

Fr Ryan Homily 3-12-2023

Read: Exodus 17:3-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42

Okay so we've all done this, I presume, someone asks you how's it going and you say fine. Or someone asks how it's going, and you say it's going. Which is like saying nothing at all. It's the most non-answer ever. How's it going? Fine. And sometimes that just might be the truth. I'm doing okay and that's the appropriate response. Too often I think, and you and I know this, we say fine because what we're really thinking is I'm not doing good, but I don't wanna get into it. I don't wanna share how lousy I am because you wouldn't get it so I'm fine. Some of you may have seen this clip from, it's an old Katy Perry interview, she's a singer, has become this meme all over the internet of her voice going you walk out the door, you see someone that you know and they ask you how you are, and you just have to say that you're fine even where you're not really fine because you can't get into it because they would never understand. I think I've heard that like a thousand times in different ways on the internet and there's a lot of truth in it. I think that's true and that's why we keep hearing that over and over and over again. And so a lot of us we hide behind that simple word – fine – when we're really not. Because if we were gonna be honest it would probably take an hour of sobbing to explain all that's going on in our lives and we don't wanna put that on people so I'm fine when maybe we're broken. Maybe we really need some help to keep going but we don't know if anybody can help so I'm fine. Cause being broken in a world that's broken sometimes the best a person hopes for for themselves is that they can just cope. Or that we can cobble together something that seems good enough and I do my best just to forget the past, ignore the present, not think too hard about the future because the best I can do is fine I guess. But then to ask the question like well what does God have to do with your life then? If that's the reality what does God add to someone's life? Because I think all of us know people in our lives, whether they're family or they're friends, who don't have faith. Who are living their lives without Jesus, and you look at them and they seem fine, they seem happy, at least that's what they say, that's how they present themselves. And so if they're fine and I'm fine and everybody's fine, what does God actually bring to your life? Well, let's look at the gospel today, the woman at the well – a really long story. But there's nothing wasted in this really long story so where it takes place this well in Samaria. Who is there? Jesus and this woman. What they say to each

other, it's all important. But I wanna highlight this particular moment. So this woman goes to the well at noon to fill her water jug and Jesus is there and He asks can I have a drink? And she's shocked by this. How would you a Jewish man ask me a Samaritan woman for a drink? And He says I could give you water. You can't give me water you don't even have a bucket. And He says no I could offer living water. And she says I'd love to be able to have that. I'd love to be able to not have to come back here every day. And so here's the critical moment because up until now there's been some deep exchanges between them, but nothing penetrates the surface until this next statement where Jesus says go call your husband. And if you're reading this or you're hearing this in church all of a sudden it's like the air gets sucked out of the room. Right, everything kinda freezes. Go call your husband. This is the moment it gets real between them. This is the moment where this woman she's fine. She's been living her life down in town, doing her thing. She's getting by. But in this moment she can't pretend anymore. She can't pretend that she's fine. She says I don't have a husband. And Jesus says you're right, you've had five husbands and the man you're living with now is not your husband. And so let's just like take a moment and look at this woman. Because here she is, and I think she's cobbled together this life the best that she can figure out. It's the best that she can do right now because her dreams. I mean in that one sentence you're right you've had five husbands and the man you're living with right now is not your husband. In that one sentence everything is revealed. All of her hopes and how all of those hopes ended. Right, it's just Jesus exposing her heart, exposing her life. She's been divorced five times and that means she's been married five times. She's been proposed to five times. There's been five nights before the wedding where she is filled with hope. Like imagine the heart of this woman thinking that I've finally found it. I finally found the one who is the answer, who will love me and it ends in divorce, heartbreak. And she picks herself up and she meets another man and all those hopes come back and again it crashes and burns. Five times she goes through this and each time it probably devastated her even more until now she might as well not even get married cause there's no such thing as love – there can't be. Because look at my life, look at what's happened to me. Think of how devastated she must be. She's alone. Nobody wants to be around her. But I'm fine, nothing to look at here. Just forget the past, ignore the present, try not to think too hard about your future. And it's in the midst of that that Jesus just names him. In the middle of their conversation she's trying to be

