



The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

Sermon: Year A –Lent 3 – March 19 (7:00 am), 2017

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I’ve been to Jacobs well.

It’s in the middle of the desert and now there’s a church built over it, unlike during the time of Jesus when this gospel story takes place. But in spite of that in the middle of the desert heat, having the opportunity to dip a bucket into the well and draw its cool waters to the surface and drink is refreshing beyond belief.

So, for the Samaritan woman in this story, this kind of water is very scarce and for her to imagine an inner artesian well full of the waters of life is beyond the wildest dreams of anyone who lives in that kind of desert like the one in the Holy Land, especially for someone who’s been judged and derided by those around her. For her to imagine water that never ends is a miracle and Jesus his ability to tell her about her life almost pales in comparison.

That ever-flowing water from the inner artesian well where the spirit of Jesus dwells symbolizes God’s love for us, the same kind of love that causes God to send God’s only son to live and dwell among us. God’s love is vast and never ending. It has no limits. It has no edges. It has no borders.

When I was eight years old I took one of my many trips back-and-forth from Guam to Oregon to visit with my father for the summer. And part of that summer ritual was stopping to see my paternal grandparents at their home on the beach on Crozier Drive out in Mokulē‘ia on O‘ahu’s North Shore.

I only remember one thing about the summer of 1973 and that visit. My Aunt Sue, my father’s younger sister, was there visiting my grandparents and we went swimming in the beach right off my grandparents’ beachfront yard. And to this day I remember my auntie’s words to me: Did you know that we’re swimming in the largest ocean in the world?

And having just flown over it, from Guam to Honolulu to Portland and then back to Honolulu on my way back home to Micronesia, that really impressed me because I actually knew how big the Pacific Ocean really was. And when I went to seminary, people would often comment that it was such a long trip from Chicago to Honolulu, and how could I do that all the time. And then I would take delight in pointing out that if I kept going the same distance beyond Hawai‘i and kept flying, I would still be over water. That always blew their minds. And that’s how big the Pacific Ocean actually is. And then to imagine that God’s love for this woman at the well was even bigger and vaster than that. Imagine.

And then to realize that God’s love for you and me, for us, is just as fast as well. Wow.

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And we don't have to go far to feel that love. We don't have to traverse continents and oceans. After all, if we do have an inner artesian well where Christ dwells in our hearts, then all we have to do is listen and wait for that presence in the stillness and the silence of our prayers and then become aware and mindful of the simple beauty that's around us as we go about our daily lives.

That's what Jesus did. He noticed. He noticed the Samaritan woman at the well. He noticed and he saw an opportunity to extend kindness, to bestow compassion and to give love.

When I moved here from Hilo earlier this year, I decided to bring a spiritual practice along with me. And that spiritual practice was to notice two or three people every day on the streets of downtown Honolulu on my way to Starbucks, First Hawaiian, Ross, Walmart or 24 Hour Fitness, to notice two or three people and to smile at them. And when I do that, a good number of them smile back.

It's human nature to want to be noticed. It's human nature to want to connect. And so, I smile. Maybe that's with the world needs. And maybe that's what Jesus longs for us to do—to be aware of those in our midst and to see the Christ that dwells in them the way he sees the Christ that dwells in us so that that limitless love flows out of us from the artesian wells in our hearts and the innate goodness in our souls.

So, let's you and I portray both characters in this story, the woman, and the Christ. May we receive the limitless love of God and may we give it back to the world in return.