關係。透過禱告、聖經在那裡敬拜神和遵守祂的話！這是屬靈的層面。有人說，奧古斯汀曾經說：當神創造人的時候，在人的心靈裡面有一個空間，這個空間是神的形狀，只有神才能滿足。不錯！我們有許多物質的需要，這些都是真、也是重要的。但是，我們要記得這一些需要乃是把我們帶到心靈裡的需要，而那個需要，只有神才能滿足的。

II. 信徒要體會到個人道德的需要. (16-19)

現在我們來看第二回合的對話。第一個回合，就是她說不要再到這裡來打水了。她說：祢把這個水給我吧！使我不要再打水，我不需要怕遇見人了，祢將這個水給我，我不要再出來了。她看的是物質的一面，祂跟她講的是屬靈這一層面。這個時候，這位婦人好像不瞭解。然後來到對話的第二個回合。耶穌說：妳去吧！把妳的丈夫叫來！這個意思是說：妳竟然要這個水的話，我也能夠給妳，不如就回去把妳的丈夫帶來！然後讓他也來，能夠有水，當然您一看到耶穌在講這句話時，您就記得第二章二十五節那裡這句話：「耶穌知道人的心，」是不是？祂知道這位婦女在想什麼。祂知道，祂認識。所以，祂叫她把丈夫帶來吧！想都不用想的，耶穌在一句話就清楚的說出來：「妳說妳沒有丈夫，不錯！現在跟妳同居的，也不是妳的丈夫。」那個婦人也承認這個，是不是？因為，耶穌二次的說：「妳講是不錯的！妳說的話是真的。」那個婦人說：「先生！看得出來祢是一位先知。」先知的意思，在撒瑪利亞人傳統裡面，是指說那一位把隱藏的事顯露出來的人，就是當一個人能將我的隱私帶出來的話，這一個人就是先知。她說：「祢一定是！」這就是那個洩入隱私的人。她一開始稱呼耶穌為：「先生。」是猶太人的先生。但現在她說：祢是一位先知，是一位洩入秘密的人。

在這裡，您我有沒有看見？是怎麼一樣回事？早一點在對話的第一個回合，是講到「水」，透過這個「水」耶穌要她看見心靈的「水」，能夠給永生的「水」。現在，耶穌又要她注意的道德的需要，她已經非常的清楚，違背了神道德的原則！我想我們都能體會到的這個方式，當我們面對耶穌的時候，面對這位神的兒子—這位完全、又聖潔的神的時候！您一看見祂！祂就會像一面鏡子一樣，將我、您生命的那些的弱點、道德的失敗，馬上完全的顯示出來了。當您碰見了耶穌，您一定會看見、想到自己的道德上的需要。這從我們的先祖亞當犯了罪之後，我們和祂的後裔，也被這個罪影響了我們的生命的每一部份，我們的思想、言語、行為都被這個罪所污穢、沾污。所以，我們說：在神的面前，我們沒有任何的好處，如果您我很誠實的看十誡的話，您會發現，沒有一條誡命，我們沒有破壞？當我們來到神的面前，要嘛您不來，您一來的話，您一定會看見自己的污穢、虧欠。

