

Tanya Howze - John 4:4-15 The Samaritan Woman

My target audience for my pericope is the adult population ages thirty and over. I am fairly new to preaching, a little over a year, and I can honestly say that I am still learning and my hope is that I continue to be more proficient in my learning and growing. I can say that as of now I am preaching from my experience. I never want to be the preacher that preaches from what they have not experienced. I feel that the only way I can reach someone or have them relate to me is if I give real life scenarios and explain to them how Jesus Christ has led me and guided me through each and every experience.

In my preaching, thus far, I have found that my style of preaching is a combination of the motivator and the counselor. The Motivator is the preacher whose primary goal is to push their audience's faith into action. The Counselor's common theme is the healing that is found in Christ. The sermons that I have preached thus far has been a combination of the two. I have learned that preaching styles can change over time but for now – I am ecstatic with the style that God has placed in me thus far.

I chose this passage because I feel that we all can relate to the Samaritan Woman in one way, shape or fashion. We all have been in a place, before we came to Christ, where we felt as though we were not worthy or that our “mess” was too messy to come to Him. Jesus Christ accepts us for who we are at any given time and day.

One of the main outcomes that I hope to effect with this sermon is to let everyone know that Jesus Christ accepts each of us for who we are and we don't have to be sin-free to come to Him. Also, Jesus gives us the opportunity to drink of the living water so that we will never thirst again and that we will have everlasting life with Him.

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⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

My brothers and sisters, I love to watch movies of different genres. One movie that really caught my attention and sparked my interest was **Only God Can**. **Only God Can** has the capability to mend people's lives and make them whole the way nothing else can. This movie is about 5 women who have been friends since college. Each of them struggles with something unique yet relatable. New Christian, Grace, elaborates on this during a weekend get-together, saying she once felt empty inside. She felt like a "dead soul" and knew something in her life

needed to change. After giving her testimony about how Jesus saved her from that emptiness, she leaves her non-Christian friends something to think about. Sadly, she ends up dying in a car crash on her way home, which tests the faith of her friends in different ways.

Along with the help of her pastor, one of the friends starts to pray for her non-Christian friends in the hopes that they will know the love and acceptance of Jesus. This movie shows how God's saving power can reach anyone. After working through their issues, each woman discovers a faith in God that leads them to make different changes in their lives. They discover a relationship with Him that is incomparable to anything else this world has to offer.

My brothers and sister, has there ever been a time in your life where you felt like you were an outcast and you were all alone? Has there ever been a time in your life where you felt like no one would accept you because of your past or even your beliefs? Has there ever been a time, or even now, where you have longed for something more but didn't know what it was? Well guess what my brothers and sisters, we all, at one point in time, have been in that same predicament and I'm quite sure the Samaritan woman had some of those same feelings and desires as well. The story of this nameless Samaritan woman at the well, recorded only in the Gospel of John, is a revealing one, full of many truths and powerful lessons for us today.

Before I delve into this text, I want us all to be on one accord. We do know, for a fact, that Jesus Christ was a Jew, and the woman was a Samaritan - a race of people that the Jews utterly despised as having no claim on their God. Samaritans were also seen as impure by the Jews. Despite her situation and her circumstances, she was an extraordinary woman. This story of the Samaritan woman at the well teaches us that God loves us despite our bankrupt and sinful lives. God values us enough to actively seek us, and to welcome us to intimacy with Him.

While Jesus was on his journey with the disciples, the road He traveled from Judea to Galilee ran through Samaria. This was shortest route, and most Jews wouldn't go through Samaria for risk of becoming defiled and unclean. As He travelled on foot, he became tired and wanted to rest and He came upon a well. On this particular day, Jesus sat under the noonday sun at Jacob's well near a town called Sychar in Samaria . . . and He's not supposed to be there. The Samaritan woman was surprised because Jesus did not show the anger of his own nation against the Samaritans. My brothers and sisters, you should know that Jesus travelling through Samaria was both divine and geographically necessary.

