



## BREAKING OPEN

Scripture Study

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT  
2026



# The Ripple Effect

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A weekly reflection based on the teachings at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion

Revised Common Lectionary Related

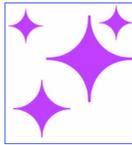
The Second Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17.1-7

Psalms 95

Romans 5.1-11

John 4.5-42



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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

**W**e beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

# INTRODUCTION

Have you ever felt like an outsider—wanting to belong but afraid of being judged? This message looks at Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, where social and religious barriers fall away. In their conversation, we see that Jesus does not meet us with condemnation, but with “living water” that reaches our deepest spiritual thirst and offers real, lasting hope.

The setting is simple: it is midday, and Jesus is tired from traveling. At an old well in Samaria, He speaks with a woman whom most people would have ignored because of her background, her gender, and her reputation. Instead of shaming her, Jesus gently brings her story into the open and offers her something greater than the water in the well—new life that flows from God and satisfies the heart. Her life is changed so deeply that she leaves her water jar behind and hurries back to her town to tell others what she has experienced.

This story invites us to see our own lives in hers. Many of us carry old wounds, quiet shame, or theological arguments that keep us at a distance from God. Yet Jesus still meets us right where we are, offering grace instead of rejection. As we receive His living water, we can move beyond our fears and become wells of compassion for others—allowing God’s Spirit to use our ordinary words and actions to bring hope and refreshment to the people around us.



As we walk lightly on sacred ground,  
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,  
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

### The Ripple Effect

At midday, under a high and unforgiving sun, Jesus reveals himself.

Not in Jerusalem.  
Not in the Temple courts.  
Not to the powerful or the certain.  
But beside a well.  
To a woman.  
In Samaria.

For generations, hope among the Samaritans had been thin and fragile — shaped by disappointment, division, and old wounds. Jews and Samaritans did not share water, let alone worship. Their histories ran deep and bitter. And yet, here, at a well dug by Jacob centuries before, something unexpected begins.

The air is hot.  
Dust rises from the earth.

The bucket breaks the silence as it drops into the cool dark below. What normally divides people — ethnicity, theology, gender, reputation — feels immovable, but in this moment, those walls begin to soften. Jesus is tired. He asks for a drink. And the conversation begins.

At first, the woman can see only the barriers.

“How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?”

She is not being rude. She is being realistic. This should not happen. It doesn't happen. It must not happen.

But grace often begins where something “should not” happen.

Jesus answers her:

“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

Living water.

She hears it practically. Of course she does. She is thinking about the daily journey, the sideways glances, the whispers, the heat of noon, chosen to avoid the morning crowd. If water could rise within her and spare her this walk, that would be a miracle enough.

But Jesus is not speaking only of thirst in the body. He is speaking of thirst in the soul.

Like Nicodemus before her, she struggles to understand. He asked how one

could be born again. She asks how one might draw water without a bucket. Both stand at the edge of something larger than they can yet grasp.

Jesus goes deeper.

Then comes the moment of exposure.

“Go, call your husband.”

And suddenly the conversation turns.

Her life is named. Not publicly shamed. Not dissected. Simply known.

“You have had five husbands... and the one you have now is not your husband.”

This is not cruelty. It is clarity. The light has dawned.

Only a prophet could know this.

Notice what Jesus does not do.

He does not dismiss her.

He does not close the well.

He does not end the conversation.

He continues it.

In a world quick to reduce people to their history, Jesus refuses to reduce her. He sees her fully — and stays.

That alone is a revelation.

She shifts the question to worship.

“Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Where is the right place? Which mountain? Which temple? Which tradition?

Jesus answers with words that widen the horizon:

“The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.”

Not confined to a mountain.

Not contained by a building.

Not controlled by jurisdiction.

Worship is no longer about geography. It is about a relationship. It is about the Spirit breathing life into truth.

And then she speaks of hope.

“I know that Messiah is coming.”

And Jesus replies:

“I am he.”

Εγώ ειμι

I am.

The same words that will one day cause armed soldiers to fall backwards in a garden are first spoken here, to a woman drawing water at noon.

Revelation does not begin in power. It begins in conversation.

The disciples return, startled to find him speaking with her. They see the surface disruption. They do not yet see the harvest.

The woman leaves her water jar behind.

That detail matters.  
She came for water.  
She leaves with witness.  
She runs back to the town.

“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!”

Notice what she does not say. She does not declare a theological system. She does not claim certainty. She raises a possibility.