III. 信徒要體會到個人脫離傳統約束的需要. (20-26)

讓我們看一下第三回合，這是在廿到廿六節，這一番對話，是由這位婦人開始。這為婦人馬上就在轉移話題。耶穌講的是道德的問題、丈夫的問題，但是，她的回答是：敬拜的地方，我們的祖宗是在這山上敬拜、你們說是在耶路撒冷。這個話題轉的好快！我想，我們都能夠瞭解。當我們跟人談話時，談到一些我們不喜歡談的事情，馬上就把話題轉到另外一個話題。這個婦人換的題目呢？是跟敬拜有關的，而且，特別是跟敬拜有關的。撒瑪利亞人的傳統是在撒瑪利亞的山上敬拜。但是，猶太人堅持在錫安山的耶路撒冷敬拜！當她遇見了她不想處理的問題、道德的問題，她就把這兩個傳統不一樣的地方，將它帶出來！您有沒有這種遭遇？當您跟一個信念不一樣的人談話時，如果您不小心的話，就很容易把不一樣的地方帶出來。您一把它帶出來，您就糟糕了，一定會引起一番的辯論，到頭大家就不開心。如果您明天要跟一個虔誠的回教徒談話，心裡準備的是兩個宗教不同的地方在那裡？那您也知道，如果朝這個方走的話，都沒有好的下場。大家都說自己是對的！要嘗試大家能夠認同的共同點，然後以那個做

為開始，對一個聖經的註釋者，他有這樣說：因為我們不太曉得怎麼樣跟一個與我們不同的人談話、對話時，當我們一談的時候，就將我們不一樣的地方帶出來，強調我們的差異之處。

耶穌的回答也是很有趣。如果您在帶查經時，有人提出一些離題的事情，您是在講道德，他是在講傳統，您大概會說，您的意見蠻好的，好不好，等我們下一次談，現在我們話歸正題，是不是！您大概都會這樣子做！也是一個最不容易學習的功課。這裡沒有、表面上沒有，她在講敬拜嗎？耶穌就跟她轉話題，就講敬拜！但是，當您看到這句話的時候，特別是從廿一、廿三節，耶穌用二、三句話就將這二種傳統解除、破碎掉。祂說：敬拜神不是在您們這個山，也不是在我們猶太人的這個山—耶路撒冷，因為神是個靈，無論您是誰？您是猶太人也好、是撒瑪利亞人也好，無論您在社會的那個階層的人，要緊的，是要您用您的心、要用您的真實敬拜祂，您對神的敬拜，是要從祢的心那裡開始。祂在轉移話題，因為道德的問題相當的敏感。道德的問題是跟自己有關係的，有人不喜歡談的，馬上把它轉移。宗教、敬拜都是提到的是傳統，這一、兩句話就把傳統打碎了。

您我有沒有這樣子？這種的遭遇？當我面對了一些，令我感到不舒服的話題的時候，馬上就退到傳統的裡面。我就說：「我來的時候就已經這樣子做！所以就繼續這樣子做！」在我來之前的這十幾、廿年都這樣子做。我也知道這樣一句話出了我的口，我就糟糕了。原因在那裡？當我一講這句話以後，我就離題，回到傳統了！我們的傳統是這樣！我也知道，我一講到這句話時，這個傳統就將所有的問題一個個都來了。當然，在問的時候，應該是我應該按著我對聖經的瞭解應該怎麼樣、怎麼樣？但是，我沒有注意到，就像過去都是這樣做的，我就退到熟悉的環境、傳統裡面。當有人指出道德的問題，我很快就說，我從小就在教會裡面受了洗，我從小就在教會裡面長大、我以前的那個教會的牧師，也知道我做了這件事情，他一句話也沒有講？是不是？我們會為了保護自己，熟悉的環境，我們的過去，我們的傳統。

但是，在這一段的對話裡，耶穌告訴我們，神所要看的，乃是要看人的心，而不是在看傳統。當然不是說：「傳統」不重要，不是這個意思，乃是當您那屬靈的生活、您跟神的關係、被您的傳統所限制的時候，那個傳統就要被除掉。祂要的是我們要按著聖經裡向我們所啟示的、在聖經裡所給我們的指示生活。然後，這位婦人在廿五節的回應：「我知道那稱為基督的彌賽亞要來；祂來了，要把一切都告訴我們。」，耶穌說：「現在跟妳說話的就是祂！」這句話之後，就結束二個人之間的對話。

最後，我們看一下，撒瑪利亞跟耶穌相遇之後，那個後果是什麼？(28-30; 39-42)

