



CHUNG DONG FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, ENGLISH MINISTRY

ONLINE FAMILY WORSHIP

MARCH 15TH, 2020

Dear Chungdong Family

Welcome to our online worship service. Due to the spread of the COVID-19, Chungdong First Methodist Church, English Ministry will continue worshipping online until further notice. We hope and pray that things will get back to normal soon. In the meantime, please join us with your family and friends for the online worship. You can follow the liturgy here along with the video sermon. Click on the links provided for hymns. The order of service has been simplified to include a prayer and two hymns. We will keep you updated with regards to services during the following weeks. Please remember to pray for the country, the leaders and those affected by this crisis.

This week's preacher is Rev. Johan Reiners.

Home Worship

Welcome

Welcome to today's service. Let's just bow our heads and pray. You're welcome to follow our morning prayer on the online bulletin.

Opening prayerⁱ

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness." At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus.
May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process.

May they know your protection and peace.
In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.
Jesus Christ, heal us.

And, in this time of Lent, teach us your peace and help us to hear your Word of life.
In Jesus' name.
Amen

Worship Song

Love Divine All Loves Excelling

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwHxRxER650&list=PLS4jQgASCDFKKnsrST9YQVft3DxlbteyA&index=5>

Confession of Faith

We believe in God, the Creator of all that we see and all that we do not see.
We believe in Jesus Christ, God becomes flesh; in death the Forgiver of sinners, in rising the
Healer of the broken.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, God within us, Comforter, Strengthener and Friend.
Amen

Prayer for illumination:

Prepare our hearts, o Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your own; that,
hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Gospel Reading

John 4:4-6 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

⁴ Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

Sermon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8VvDoD8xMw&feature=youtu.be>

Passing, Pausing and Perusing in the Place of the Dreaded Virus

With the words “Happy birthday to you! How have you been?” I texted a friend of mine earlier this week. His answer: “Thank you. I’m doing well, but this virus makes me blue!” I texted another friend asking about his whereabouts and how he’s doing. The answer: “I really miss going out! I hope the virus thing ends soon!” A Facebook friend posted a picture of an empty Line 1 subway carriage. The “Virus” is creating havoc everywhere and, believe it or not, is changing the world into a before and after scenario. We all feel the effect of the virus in our everyday lives, the economy, the way we go about doing our daily tasks, and, most of all, in our emotions and the way that we try to cope with the effect of it. People are cut off, avoid places of gathering, and have to deal with a new set of social rules – don’t touch, don’t trust, don’t get too close. But, most of all, it is the forced solitude – the place of silence and aloneness that gets to us.

What do we do with this place – this imposed place?

Interesting enough is that this is also, according to the church calendar, the time of Lent. Lent is a time of reflection, a time of inward-looking, contemplation, and silence. We’re marching slowly to Jerusalem, Gethsemane, Golgotha, and then on that glorious Easter morning, the open grave!

In our Gospel reading, we revisited a most exciting journey. Jesus, we are told, is on his way to Galilee and, according to John, had to pass through Samaria. Odd, isn’t it? Jews simply never gave though Samaria if they could help it, but Jesus, we are made to notice, had to pass through this dreaded part – not exactly a favorite pass-through place for any Jew. He had to pass; I think because He had an appointment – although the appointee had no idea.

So, John is particular about the urge or need for Jesus to pass through Samaria. That’s location-specific. He is also time-specific. It was noon. John wants us to take note of these facts. They are not to be ignored and taken lightly.

Let’s investigate what God wants to say to us about it:

1. Passing through Samaria

Well, Samaria wasn’t the exact favorite place of Jews. You didn’t see too many of them journeying through, and if you’re lucky enough to spot one, do not expect to have a conversation, let alone a discussion and a friendly chat! Yet, Jesus decided to pass through it in the act of divine appointment. Divine appointment in Samaria – the place of exclusion, the site of least expectation.

Moreover, He passed there at noon – the hottest part of the day when everyone hides from the heat of the day. The time of hiding – aloneness, rest, seclusion. That’s where we focus on this extraordinary sacred moment in time –a Samaritan woman and the Jewish Jesus, the Messiah.

In the Bible, we find many of these divine appointments. Appointments where an ordinary place becomes a sacred temple, a holy mountain, a divine encounter between man and God. Moses with the burning bush; Daniel in the lion den; Joseph in prison, Nicodemus in the night, and Saul on his way to Damascus. Places where the mundane, the common, the ordinary is turned into the extraordinary, the sacred, the God-place. A place not sanctified by us, but by the passing of the Divine through it.

In this time of Lent, along with the COVID-19 driving us into our Samaria, let us remember, Jesus is passing through it. It’s also a place of divine appointment and a meeting place with the Messiah. The place of confusion, anticipation, and also fear, uncertainty, and not-knowing, is also a sacred place of meeting. It has been for Moses, Abraham, David, and even Jesus in the wilderness.

2. Pausing at the Well

Jesus didn’t merely pass through in a hurry. He paused – all to his disciples’ frustration.

There in the heat of the day, we see an encounter between a social and religious outsider, a spiritual loser. In John 3, we see the famous man Nicodemus use the cover of darkness to hide himself. In John 4, we see an infamous Samaritan woman use the heat of the noontime sun as a way to avoid contact with others. It sounds a bit like us here in Korea in 2020! In John 3, Nicodemus initiated the conversation by delivering to Jesus the verdict as to who the religious authorities deemed Jesus to be. Here we see Jesus initiates the discussion through the simple request for a drink of water.