“Can this be the Messiah?”

And the ripple begins.

The story widens.

What begins as one conversation becomes a movement through a whole village. Many believe because of her testimony. Many more believe because they encounter Jesus for themselves.

“Now we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.”

The harvest Jesus spoke of begins to gather.

Water does not stay still. It moves. It carries life outward.

First revelation.  
Then recognition.  
Then release.  
Then ripple.

This Gospel honours the voice of someone society did not.

In Jesus’ time, a woman’s testimony carried little weight in public religious life.

And yet here she becomes one of the first evangelists in John’s Gospel. The first to hear “I am.” The first to draw a town toward faith.

The living water rises within her, and her life becomes a well for others.

And that is how the Spirit still works.

Not always through the obvious.

Not always through the powerful.

But through those who are willing to speak honestly about their encounter with Christ.

We know thirst.

Not only the thirst of the body, but the quiet thirst beneath our routines. The longing to be seen without being shamed. The longing for worship that feels real.

The longing for a faith that does not depend on perfect circumstances.

We reach for small satisfactions — a distraction, an affirmation, a habit that

promises relief — and we find ourselves returning to the well again and again.

Jesus does not condemn thirst.

He meets it.

And he says, “there is more.”

Living water is not self-generated positivity. It is the Spirit of God dwelling within us — renewing, cleansing, reorienting, flowing outward in love.

So let me ask gently:

What barrier stands between you and that living water?

Is it an old wound?

A quiet shame?

A theological argument?

A fear of being fully known?

The woman named hers without defensiveness. And Jesus did not turn away.

This week, choose one small practice that makes space for that flow. Pause at a doorway and offer a simple prayer for openness. Share a cup of tea with someone you usually hurry past. Listen to a voice you have overlooked.

Living water often moves through ordinary gestures.

The ripple does not end with her. It never does.

Revelation spills outward.

Communities awaken.

Worship deepens.

Voices once unheard become bearers of grace.

The question for us is not whether living water is offered.

It is whether we will draw from it — and whether we will carry it.

Holy Spirit, open our hearts today.

Where we are weary, bring your renewal.

Where shame has lingered, speak your mercy.

Break down the walls that keep us apart.

Teach us to worship in spirit and in truth.

Let our voices point to Jesus; let our lives shine with hope.

Make us wells of compassion in our homes,  
our neighbourhoods, and our world.

Lead us to invite others into your abundant life.

Living water, flow through us. Amen.

## Discussion Questions

The sermon describes how Jesus broke several social and cultural barriers by speaking with the Samaritan woman. What

were these barriers, and why was this interaction so significant for that time period?

- The sermon mentions that Jews and Samaritans did not share water or worship, and there were barriers of ethnicity, theology, gender, and reputation that normally divided people.
- What social or cultural barriers do you see in your own community today that might prevent people from experiencing God's love?

How does Jesus's approach to the Samaritan woman's past demonstrate His character and teaching style?

- The sermon points out that Jesus does not dismiss her, does not close the well, does not end the conversation when her life circumstances are revealed. He sees her fully and stays.
- How can we follow Jesus's example when interacting with people whose life choices or past experiences differ from our own?

The sermon discusses the concept of 'living water.' What does this metaphor represent, and how does it differ from what the woman initially thought Jesus was offering?

- The woman thought practically about avoiding daily trips to the well, but Jesus was speaking about spiritual thirst and the Spirit of God dwelling within us.
- What are some ways you've tried to satisfy your spiritual thirst with temporary solutions instead of seeking God's living water?

The Samaritan woman left her water jar behind and became one of the first evangelists. What does this detail symbolise about transformation and sharing faith with others?

- The sermon notes 'She came for water. She leaves with witnesses and runs back to tell others about her encounter with Jesus.'
- What 'water jars' (old priorities or distractions) might you need to leave behind to better share your faith with others?

The sermon describes a progression: 'First revelation. Then recognition. Then release. Then ripple.' How did this progression play out in the Samaritan woman's story, and what resulted from it?

- The sermon shows how one conversation led to a movement throughout the village, with many believing first because of her testimony and then because of their own encounters with Jesus.
- Can you identify this progression in your own faith journey, and how has your experience with God created ripples that affected others?

This five-day devotional will be swimming against the currents and ripples that lead into this weekend's sermon. It will explore themes of revelation, living water, and transformative conversations with Christ, encouraging a deeper understanding of faith and a renewed approach to worship.



