Jews didn’t expect much from Samaritans. They thought they were an inferior race of people because they had intermarried with the Assyrians. Their land and their people were considered polluted because of this intermarriage.

Men in ancient Jewish culture didn’t expect much from women. Women didn’t have any rights. When they spoke, they often weren’t believed. They were uneducated, which many believed also meant stupid. They were considered property.

Most Jewish rabbis of the time would have walked out of their way so as to avoid going through Samaria. But Jesus did go through Samaria. Almost every other Jewish rabbi would have never talked to a Samaritan, but Jesus did. Other rabbis would never have talked to a woman as if she were an equal, but Jesus did. None of the other rabbis would have ever shared a common cup with a Samaritan man, much less a Samaritan woman – even before the coronavirus. But Jesus did.

Jesus did all these things because in the beginning, the Word, the Word that was with God and the Word that was God put some of the spirit of himself inside Adam and Eve. God put his Living Water inside them. And the Word/God/Jesus (all One and the same) did and does put Living Water inside each person – you, me, our friends, our family, that really strange person who works next to us, that “gross” person we saw the other day, that person of a different race than us, that person who is less righteous than us – each person. Jesus knew that the Samaritan woman, just like us and everyone else, possesses inside them Living Water and that Living Water makes them precious. So even if we don’t always act as if we are all precious. Jesus does.

In our baptismal covenant, we promise to see the Christ – the Living Water – in all people. But sometimes we walk through life without ever realizing this water is inside us – without helping it to soak through us and be filtered. We let that water stay below the surface, we let it remain unclean. We let it keep flowing just below the surface without ever springing forth. When we do this, we miss out on the power Jesus gave us to join with Him in creating a new world. We don’t always see the beauty inside us but Jesus does.

Sometimes we walk through life without realizing that the Living Water is in others. The water we miss may be freely flowing and almost pure but we don’t realize it. It’s almost as if our taste buds are so damaged from living in a mixed up culture that we struggle to discern clean from dirty. Maybe we are afraid to see the Living Water in others because of how our reflection might look against that pool

Maybe we can’t see this Living Water in others because we are judging a person based upon what we see on the surface – gender, race, economic status, likeness to us – rather than by that Living Water that flows underneath the surface and sometimes bubbles up – just as many Jews judged this person without knowing her.

When we dig below the surface, as Jesus did, and take a closer look at this Samaritan woman, we realize just how much that living water was flowing through her, just like a stream flowing around rocks and stones on its way to becoming pure. She engaged Jesus in theological debate; she allowed herself to be so transformed as to be rid of her fear of being disbelieved; she turned out to be one of the Bible’s most gifted preachers. Like many of the Jews of the day, we have failed to see the spirit of God flowing in her but Jesus did. When we learn to look more closely at people who cross our daily path, without judgment, we will see the spirit of God – the Living Water – flowing through them, too.

Jesus fills each of us with living water (that spirit of himself) that makes us co-creators with him in giving life to the world. We are precious to Jesus. Because we are so precious to Jesus, he died for us.

We don’t always know and value others fully. We don’t always expect as much of ourselves as God knows we were created to do and be. We don’t really consider ourselves and others as holy, worthy of God’s blessings.

But Jesus did.