Those are some of the differences, but there are similarities, too. In both John 3 and John 4, the subject of water comes up: Jesus told Nicodemus that the spiritual re-birth he needed comes through "water and the Spirit." Now the conversation with this woman centers on living water. Also, despite the vast disparities between Nicodemus and this woman from Sychar, both of them are hiding. Nicodemus hid in the darkness; this woman hid in the daylight, and neither wanted to be seen by other people. Both were hiding, running, but finally also seeking something. That's because they both need a new life that only Jesus can give. Nicodemus was at the top of the religious heap, and this woman was at the bottom. But Jesus was the answer for both, which tells you a lot about the gospel and who needs it. *Everybody* needs it. A final similarity between these two stories is that both Nicodemus and this woman are at first very confused by Jesus.

In the case of this woman, there were lots of things bombarding her senses that day. First of all, she didn't expect to run into anyone at the well, much less a Jewish man. In fact, avoiding other people is precisely why she did the foolish thing of drawing water at the hottest hour of the day. At six pounds per gallon, water is heavy stuff to tote around. That's why in villages like Sychar people gathered at the town well in the cool of the early morning and then again later in the cool of the evening. Noontime was too scorching for such work.

That's why it was this woman's favorite time to get water: she didn't have to run into anyone because, in the past, whenever she did encounter other people at the well, she withered under their judgmental stares. The heat of the noonday sun couldn't hold a candle to the heat of social stigma and disapproval. For you see, this woman "had a past," a bad reputation. She was the village whore, the five-time divorcee now rumored to be shackled up with man #6. She wasn't "good people."

There at the town watering hole where everyone gathered twice a day to fetch water, gossip a bit, lingered a bit to tell some tales, catch up on the news, and also stay current on all the juiciest town gossip, she was not to be found. This Samaritan woman had no doubt long been a favorite subject of such scuttlebutt. Needless to say, when she used to show up at the well in person, a lot of conversation ceased, eyes were averted, maybe even a few dirty looks were directed her way.

So eventually she'd given up. She stayed home when everyone else was out, and she went out only when everyone else was home. But, here at noon – in the heat of a scorching sun burning down on them, Jesus paused with her. Time to talk, time to get into the heart of this woman in hiding. When Jesus passed through, He makes the time to pause. That's the time when the woman at the well becomes you and I.

3. Perusing about Living Water

It was time for Jesus to look deep into her heart. Moreover, he speaks the words of life to her. He uses the well as an occasion to introduce the memorable image of living water--a new spring of water that would well and bubble up into all eternity. When Jesus cuts right into the very need of our heart, it's not to judge like what this woman was used to. It's time to unearth, clean, disinfect, straight-talk, life talk! He sees her thirst. He sees beyond what anyone else could ever imagine – and He speaks life into it. Water! My kind of water for your type of thirst.

In her heart, he heard the cry; I need Thee!

I need Thee every hour,
Most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine
Can peace afford.
I need Thee, O I need Thee,
Every hour I need Thee!
O bless me now, Savior,
I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour,
Stay Thou near by;
Temptations lose their power,
When Thou art nigh.
I need Thee, O I need Thee;
Every hour I need Thee!
O bless me now, my Savior,
I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour,
In joy or pain;
Come quickly and abide,
Or life is vain.
I need Thee, O I need Thee;
Every hour I need Thee!
O bless me now, my Savior,
I come to Thee.

What is the need of your heart? He who is passing is pausing and perusing the depths of your heart and soul.

Conclusion

Eventually, she catches on to what Jesus is saying. Unlike Nicodemus, we know how she responded: she raced back to the village and began knocking on doors whose doorsteps she had not darkened in years. Somehow she forgot that she was supposed to avoid these people. Instead, she rather quickly becomes a member of the community again. Before this story is finished, villagers are actually *speaking* to her again (and speaking gratefully at that).

It's all rather exciting and ultimately rather happy, too. But the disciples are confused, perplexed, even a bit distressed by it all. They don't understand what, in the name of all that is holy, would inspire Jesus to talk to a Samaritan woman.

So Jesus has to explain things to them, and what he says comes down to this in verses 34-38: there is work to be done, a spiritual harvest to gather in. The disciples' problem is they didn't see this. They saw Samaria as a place to pass through as quickly as possible. It never occurred to them that Samaria is a place to pause; a place of new life; a place to be filled. All their lives they had been taught to bracket all Samaritans, to write them off. Jesus had a somewhat different point of view. If *this* woman was worth engaging with the good news of the gospel, then that opened up the field of potential gospel-receivers to pretty much everyone!

Surely it changed the life of this sad woman from Sychar. Later in verses 39-42, as the Samaritans happily urge Jesus to stay in their village for a while, I picture the whole jubilant crowd hustling Jesus and the disciples back into town.

As the noise of their laughter fades and as the dust from their feet settles in the noonday heat, I can see an abandoned water jug next to Jacob's well. In her hiding there was a passing, a pausing and a life changing perusing. May we encounter the Living Jesus, the Living Water in this time of seclusion, this time of uncertainty, this time of waiting. To encounter Jesus is to find life--a stream of living water that wells up in us now; a stream of water that will mount up over time until it finally becomes a mighty tidal wave of cleansing that will wash over the entire world, making us and all things new. That's the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!

The Lord's Prayer

Therefore, let us pray as Jesus taught His disciples:

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn

I Need Thee Every Hour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZIMDcgrF-Q>

Closing Prayer

Gracious Father, we have come to the end of this worship, and we want to thank you. We thank you God for...

Every prayer we have prayed
Every song we have sung
All the things we have learned.

Thank you for all the joy you bring.
May we walk with you in the week to come.

May we rest in you, believe in you and hope in you.
This day and forever

Amen.

ⁱ <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/03/02/coronavirus-prayer>