在這個時候，門徒也回來了！那婦人也走了。她走的時候，開始在想耶穌不單是一個先生，一位先知，祂是彌賽亞。然後，她回去就告訴她鄉村裡的人，他們聽見了，他們也來找耶穌！跟耶穌住了幾天，他們很多人也相信了，耶穌就是那位彌賽亞！就是神的兒子！就是神！

我們大概注意到，這一個故事的結束，跟尼哥底母相遇的結果，是完全的不一樣。白天跟晚上的不一樣？尼哥底母晚上來了！他遇見了耶穌，但是，我們不知道，他聽見了什麼？因為在約翰福音裡，在記載尼哥底母大約有三次，在三次的描寫，都是將尼哥底母放在末後的。他一次在替耶穌說話，但

是，並不是替耶穌明說：這是神的兒子，你們要小心。他不是，他只是要公平起見，隨便對付這個人，如果祂是從神來的話，沒有人能夠打敗他的。但是，如果他不是從神來的、從人來的話自然而然的就會消滅掉了。當耶穌死的時候，約瑟把耶穌的身體拿來要去埋葬，也記載尼哥底母在晚上將香料帶來，尼哥底母是扮演幕後，很沈默的一個角色，沒有像這一個撒瑪利亞婦人，到處去跟人說她遇見了耶穌，讓人家聽見，尼哥底母就沒有這樣的記載。所以，有人說：尼哥底母是一個思想關閉的宗教、撒瑪利亞婦人是一個思想開放、非宗教的女士。我想我們當中也有許多人做一個這樣的選擇？是不是您的心目中已認定了耶穌基督是怎麼樣的，無論看多次的聖經、無論聽多少的道，您都認定耶穌是這樣的人，而是您自己所造出來的耶穌！可能，也有更多的人，您心目中的那一位耶穌是開放的。所以，您有沒有看見，婦人跟耶穌的對話，那個活潑的地方，從一個話題到另外的話題。耶穌講了、她聽了、她又講了另外的，耶穌也回應了！活潑的一段對話。巴不得有更多的時間能夠進入他們對話的一些精要的地方！但是，最終，她被說服了！耶穌是神的兒子，耶穌祂是神！——那位彌賽亞！

結語：

有時候在忙碌裡，去到 STARBUCK 的地方會帶給我們一些的休息和恢復精神。是不是您和我都需要一個與耶穌相遇的時刻？我知道我們大家都非常的忙，我也是每一個禮拜都是要達到禮拜天講道的信息，禮拜五就一定要把信息準備好了，如果我沒有準備好，我就想，我還有明天一禮拜六，如果禮拜六還沒有準備好我會想，我晚上還有時間，就是每一個禮拜，有一個限期，叫做「終期」我要預備的。除了禮拜天要講的話，還有禮拜三下午要同工會，那我在禮拜二，也要想想準備禮拜三下午的內容是什麼？好像不停的一連接二的一些限期。我想您也是這樣吧？在您工作的地方，每一天都有這些限期。每天、每禮拜、每個月，我們都要在忙碌著滿足我們身體上的需要。就好像中國有一句話說：「開門七件事」對不對？有多少人知道？開門七件事，那七件呢？柴、米、油、鹽、醬、醋、茶。我們是不是我們要很好的照顧我們的身體！您看本地社區新聞，特別是中文的新聞，都充滿了大家健康，不但在曉士頓，去到奧斯汀，看到華人報紙，也是一樣的！不錯！這是蠻重要的？是要保護我們的身體，往往因為我們要保護我們的身體，物質上的需要就沒有時間給我們、屬靈方面的需要，我們就再沒有時間與耶穌坐下來談談、談您的事情。除了告訴祂我需要這樣、那樣。我開門七件事還有那幾件我還沒有有的，或我要更多。但是，忘記了跟祂談談心靈的事情。有時在教會服事久了，就會想，如果我不小心，很容易就變成一個泥匠，就是在做做做！在您忙碌的事奉裡面，都是事奉，往往忘記了您心靈的需要！如果用國內的一個名詞：「心靈的文化」，精神的文化就沒有。

