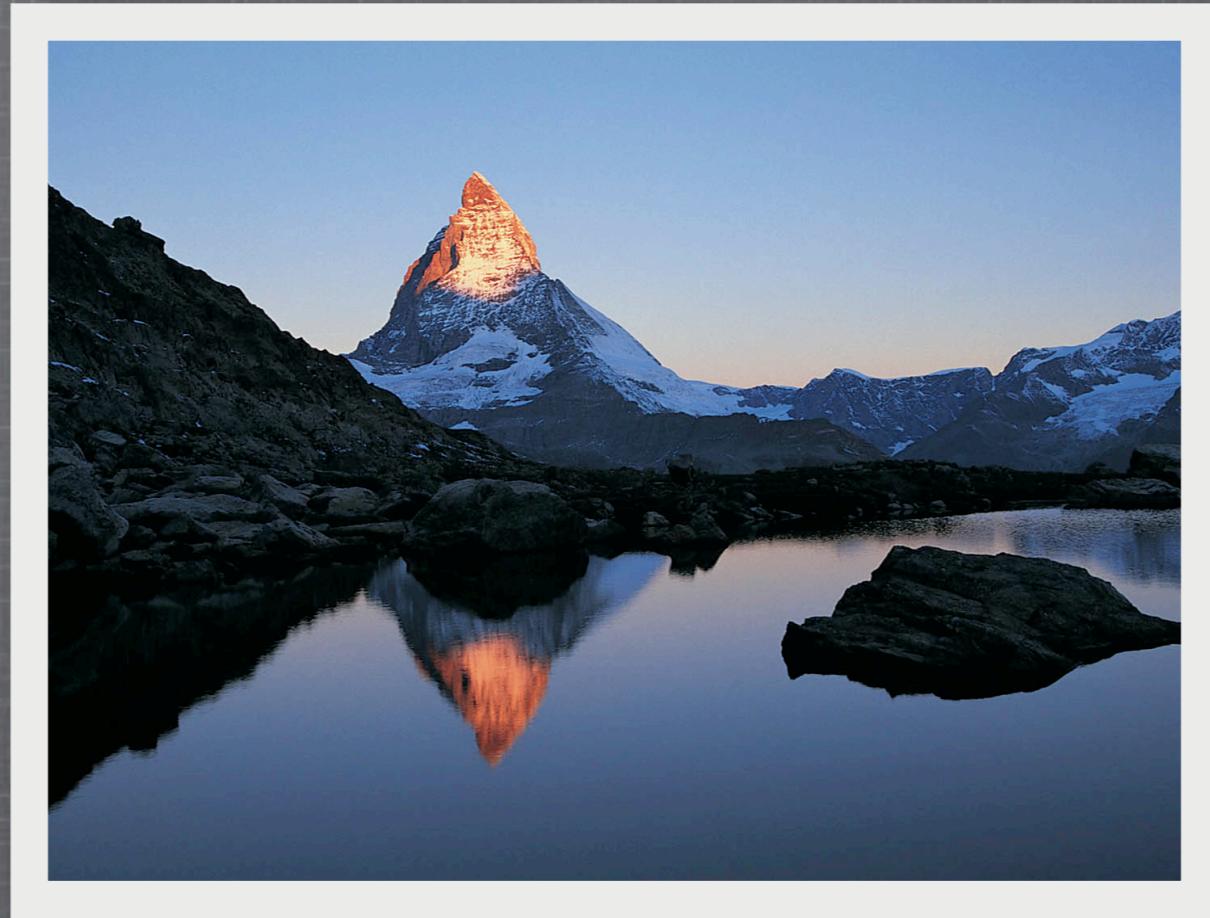


IF YOU ONLY KNEW THE GIFT

The Fountain of Grace



2012 Men & Women's Silent Preached Retreat
2nd Presentation

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL



John 4

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

- “He had to pass through Samaria” He didn’t have to there were ultimate routes.
- The well was the hub of social life.
- The hour at noon was not the regular time to collect water.
- The woman had a sorted and sinful past. Perhaps she was collecting water at the time when others wouldn’t be there to avoid ridicule.

THE WELL

The Samaritan woman represents every sinner in the Church, of all times and places. She meets her Lord at this strategic intersection of the ordinary and the extraordinary, the painful and the routine. He invites her to spousal union with him in chaste love. It is as if he begins to hear her confession.