## Day 1 John 4:7-14

Today, we reflect on how Jesus begins a transformative conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. In a society that placed barriers based on gender, ethnicity, and creed, Jesus initiates change with a simple request: "Give me a drink." This request signals the possibility of grace that thrives on breaking conventional barriers.

The living water Jesus offers goes beyond quenching physical thirst—it speaks to the spirit, meeting the deeper longings of our souls. Just as the woman's life was known and met with compassion, we too are invited to experience a grace that knows us deeply and meets us where we are.

- How do societal barriers impact your current walk with faith?
- Where in your life do you thirst for something deeper?
- What can you do to offer grace in unexpected places?
  
- Pray for an open heart to receive what God wishes to offer.
- Ask for the courage to break through personal and societal barriers.

## Day 2 John 4:15-24

In this passage, Jesus discusses worship with the Samaritan woman, moving the conversation from the physical act of drawing water to the spiritual depth of worship. True worship, Jesus explains, is not confined to physical spaces but must be grounded in spirit and truth, removing the limitations of geography and tradition.

This teaching challenges us to explore what worship signifies in our own lives. It's an invitation to connect authentically with God, allowing the Spirit to guide and reshape our understanding of where and how we encounter the divine.

- What does worship in spirit and truth mean to you personally?
- How can you make worship a more integral part of your daily life?
- What tradition or routine in your worship might need re-evaluation?
- Pray for the Spirit's guidance in enriching your personal worship.
- Seek clarity in how to authentically worship beyond traditional confines.

### Day 3

#### John 4:25-30

The woman at the well leaves her jar behind, a symbol of leaving her old burdens and perhaps old ways of thinking, as she rushes to share her encounter with Jesus. Her testimony, though simple, sparks curiosity and awakening in her community, illustrating that revelation leads to transformation.

As we consider this passage, it reminds us that our personal experiences and revelations can significantly impact others. Sometimes, stepping away from what weighs us down allows us to embrace and communicate God's message more effectively.

- What are the "water jars" in your life that you need to leave behind?
- How has a personal revelation about Jesus changed your outlook?
- Who in your community needs to hear your testimony?
- Ask for the strength to leave behind what no longer serves your faith journey.
- Pray for opportunities to share your encounter with Christ with others.

### Day 4

#### John 4:39-42

The impact of the woman's testimony reaches beyond personal revelation, drawing others to Jesus. Her encounter at the well becomes the catalyst for a wider acceptance and recognition of Jesus as the Saviour. This wave of belief showcases the power of individual stories in creating collective faith experiences.

Reflecting on this, consider how our testimonies can serve as a conduit for others to experience Christ. When shared sincerely, our stories of faith can ripple into our communities, fostering a broader engagement with the divine.

- How can you use your story to inspire faith in others?
- What barriers keep you from sharing your testimony?
- In what ways can your community benefit from hearing your personal experience with Christ?
- Pray for the wisdom to share your faith in impactful ways.
- Seek courage to speak about your encounters with Christ, regardless of uncertainty.

### Day 5

#### John 4:13-14

Jesus offers living water—a metaphor for the ever-renewing sustenance that faith provides. Unlike ordinary water, this living water quenches the soul's thirst and flows outward, impacting every area of life. Today, consider how this living water can bring renewal not just to ourselves but to those around us.

We are called to be vessels of this living water, allowing it to transform our lives so that we can, in turn, offer hope and love to others. Contemplate what it means to live a life that continually draws from this source and shares it generously with the world.

- In what areas of your life do you need the renewal of living water?
- How can you become a well of compassion in your daily interactions?
- What practical steps can you take to ensure you're sharing living water with others?
- Pray for living water to fill and overflow from your life into your communities.
- Ask for the Spirit's guidance in making a positive impact on others' lives.

# End notes and further reading

## End notes and further reading

Harrington, Daniel J Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew  
Moloney, Francis J, SBD, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John  
Johnson, Luke Timothy: Sacra Pagina: The Gospel on Luke  
Collins, Raymond F., Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians  
Andrew McGowan [substack.com/@abmcg](mailto:substack.com/@abmcg)  
N.T. Wright, Twelve months of Sundays Year A  
Andrew Pratt, pastor and hymn writer ([theworshipcloud.com](http://theworshipcloud.com))

Let your faith and relationships  
be shaped by love and patience  
for God's love is  
revealed in lives, not letters.



## Brabarlung Totem

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Prepared by Rev'd Dennis Webster, Rector of the Anglican Parish of Paynesville, Diocese of Gippsland for personal or small group use.

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