我鼓勵您、自己，我們每天、每週、每月都要與耶穌相遇的時刻。不單指著靈修，因為我也知道靈修，也可以變成一個滿足的需要。年初的時候，我設定了今年要按著每日靈修計劃，把聖經看完一舊約看一次、新約看二次。然後再看一些其他的。當我在做的時候一讀聖經，發現我又在滿足一個需要，而且在讀的時候，沒有安靜下來，好讓神的話對我說，只是忙著我要看的這段經文看完，或把這四章經文看完，而沒有讓這些經文與我說話。我非常喜歡在三年前與耶穌相遇在早晨的一段時間，二個月一次，禮拜六早上。在這不停的限期裡面，拿出一個半小時。要求也不高，二個月一次，安靜的在聆聽，

耶穌要對我說的事，可能在我與祂相遇時，讓我安靜下來，讓祂對我說話時，祂會告訴我心靈裡我所忽略的，雖然我在做神的事情，我的服事、工作離開不了聖經。這是為了要滿足一些我的標準，我要做的！有沒有讓祂來對我說的話。可能在一個半小時，祂也會告訴我：我道德生活在那些地方開始進入灰色地帶？那些地方超越那條線？會不會在那個安靜的時刻與祂相遇的時刻，我看見自己重覆回到熟悉的傳統裡面？而不願意去面對活生生的永生的神！在那些安靜的時刻，不單單自己的心靈得到了滋潤，更加再一次的肯定認識這一位耶穌！就是那神的兒子！祂就是神！並且因為相信了祂，能夠有永生！知道自己的永恆那個終點是什麼？

Date: 03/01/2012

Text: John 4:1-26

Title: Encounter by the well 井旁相遇

Theme : Our encounter with Jesus can bring renewal into our lives.

Introduction :

You are at Starbucks, trying to get a mini break and change of pace from the routine. You ordered a cappuccino and you're enjoying it. After a little while, someone came to your table and asked if she could share the table with you. You looked up and it was a friend whom you haven't seen for a long time. What if this person were Jesus and sat with you? What kind of conversation will the two of you have?

Last Sunday we read that Jesus did not entrust himself to 'people' because he knew all people. And following this, Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and engaged in a conversation about the kingdom of God, about eternal life. The familiar text before us is about an encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. I trust that the Bible students among us have approached this passage from many perspectives. We have used this passage, full or partial, to extract principles on personal evangelism and worship. Today, I'll try to look at it from the perspective of an unfolding story. We want to focus on the dialogues, conflicts and their solutions.

First, let's take a look at the setting of this encounter (vs.1-6). We learned that Jesus wanted to travel to Galilee from Judea (look at the map). The Jews were considered descendants of Abraham, while the Samaritans descendants of Jacob. The Samaritans were Jews but because of their intermarriage with the non-Jews, they were considered unclean. The Jews would want to have nothing to do with the Samaritans. There was the saying that a Jew would not use a dish that was used by a Samaritan. One can see the animosity the Jews had towards the Samaritans. By the time Jesus arrived at Sychar, he was tired. We are to note that in this gospel of John, the author had a strong emphasis on Jesus as the son of God, God himself. Yet here he wrote that Jesus was tired and needed a drink. This revealed that on the one hand he was God, and on the other had he was also fully man.

And then John noted that it was the 6th hour, noon time. Previously, Nicodemus came at night, now it is noon. Jesus sat by the well. In the OT tradition, a well is a meeting place. You remember Abraham's servant met Isaac's future wife, Rebecca, by a well. Jacob met his future wife, Leah, at the well. Moses also met his

wife at the well. Now Jesus came and sat by a well. The reader would anticipate something, or some kind of encounter was about to occur.

