

Looking for Love in All the Right Places

Father Bob's Homily – Third Sunday of Lent – March 8, 2026

In 1980, Johnny Lee had a hit song called “Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places.” That line describes very well the life of the woman we meet in today's Gospel.

The Samaritan woman in the Gospel was looking for love, for meaning, for purpose, for direction, for peace, and for salvation in her life — but she wasn't finding it. Her life, quite frankly, was a mess.

It began with her marriages. In the longer version of the Gospel, Jesus reveals that she has been married five times, and the man she is now living with is not her husband. Marriage had not worked out for her.

Then there were friendships. Friendships were not working out for her either. She goes to the well at noon — the hottest time of the day — and she goes there alone. In that culture, the women of the village would normally go to the well early in the morning when it was cooler, and they would go together. It was a time for community and conversation.

But she goes alone. She apparently has no friends. She is isolated.

And then there is religion.

Even her religion is not working out for her. Jesus points out that the Samaritans do not fully understand how to worship God. Their worship is incomplete, and to the Jews the Samaritan faith was considered both ritually and racially impure.

So in many ways nothing in her life seems to be going well. With all of this, she likely had a very poor self-image.

Until she meets Jesus.

Saint Gregory once described this Gospel by saying that Jesus is the “thirsty fountain.”

At first that sounds strange. How can a fountain — something that pours out water — be thirsty? But when it comes to Jesus, it makes perfect sense. The water flowing from Christ is the overflowing grace of God. And Jesus is “thirsty” in the sense that He deeply desires to give that grace to anyone who wants it.

When Jesus encounters this woman, He recognizes in her a deep longing — a desire for something more meaningful in life. And she finally finds it in Jesus, who is God made flesh.

What a beautiful and powerful message this is — not only for our catechumens, but for all of us.

It invites us to ask ourselves an important question: What are my deepest desires in life?

And even more importantly: Do I recognize that my deepest desire is for Christ?

Do I desire to drink the life-giving water that Jesus offers — the water that comes to us every Sunday in His Word and in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?

Because it is there that we find the love our hearts so desperately seek.

Not only love, but meaning. Purpose. Direction. And that deep and lasting peace that only Jesus can give.

Jesus speaks to us today just as He spoke to the Samaritan woman.

He promises the gift of living water — the grace that satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart.

Some people come searching for that meaning. And if that is what you are searching for, our Lord will not disappoint.

There truly is a recipe for happiness in life. And that recipe is Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus is the life-giving water who longs to share His grace with every person who thirsts for it.

The Samaritan woman may have been looking for love, meaning, and fulfillment in all the wrong places.

But may we learn from her story. And may we always seek love, meaning, and fulfillment in the right place — in Jesus Christ.