like I'm fine, no problems here and Jesus names it. Go call your husband. And in the moment she has to come face to face with what she's always known but what she's never admitted. That she is not fine. She has to come face to face with what's she's always known but never admitted that she is not fine. She's not okay. And this is true for us, for every single one of us because in life we get broken. We get hurt, maybe we've sinned. Maybe we've been trampled on, and we've been used by somebody and then thrown out. So what do we think we have to do? We just have to keep moving, keep filling up our lives with distractions because we don't wanna think about it. We tell everybody that we're fine. We tell ourselves that we're fine. Trying to forget the past, ignore the present, not think too hard about the future. And Jesus says what is it you've always known but never admitted? See Jesus goes right for that wound. Go call your husband. And the woman, I mean it makes her uncomfortable and so she tries to change the subject. She just starts talking about where her people worship and we do the same thing when Jesus or another person gets too close we just duck and weave and we leave that topic behind, we focus on something else. Because I'm fine, let's not go there. I don't wanna think about that pain. I don't want you to touch that wound. Again just think about this woman's life. If she was alive today let's say she was a celebrity, she'd be a joke wouldn't she? Like how many husbands has she had now? The fifth husband? I mean we talk about people like Joan Collins or Larry King, people like that who have five six seven eight nine husbands or wives because unfortunately in our culture these people are just a punchline. That's who they are to us, they're a joke. Back then it was even worse. They're rejected, there's no place for them to go, there's no place where they belong – they're done! Their life is done. And so to Jesus she says I see you're a prophet. I see that you know things about my life. You know what I've been through, you know what's happened, you know what I've done, am I a joke to you too? And for Jesus the answer is a resounding no. For Jesus she was more. Like no she is not fine, but she was not a joke to Him. She was not fine, but she was not done in His eyes. Because what did she need, like what was her great wound and this is the key for every single one of us like what do you need? What is your great wound? For her it was having this hope and this hope gets shattered over and over, being devastated five times until now she's just given up. This thing that came against her heart that says you think you're worth loving? You're not. You want proof look at these five guys. You want proof that you're beyond love, that you're beyond

repair? Just look at these five guys who promised to love you and then failed to love you. Jesus says go call your husband. So why does Jesus reveal this great wound of hers? Well as I said no word in this gospel is being wasted so for the people of the day reading this, in their mind a man plus a woman plus a well plus mentioning living water, you put all of that together that means there's a wedding. These are all elements of a wedding. That's why the disciples are shocked when they see Jesus talking to her. You don't do this unless you want to marry her. Now, Jesus is celibate, he doesn't want to marry her as these other men did. He's not looking for a wife, but Jesus is talking to her as the Lord. As the Son of God and He's saying I wanna love you. He's saying your sin is not an obstacle for me to love you even now. Her sin was no obstacle. Her wound, her brokenness was no obstacle for Jesus to love her. And that's why I think it's so wise the church gave us this second reading today because it's telling us what's happening between Jesus and this woman. Cause here's Paul, he says God proves His love for us. God proves His love for you in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Christ came for us in love. And this is what Jesus reveals to the woman, that her sin, her past was no obstacle for Jesus to love her. Her sin, her past was no obstacle for Jesus to love her, but her sin and her past could be an obstacle for her to love Him. This is true for all of us. Jesus has to bring it up so she can realize that she's not fine. When I pretend things as they are are as they are meant to be or as good as they can possibly be. When I try to convince myself that I'm fine because this is a good as it gets then I miss out on this massively, massively important truth. Not only is the world not as it was meant to be, not only is my great wound that I don't believe in love anymore – that's this woman. But I believe I'm not worth loving. But to let Jesus step into that and reveal to you this profound truth that where you believe you are no longer wanted, I want you. When you believe no one wants to fight for you anymore, I'm gonna fight for you. When you believe your life is done, I'm telling you I can give you living water. I can restore you; I can revive you cause your sin is no obstacle for Him. So if you're living under the illusion or the mirage that we're fine, that nothing can get better, or that anyone who tries to cobble together a life without Jesus is fine. That's the obstacle. Your sin, your past that you try to forget, your present that you try to ignore is not an obstacle for His love, but it can be an obstacle for us to love Him back. That's one of the reasons I love confession. I love that sacrament. To be able to be face to face with Jesus and to acknowledge I'm not fine, that's why I'm here. To be able to say I'm not gonna

forget the past anymore, I'm not going to ignore my present, I'm not fine. And here in the sacrament of confession, I don't have to be fine. I'm not fine and I don't have to be because in confession this gospel repeats itself. It's your soul and Jesus having this exchange. Jesus saying your sin is no obstacle for My love for you. This woman in the gospel was not fine but for Jesus neither was she a joke. For Jesus she was more and for Jesus you are more. Some people they think what I've done, what I've been through, what has been done to me – my life is over. I'm irredeemable, I'm done. But you know what, I'm fine. That's what this woman thought. But because Jesus loves you you're never done. Your life is never over. Maybe you're not fine and you have to be because to Jesus you're not a joke. To Him you are so much more.

Amen