I. Believers are to be aware of our spiritual needs. (7-15)

At noon, a Samaritan woman came to the well for water. At once the alert reader would notice something was wrong with this picture. It was true that it was the women's responsibility to come and get water. They would come in early morning to avoid sun. The Samaritan woman came at noon and most likely, from her reputation, was to avoid people. A well was a place of meeting others, but to her, it was a place to isolate herself. This meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman consisted of 3 rounds of conversations. Let's listen to this first round of conversation.

Jesus started the conversation, 'give me some water.' This was certainly uncalled for. First, a Jewish man was not supposed to talk to women in public. Secondly, a Jew was not to have any contact with the Samaritans, not to mention a Samaritan woman. This was the reason she was so surprised that Jesus, a Jew, would talk to her and ask for water. Jesus responded in vs.10; if you knew the gift of God, who I am, he would have given you living water. The Samaritan woman thought living water is a reference to the fact that there is running water, a spring beneath this well. So she responded by saying that since you didn't have any buckets, how could you have given me water from this well. She then says, this well was given to us by Jacob. Now are you greater than Jacob? In a different narrative, the Jews asked if Jesus was greater than Abraham. Here, was Jesus greater than Jacob? Jesus said my water is greater than the water from this well, it will keep flowing to eternal life. She said give me this water so I don't have to come here anymore.

Jesus was talking about that spiritual water, water that could clean and give eternal life. But the Samaritan woman could not understand. She only saw her physical needs, and could not venture beyond them to see her spiritual needs.

Aren't we very much like her? We know and see our physical needs. We're not happy with our marriage. We want our children to listen to us. Or we are very lonely and not happy with our social life. We are convinced that we need more money. We want to be more healthy. The list of needs can go on and on. There seem to be an insatiable desire of wanting to have more and more. But there is more than meet the eyes in life.

Earlier in his temptation by the devil, Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” besides our physical needs, which is important, but equally so, there are also spiritual needs. They include our eternal destiny, our relationship with God; our worship of him through praying and reading and obeying his words. It is said that when God created men, there is a God shaped vacuum within each person. God alone can fill this space and make us complete and satisfied. Yes, we need to meet those physical needs, but even more important is our need to meet the spiritual needs.

II. Believers are to be aware of our moral needs. (16-19)

Now, we come to the second round of conversation between the two. Again, Jesus initiated this. Since the woman had asked for this water so he asked her to bring her husband here. (because he knew people’s heart). The woman’s response was crisp and fast. I have no husband. Jesus’ response was equally clear to the point. (you feel the tension now). Yes, you are right that you don’t have a husband. For you have had five and the one you have is not your husband. Jesus was saying that you have married 5 times, and now you are living with someone. According to their common tradition, the Jewish law will accept up to 3 marriages. And there is no room for living together with a man or woman; there is no room for common law marriage. The woman acknowledged this and concluded that Jesus must be a prophet. The word ‘prophet’ in the Samaritan tradition means the revealer. Since you have correctly revealed my personal life. You must be a revealer. From sir to prophet.

Do we see what is happening here? Earlier, through water, Jesus was calling her attention to her spiritual needs. Now, Jesus is calling her attention to her moral needs. She had clearly violated God’s moral principles. I trust that we can follow this reasoning. When we come face to face with Jesus, the Son of God, the perfect and holy God, he will be like a mirror revealing our moral failures. As we have mentioned in previous sermons, when we see ourselves in the light of the 10 commandments, there is not a single commandment that we have not broken. Ever since Adam’s sin against God, we, his descendants, have been affected by sin in every area of our lives. Sin has touched and defiled our thoughts, our will and emotions.

