

FROM THE PASTOR

My brothers and sisters,

Sorry the column has been gone for the last few weeks, but space was at a premium in the bulletin. Now we are back, and none too soon as we start the third week of Lent.

The Gospel this week is the beautiful story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:5-42). Jesus asks the woman for a drink, but it was not for water of this earth that He thirsted, but rather He was thirsting for her love! And we get to see how far He will go to quench that thirst. She refuses at first, but Jesus knows our hearts and our deepest longings, and so He stirs up that longing within her. As He talks of living water, you can hear her soul crying out for this water that she didn't know about but had always longed for, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty..."

Here's where the story changes: now that Jesus has evoked the woman's thirst, He speaks to her of the change that she must make. In her deep longing for God, she did not know how to satiate the thirst, and so went "looking for love in all the wrong places," trying to fill the void in her soul with relationships. But this hole can only be filled by the infinite love of God, and anything else will leave her emptier than before. She knows she has sinned, and doesn't want to face it, so she begins a theological discussion to distract Jesus from the real issue. Jesus allows, it, but eventually draws her to a deeper longing to worship God in "Spirit and truth," a longing that soon out shadows her addictions and shame.

When the woman leaves the well to tell the people about Jesus, it is important to note that she leaves her jar behind – the jar she needed for the water. She drank of the water of life, and so she is no longer thirsty!

Jesus is calling each of us. He longs for each of us. From the cross, He cries out, "I thirst!" as He thirsts for our love. In order to draw us in, we have to be ready to let go of the things that are separating us from God: our addictions, attachments, our sin and shame. We let go of these things not that we may be left empty, but rather that we may be filled with the true water of life!