

Twenty-One Days With John

Rev. Thomas F. Fischer

Day 4 – John 4

Prayer: Lord, Jesus Christ, we stand in awe at the power of Your Word. Not only does it change lives, but it also extends even to the most undeserving. Enable Your words of grace come freshly to us each day. By Your grace erase our guilt and remove our shame. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Meditation:

John 4 opens by describing remarkable explosion of grace. Chapter 3 recorded the core of Jesus' preaching: God loves the world. The response to the preaching of God's grace was nothing short of unprecedented. People—hundreds and even thousands of people—came to Jesus. They came to be baptized. They came to be forgiven. Most of all, they came to get what they needed most: a new start, a new beginning, and a new life,

That's what John 4 is about. John 4 is a case study in how—and to whom—Jesus gives us new life. What we learn from this account is that God's grace is far beyond even our wildest imaginings and our deepest ponderings.

God's love goes beyond rationality, common sense and the expected...over and over and over again. Just when people think they have sinned so greatly that God could never, ever forgive John, in chapter four, demonstrates what God does. He comes into our lives—albeit unexpectedly—and offers us new life. “Your forgiven”

The “Woman at the Well” is such a person. Having had more men in her life than one can count on one hand, her life was less than stellar. Having entered, survived and exited failed relationships over and over again, she needed more than just water. She needed more than a makeover. She needed a new life.

What her multiple failed efforts could not achieve, Jesus' love could. Jesus' direct, but loving, confrontation moved her to seek something more. In Jesus, her thirst was satisfied. God's grace was even for undeserving people like her. Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, had come to her. And now she had the greatest gift she could ever have: a new life.

No more did the past have to haunt her. She could give it to Jesus. No more did she have to be brought down by her own failures. Jesus would pick her up. No more would she have to fight shame and the fear of God's condemning anger. Instead, she could joyfully worship God “in spirit and in truth” knowing that she truly was a child of God.

God's amazing grace means God forgives every undeserving person who has ever lived. That, of course, is everyone who ever lived...except Jesus. That of course is you and me. What an amazing power that is! Our thirst for grace is satisfied over and over again!

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As chapter four ends, John reminds us of the great power of Jesus. Those who won't believe unless they see the signs are stuck in unbelief. But those who simply trust Jesus to know the circumstances and to intervene, are the blessed ones.

“Your son will live,” Jesus told the concerned, but trusting royal official (John 4:53). Recording these accounts, chapter four reminds us that Jesus, the Messiah, is about restoring lives. Whether one is trying to put behind a shameful past or battling illness, Jesus gives hope. He gives grace. He gives new life.

Prayer:

Jesus, You give new life. By Your Word and Sacrament, I too have new life. Do not let Satan let guilt prevent me from realizing the joy of this new life. Keep me from dwelling on my shame-filled past. Focus me on the new life you give. Where I am weak, strengthen me. Lord You worked miraculously in the lives of those to whom You ministered. Work the miracle of Your grace also in me. Never let me fall away. Never let me doubt Your grace. Renew me each day that I may celebrate Your grace anew each day. In Your name I pray. Amen.

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