

Reflection on the Samaritan Woman

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It was a bright, sunny day. It would be quite hot soon. Maybe if she hurried to the well, she could get back before the heat was oppressively heavy. Maybe she could even make it there and back without encountering many people, without having to exchange small talk with people she didn't care that much about, without having the stillness disturbed.

Yes, she appreciated the stillness. There was no challenge in it, and she was tired of challenges. She could live in her own thoughts, walk the silent path, draw from the lonely well and return to her nothing existence - all undisturbed. A disturbance, any disturbance, would be too much to take anymore.

"Hello! Give me a drink." No way! She didn't need another needy person. She was too needy herself. Why was he trying to complicate her life? It would be messy to get involved - different backgrounds, different cultures, different sexes, different viewpoints, different ... on and on and on. It would be definitely be messy.

"Hello! I can give you a drink, if you ask me instead." She wondered why he offered her a drink, something she did not ask for. She wondered how he intended to give a gift he didn't seem to have. She wondered if it was blindness in her or foolishness in him. Or was it just her need to see obstacles in everything? Did she want the drink he offered? Could she believe he would make good on his offer? Well, it is quite a good two months! "Drink my water and you will never be thirsty again."? Of course she liked that promise. Who wouldn't! It offered a life of bliss, refreshment, no struggles; of needs filled, happiness within reach; of thirst quenched, challenges ended. Sure, she wanted that water.

Imagine what she do with it! Win friends and influence people, stay home in the heat of the day, feel satisfied, be cool. Yes, she wanted his water. What could she do to get it? Would he really give it to her?

And then the damn broke! She got involved over her head. Perhaps she would drown.

He knew her so well. He knew things she preferred he didn't know. He challenged her and she didn't want challenges - not anymore. But if he was such a prophet, could he answer her questions? Could he answer the piercing, painful probing questions that no one else had been able to answer for her?

Maybe she could challenge him instead.

- Where should God be worshipped - on my mountain or in your city?

- Where can God be found - in my convictions or in your ideals?

- What is the better way - a love that embraces all, or an exclusive commitment that demands my all?

- What is truth - my perception of it or your explanation of it?
- How does forgiveness happen - in quiet letting go or in seeking to be reconciled?
- When does growth take place - when the pain starts or when it stops?
- Who sees best - the wounded healer with a vision, or the visionary with a wounded heel?
- Who cries more - the innocent or the guilty?

He had an answer for everything, and there was comfort in that, even though the answers were still puzzling because they were not either - or. The answers said yes to everything, and so the mystery remained:

- God can be worshipped on your mountain and in my city, but most of all He is worshipped in spirit and in truth.
- God can be found in your convictions and in my ideals, and most of all He is found in the union of our hearts and the peace of our souls.
- The best way of life is lovingly to embrace with a commitment that demands your all, while remembering that our heart will still be restless until it rests in God.
- Truth is your perception of it and my explanation of it, together with everyone else's price of it, united in the whole picture of Truth, which is possessed only by God.
- Forgiveness happens in the quiet letting go and in seeking to be reconciled, and mostly just in wanting to forgive.
- Growth takes place when the pain starts and when it stops, and during all the times in between.
- The one who sees best is the person who has something to see. People who have vision are usually getting wounded. All of us have started out wounded anyway, so when we see that, we have a vision that is the beginning of healing.
- Both the innocent and the guilty cry very much, but in the end all tears will be wiped away.

The woman looked at this prophet and had nothing to say. Who could argue the wisdom of his answers? Drinking at this profound well, she could learn to quench her thirst.

It seems as though he knew her and knew everything she had ever done. Or was it just that she wasn't so different after all? That she was no more weighed down with problems than anyone else, had no deeper suffering, no more demanding life?

Her tears (though hidden), growth, guilt, vision and capacity to heal were like everyone else's. She could go home feeling challenged and feeling okay about the challenge. She could go home to heal and to smile and to notice that after all the sun was shining.