

Third Sunday of Lent – 3.12.23

“Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water.”

The Gospel today begins with a declaration of the time: it was about noon. Odd As someone who often can be overly dependent on the time—both how much I have and how little—I found the inclusion of this to be intriguing. It sets the stage for what will soon unfold: Jesus and the disciples are tired from traveling under the fierce sun, yet here comes a woman from Samaria braving the heat in the hottest time of the day the come and draw water. Why now? Was it because she was almost assured to not run into others? Who would come to the well at this time of day except for those who did not want to be seen? This woman was trying to avoid others because she was ashamed, and yet she finds herself being spoken to by an unknown person—not just a man unfamiliar to her, but a Jewish man at that!

Everything socio-culturally constructed in them would have led these two individuals to avoid interaction, and yet Jesus sought it out. And “he told me dadfa I have done!” He knew the source of her shame, and he sought connection with her nonetheless. How powerful this must have been for this woman from Samaria, and how perfect an example of how God looks on our shame too! During this time of Lent, we are made to look on our own brokenness, our shortcomings, but we are not called to wallow in shame; rather we are to see that in the light of God shame can never have the last word! This “unshaming” can only happen in relationship, something each of us is not only fully capable of, but also fully called to.

How will we take up that call this Lent and beyond?

*--David Gaillardetz*