My brothers and sisters, the first thing that I bring to your attention is that **Jesus interacts with people that are different;** Jesus is not a respecter of person. He laid hands on those that were diseased, crippled and blind. Jesus and the Samaritan woman both identified that cultural and political practices separated them, set them apart and divided them. She was an alien and a hostile Samaritan and merely speaking to her was thought to disgrace our Lord Jesus. Segregation was a way of life however Jesus did not allow that to stop Him or deter Him from doing the will of God.

The Samaritan woman was alone. Her name – only known to God, comes to draw water from this ancient well only to find a tall, olive complected Nazarene sitting next to the well she had been numerous times before. The other, respectable women who lived in town, had been to the well early in the cool of the morning. They had all filled their pots with water for their needs of the day. This woman came to the well alone because she was considered an outcast in her village. She had been married 5 times and was currently living with a man who wasn't her husband. Her reputation around the town was pretty low. She wasn't a respectable woman,

that's why she arrived at the well in the middle of the day; so, she wouldn't be harassed by the respectable women who lived in the area. As she approached the well, she carried a heavy clay water pot toward the well, but she also carried a much heavier burden in her soul.

Jesus then does the unthinkable. He speaks to her. He actually speaks to her. In doing so Jesus defies social convention and breaks barriers in two ways: first, he speaks to an unknown woman; and second, he talks to a Samaritan. Both were forbidden for Jewish men. To simply put it, here we see Jesus talking to an unknown woman of an enemy people. Jesus risks his reputation by being seen with a Samaritan woman. There is a sense of ignoring conventions here on both sides, a crossing of the lines of caution, a willingness on both sides to risk misunderstanding.

This nameless Samaritan woman was surprised that Jesus would even talk to her. To the Jews - Samaritans were half-breeds, both culturally and religiously. It was also inappropriate for a man to converse with a woman in public. A man wasn't even supposed to talk to his wife. Jesus crossed a social taboo to meet with this woman. Most Jews went around Samaria however Jesus didn't. He didn't harbor that hatred toward the Samaritans as they did towards the Jews.

We see later that when his disciples return with food (in v. 27) that they were astonished that he was speaking with this woman. But of course, they didn't say anything – this was Jesus after all! But we know what they were thinking, right? They were probably saying, “What is Jesus doing talking with her? Doesn't he know that he shouldn't be talking to her?” He willingly crosses boundaries and breaks barriers.

As sinful human beings we are much more capable of erecting walls and barriers than we are at breaking them down. We draw lines in the sand. We separate. We divide. We do so based on economic status, social status, race, religion, geography, church denomination, and theology. It happens in and outside the church. And once these barriers are built, we reinforce them with time and stubbornness. However, Jesus does none of this – He is the total opposite. He crosses borders and barriers, and He enters enemy territory and believe it or not – He wants us to do the same.

My brothers and sisters, the next thing we should know is that **this Samaritan woman didn't know how to Worship God**. We tend to think of worship as something we do for God, but in reality it is something God does for us. Our very nature must be changed to be able to worship God in the way he requires. Only God can change us from being a self-seeker to being a GOD SEEKER. Like King David, our heart must desire God so much that it is our eternal lifelong quest to know Him better every day.

Like the woman at the well, we as Christians do not worship God to receive blessings but worship Him because we have already received spiritual blessings beyond our imaginations. To be forgiven, to have our shame erased, to be included in the family of God; is treasures beyond anything this world has to offer! In Psalms 73, Asaph concludes that his true reward for keeping his ways pure is GOD! Our spirit must praise and worship of God who is our portion of blessings forever! Within our hearts we must come to understand that God is light, God is love and God is a consuming fire that is to burn inside our hearts guiding and directing us to praise and worship Him with our entire being.

