

What is your opinion of this woman? High? Low? Somewhere in between? Her opinion of herself is revealed by the time of day she comes for water. It's about the sixth hour we're told. Around noon. When the sun is high in the sky. And when she will not be meeting others at the well.

In her opinion she is a failure. Five failed marriages. And in all five her husband gave her the boot. Wives were not allowed to divorce their husbands. But the husband could divorce his wife. And pretty much for any reason. Five times she was shown the door. Five times her ego took a beating. Perhaps this explains why husband number six was married to someone else and not to her.

She would never reveal her past, a scandalous past to most people, to a stranger at a well. And not only a stranger, a Jewish man. Her enemy in many ways. Someone who already has a low opinion of her simply because she is a Samaritan.

When Jesus says, "*Go, call your husband,*" she hides her past life with her answer: "*I have no husband.*" In other words, "I'm available." True, this man is a Jew. But beggars can't be choosers. Maybe fate brought them together. Maybe even God. Could this man at the well be husband number seven?

And the answer to that question, this question in her mind, is Yes. Yet not in the way she imagines.

This Jewish man, who is God in the flesh, has come to this well, at this very time of the day, to seek this woman as His bride because, where six prior husbands failed, He would not fail; where her prior husbands cast her out, He would not. Instead, He would draw her to Himself, giving her living water to drink, and not only to her, but through her to many of the people in her town.

In the chapter just before our text John the Baptist says of Jesus, "*He who has the bride is the bridegroom.*" Even back in eternity Jesus chose His bride for Himself. And then He came, the Bridegroom to seek His bride, to give Himself up for His bride on the cross, and claim His bride.

And isn't it interesting that Jesus seeks this woman at a well? A font we could say. And at this well Jesus reveals Himself as the Messiah to this woman, and gives her living water to drink, despite her failed marriages, despite her low opinion of herself. Because what matters to Jesus is not what she thinks of herself, but what He thinks of her.

What is your opinion of yourself? High? Low? Somewhere in between? Perhaps it has a lot to do with how many times you have failed in life. Failed in a marriage. Failed with your children. Failed in a job. Failed as a Christian. Failures take their toll over time. They can cause us to despise ourselves. But we usually take our failures out on others, on those who are nearest and dearest to us.

Like this woman, we hide our past failures. But God knows them. Jesus knew exactly what this woman had gone through in life. Did it drive Him away from her? Just the opposite. Her failed life drew Him to her.

She needed a husband, a Divine Husband, who would love her without fail, forgive her for everything in her past, and never, ever leave her. And at the baptismal font of that well this Husband entered her life.

And, my friend, at the baptismal font of this well is where He also entered your life.

Doesn't Jesus know what failures we are? He sure does. But He is your Divine Husband. He chose you for Himself back in eternity. And no matter what you think of yourself, He counts you worth dying for.

And living for. Jesus lives for you. He lives to grant you living water. He is pouring the living water of His Holy Spirit into your ears right now to keep you as His bride forever.

Don't try to hide your failures from Jesus. He went to the cross for them, for you. And there is nothing He loves more than to forgive. Whatever you have done, however you have failed, you – and I mean each and every one of you – is forgiven of all your sinful failures.

You will still fail in life, and so will I. But Jesus will never show you the door. He will never cast you out. You are His bride for better or for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, even unto death. And He cherishes you with a love that we cannot fully understand now. Yet a love that we see as He hangs upon the cross for us.

Your opinion, therefore, doesn't matter. But only what Jesus has done for you. Only that you are claimed by Him as His beloved and forgiven bride. Amen.