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There's a Hole in the Bucket

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This week, I debated changing the first hymn to "Hands. Touching Hands. Reaching out. Touching You, Touching Me... Sweet Caroline." Possibly changing the Scripture to the Pharisees complaining to Jesus about his disciples not washing their hands with soap. Or preaching the sermon on The MONEY-CHANGERS in the Temple, but the Patio Sale has done such wonderful good work for so many. With all the fears about Storms and Rain, I wondered about Massah and Meribah, whining and complaining about water. With Coronavirus, there were times I wondered if the Sheriff might violate the separation of Church and State and tell us all to go home. When this passage from John struck me, of the Samaritan Woman at the Well and Jesus without a Bucket.

One of my earliest memories, was going to St. Louis Cardinals baseball games in the summer. Mom was a huge baseball fan so every summer we got to go to a game. Now these were the summers of Stan Musial, Mickey Mantel, Lou Brock, Bob Gibson, Kurt Flood, Orlando Cepeda. But St. Louis in the summer gets really really hot and humid. So spying a Water Fountain, I made a Beeline for it, and was just about to turn the handle for a drink, when Mom's hand grabbed me by the collar, explaining that in St. Louis in the 1960s there were Water Fountains and Water Fountains and I was at the wrong one. This made no sense to a 5 year old because water was water especially when you are thirsty.

Faith in God through Jesus Christ should not have to be so complex and difficult that none can understand. Instead, loving God is as natural to us as breathing! There's a hole in the bucket dear pastor, dear pastor, a hole... So Fix it!

How readily anxiety takes hold of us, and rather than addressing the problem before us, we allow a simple problem, water, to become far more complex with race, prejudice, rumors, viruses, fears. It was the middle of the day, it was hot, Jesus had been left alone beside the Well of Jacob in a Samaritan city. Jesus was thirsty, the water was right there, but he had no bucket or ladle to catch the water to drink. So he asked the woman who had come to the well, for a drink of water. Except she was a woman and men did not speak to women in public. And she was a Samaritan, and he was not. If this seems too odd to imagine, just exchange the word Samaritan for Palestinian and this could be a story from today. With what shall I fix it, dear Pastor, dear Pastor? With straw.

Now I know where some are going, allow me to redirect you. Does this story use the word "adultery"? No, according to this story in John, she had had five husbands and the man she was living with was not a husband, but this is not the story of the woman being stoned. As she herself describes, Jesus took one look at her and could tell everything about her life. This is a woman who bore out the question posed to Jesus by the Pharisees: She had a husband who died, and his brother took her and he died, and their

brother took her and he died, and their brother and he died. She had followed the tradition, done everything legal and righteous, and she had had 5 husbands. BUT where the Pharisees who did not believe in resurrection questioned Jesus had been facetious about whose wife she would be in Heaven; Many of us assume, she had been promiscuous or dissatisfied by these men and divorced 4 times, painfully she could have been widowed repeatedly. How many of us have been married before? What I take from this, is that the Woman at the well was not a 17 year old, but more likely a woman over 60, who because of life's hardships, is not living happily ever after, and Jesus understood her, he did not judge her. The Straw is too long, dear Pastor, dear Pastor, the straw is too long! Then cut it!

This story comes immediately after Nicodemus being confused by being Born from Above. Nicodemus was a man of known identity, she was an unnamed woman. He came under dark of night, instead Jesus sought her out at Noonday. He was a Pharisee and teacher of the Law, she was a Samaritan who believed by a different way to God. But she instead of Nicodemus, Jesus offered access to everlasting life. With what shall I cut it, dear Pastor, Dear Pastor, with what shall I cut the Straw? With an Axe!

In Green Valley people move an average of three times. We come here from so many different states and countries, having brought the wrong things and gotten rid of things we now wish we had. Families out of State have no clue how to resolve the estate of a loved one who had died. By caring for one another, helping one another, each person's trash becomes another's treasures, and money is earned for missions. The Axe is too dull, dear Pastor, Dear Pastor, too dull. Then sharpen the Axe.

We come from other States and settle here in Arizona meaning we need to rewrite our wills and estates. We also have a columbarium as the final resting place for our ashes and remains. Would it not make sense to remember VPC in you will? This may not be the Church where you were Confirmed or Married, but many of you have spent more hours here than in your own home. Do you not want this to continue for generations to come? With what shall I sharpen the Axes, Dear Pastor, Dear Pastor With What? With a stone.

Coronavirus has everyone alarmed, purchasing Toilet Paper for \$6 a roll and Hand Sanitizer for \$50. Everyone needs to take a deep breath and treat this as we do an especially virulent strain of the Flu. If you are sick, stay home and rest. Wipe down all your flat surfaces with antibacterial soap because this is not airborne, and can live on flat surfaces for something like 9 days! So wash your hands regularly with Soap and Water. What should I wet the stone with, to sharpen the Axe, dear Pastor, Dear Pastor with what? With Water.

This is a new time in the life of our church and community with no need to make comparisons, simply to pitch in and fix our concerns. There's a hole in the Bucket dear Pastor, Dear Pastor, There's a hole in the Bucket, Dear Pastor, a hole.