Our life, too, has a well. It sits right in the midst of our daily routine of ordinary places and common tasks. Our lives might even have a place of exile, where we go to avoid other people and to forget the pain. Nonetheless, pain prompts us. The thirst goes deep, a thirst that exists not only in our throat but throughout our life." If we look carefully and listen closely in our exile, avoidance, and forgetfulness, we might see the figure of a man whose timing is perfect, who sits down and still thirsts. He looks up and turns to us with his request: "Give me a drink; I thirst."

from *Living the Beatitudes – A Journey to Life in Christ* by Fr. J. Brian Bramsfield pp. 18-19.

COME JUST AS YOU ARE

At a certain point in life some people may begin to wish they were actually someone else or could start over with a different life. Those who experience pain can often fall into the trap of idealizing others. Often, in the early immature years, people wish they could switch places with a classmate or friend who seems to have it all: flawless good looks, high intelligence, the "perfect family," money, talent, popularity, expensive toys, the cleanest house, and athletic prowess. But before wishing for these things, people often blame themselves or others. It is so easy to blame others for all our problems and painful setbacks. We blame others for who we are rather than take responsibility for who we will become. Oddly enough, many who have a negative sense of themselves stubbornly refuse to work their way out of such pain. Instead, they blame, pretend, anesthetize, fantasize, and search for shortcuts that sometime appear to pay off in the short run. It appears easier to wish for what we desire than to work for it.

from *Living the Beatitudes – A Journey to Life in Christ* by Fr. J. Brian Bramsfield pp. 33-34.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Jesus comes to meet us wherever we are. We don't have to pretend that everything is okay. We just need to be honest. This is part of receiving the Beatitudes.
- Other people may put obstacles in our paths trying to make us feel shameful and unworthy.
- "Jesus notes that the Samaritan woman had five husbands. He brings this forward, not to embarrass her, but to confront her so that she can acknowledge the chaos and see it in the proper light—or darkness. He shows this to her in his mercy and attentiveness to her pain. As the psalmist says, "My wanderings you have noted. . ." (Psalm 56:9)."

AUTHENTICITY

- We must reflect on our faith journey about where find our truest identity. This requires us to acknowledge fear.
- “Understanding one’s life and faith as a gift is not an idealistic, world-denying outlook or a naïve coping mechanisms for the painful events of daily life. To live by the gift frees us from the self-centered attitudes that can weigh down our spiritual life. To live by the gift helps us climb out from under the load of negativity, impulsiveness, and routine fueled by our self-centeredness. To live by the gift turns our automatic reactions into authentic human responses. (Bransfield p.40)

TRUE PROGRESS

Our tendency to measure progress and relate it to our personal self-worth can easily sabotage growth in our relationship with God. My desire to gauge the relationship by the returns is ultimately more about me than about God. It is about my control, my need to be certain rather than the gift of faith. The tendency to keep looking for the next result takes us farther away from the fountain. Again and again in the Bible, we see that God calls a person to uncertainty, to a lack of palpable results, and therefore to total reliance on him alone. God summons us to a relationship, not to an analysis. He calls us to be faithful without conditions.

Bramsfield p. 53

AUTHENTIC CONVERSION

- Is the reality of transparency in one's life. Being honest with God about what is our reality and seeking His mercy and healing.
- Thirsting for more. We are never “know-it-alls” and our Life in Christ is a continuing journey which will someday reach its fulfillment.
- The Beatitudes help us along the way by bringing us back to reality.

OVERCOMING FEAR

The Samaritan woman shows us that when we follow the path of Jesus, he will transform our lives. He heals memories, forgives past sins, and helps us change our habits to transform our lives. Just as the word of Jesus begins to transform the Samaritan woman, it will transform us too. Jesus leads her from worldly fear, through servile fear, past initial fear, into filial fear. As the psalmist says, "I turn my feet from evil paths to obey your word" (Ps 119:101). With fear so prevalent, it is no wonder that anxiety and unease often predominate when Christians approach faith and the moral life. We can be preoccupied with the same old fears for years. They can be like a boulder that blocks the path to the fountain. Even our attempts to change our lives can seem fraught with fear. On a popular level, and often in media, Catholic morality is equated very quickly with juridical obligations or imposed sanctions.

Bransfield p. 116

THE POWER OF YOUR LOVE

HILLSONG

Lord I come to You
Let my heart be
changed, renewed
Flowing from the
grace
That I found in You.
And Lord I've come
to know
The weaknesses I
see in me
Will be stripped
away
By the power of
Your love.
Hold me close

Let Your love
surround me
Bring me near
Draw me to Your
side.
And as I wait
I'll rise up like the
eagle
And I will soar with
You
Your Spirit leads me
on
In the power of
Your love.

Lord unveil my eyes
Let me see You face
to face
The knowledge of
Your love
As You live in me.
Lord renew my
mind
As Your will
unfolds in my life
In living every day
In the power of
Your love.