III. Believers are to be aware of our needs of not being bound by traditions (20-26).

We'll come to the third round of conversation. The woman initiated this. We notice how quick and abrupt she changed the topic; from husbands, moral issues to the tradition of worship. We can certainly echo this sentiment. When the conversation touches upon our sensitive spots, we too will quickly change the conversation topic. She brought up the issue of the location of worship. The Samaritans insisted that worship of God was to take place at Mt. Gerizim while the Jews would worship in Jerusalem. When facing something she would prefer not to deal with, she not only resorted to tradition, but also brought out the contention point between the two traditions. One commentator wrote that when we don't know how to carry on a conversation with someone who has a different persuasion from ours, we tend to focus on the differences between the two.

Jesus' response was equally intriguing. He did not say that you have gone off track and we need to come back to our main point. Instead, he followed her thread. In vs.21 to 23, he basically abolished both traditions, instead, insisting since God is a spirit, we, no matter who you are, what your social status is, what your race may be, we have to worship him with truth and spirit. Worship has to come from one's heart.

Don't we sometimes do the same? When faced with something we feel uncomfortable, we'll go back to our traditions. When new and young ministers asked me why we do some of things in this church; there were times I found myself saying, this is our tradition. This is how things were done at HCC. And the moment those words came out of my mouth, I knew I am in trouble. I was leaning on tradition, how things were done in the past but not based on the standards of the scriptures. The same is true when our moral failures are revealed, we'll say something like this: oh, I was baptized in that church by so and so, the church I went to before thought it was ok to do that. We would fall back on something familiar.

Yet in this conversation, Jesus was telling us that God looks at our heart instead of our traditions. He would not be bound by traditions, instead he wants his follower to follow his instructions as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

The woman's response, vs. 25, "I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will teach us all things." Jesus said, "I who speak to you am he." With this, it brings to an end of the conversation between the two.

What was the conclusion of this encounter by the well? (28-30; 39-42)

At this time the disciples came back and the woman went into the town and told others about him. She seemed to have concluded that could this person be the Messiah that we have been looking for? Please take note of the process of thinking who Jesus was. First, a Jewish man, then a revealer, and finally the Messiah. And those in the town upon hearing this, went to where Jesus was and many believed in him as Messiah, the son of God.

We probably notice the ending of this encounter is day and night in contrast to the ending of Nicodemus' encounter. Nicodemus came at night. After meeting with Jesus, we don't know what did he with what he heard. Did he eventually understand Jesus' words? From the rest of John, he seemed to be staying in the background most of the time. He did speak up for Jesus; but not for His identity but urged the religious leaders to be fair. Nicodemus was a rather closed minded religious person. A very stark contrast to the Samaritan woman. Her conversation revealed her being an open minded non-religious person. Yet at the end of the encounter she was convinced of who Jesus was then went on to tell others about him.

Conclusion:

Meeting different people at Starbucks can sometimes bring about refreshment in life. Don't you think at times we also need to have a 'Well moment' with Jesus? I know we are all busy with life. I am constantly trying to meet the Sunday sermon deadline, preparation for the weekly staff meeting and monthly council meeting. You too are busy in meeting your daily, weekly and monthly deadlines. In a way, we are all busy trying to meet our physical needs. We are all running after 開門七件事: 柴, 米, 油, 鹽, 醬, 醋, 茶。 We take good care of our physical well being, but have no time for the spiritual side. There is no time to talk to Jesus about what's going on in life, besides asking him to provide and give us more of the 開門七件事: 柴, 米, 油, 鹽, 醬, 醋, 茶.

Maybe we want to consider daily, weekly or monthly to have that 'well moment' with Jesus. I have found our bi-monthly Breakfast with Jesus helpful. Amid those endless and unrelenting deadlines, spending 1 ½ hours in quietness, listening to what Jesus has to tell me that I may be neglecting certain areas of my spiritual well being or lapsing in my moral behavior. Or I may have unknowingly allowed tradition to block a lively

relationship with my Lord. Such moments with Jesus can cause us to have a deeper understanding of Jesus, that he indeed is the Son of God, by believing and following him, we will have eternal life.