The Samaritan says to Jesus, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus than replied “Woman, believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. (John 4:19-21)

At this point the Samaritan woman starts to see Jesus as a prophet. She says to Him that worshipping and praising God can only happen at designated places such as the mountain for her and Jerusalem for the Jews. Jesus corrects her and states worshipping God will soon be without boundaries. Since there is nowhere that we can go where God is not, worshipping Him is to be done everywhere. The Spirit of God lives inside of us (1 Corinthians 3:16) and that is precisely where praise and worship must well up like springs of living waters!

Lastly, Christ wants us to know that **He is the living water, and He is the gift that keeps on giving.** We live in a world which is in need of God’s presence daily – every minute and every hour of the day. He longs for us and is always seeking us to come to Him. He knows all the details of our lives: the good, the bad, the ugly and the not so good. He sought out the Samaritan woman my brothers and sisters and now He is seeking for you to come to Him. He has acknowledged her faults and she confessed knowing that He knew everything. Without judgement or hesitation or conditions, Jesus offered her the Water of Life. Only through Jesus can we obtain and receive eternal life. He states in verse fourteen – “the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Jesus now is identified as the Prince of Peace, the Savior of the World. He says, I am the way, the truth and the life. Jesus is the Gift of God that is sent to us to be our redemption and our salvation. He is the Shepherd to eternal life.

When we speak of the living water – we mean the Spirit. What Jesus spoke figuratively; the Samaritan woman took it literally. Christ shows that the water of Jacob’s well yielded a very short satisfaction and that was to quench your thirst. Of whatever waters of comfort, we drink,

we shall thirst again. But whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the comforts of the gospel shall never want which will abundantly satisfy his soul. Living water in the mind of the Samaritan woman would describe running water or spring fed water. Jesus means spiritual water and when you receive it, an eternal spring wells up in your soul. He is the living water. He is the eternal life and spiritual waters that flows without end.

My brothers and sisters you should know that the water that the Samaritan woman had to offer was nothing compared to the water that Jesus had to offer. When you drink from the water of the well – you will continue to thirst, and your quench may be satisfied momentarily but it will never be satisfied fully. The water that Jesus has to offer – it’s everlasting water that springs up from the wells of Living Water. The thing about water from the well is that it is Earthly water, and it only satisfies temporarily – it doesn’t last. Well water can be compared to inexpensive and cheap perfume. The perfume may smell good in the beginning but after a few hours of having it on the smell wears away. That is the same with anything you get from the well. It may make you happy for now, but it will wear off after a while.

And so certainly what Jesus says to her is significant. He doesn’t tell the woman that he is the Bread of life or the Light of the world – he tells her that he can give her living water. Here Jesus is the consummate teacher. He knows this woman perfectly and wants her to know who He is. He wants her to accept him as the Messiah and receive eternal life. They are at a well, so he begins the conversation about water. This is the beginning of how we eventually see Jesus offer her salvation. Jesus begins the conversation with the woman’s situation. She was getting water from a well and that became his starting point for introducing her to her need for him as “living water.”

If we as Christians are going to speak salvation into the lives of those around us, we do so in the same way that Jesus did the Samaritan woman. We should meet people where they are. We should go to where those people are. We should converse in ways that are both common to both of us and we should treat their situation as important. By entering into a conversation with this Samaritan woman, Jesus gave her a dignity and humanity that she wouldn't otherwise have had with anyone else, not even the man whom she was living with. Jesus calls us to do the same with those in our homes, communities, neighborhoods and workplaces. This is the beginning work of love and salvation. It's about being there – being present. It's about personal conversation, everyday encounters, and ordinary situations. This is the stuff God works through so that others will receive His gift of salvation.

Conclusion:

My brothers and sisters, we see that through the work of Jesus that salvation was not only extended to the Jews but to everyone as well. Jesus makes intercessions for us, establishing a new covenantal relationship between God and man. Through His sacrifice, our sins are atoned for, and we are given new life, living in the fullness of His grace.

No past sins can bar our acceptance with Jesus Christ, if we humble ourselves before him as the Christ, the Saviour of the World. Jesus' ministering to those outcasts of the Jewish society (the Samaritans) reveals that all people are valuable to God and that Jesus desires that we demonstrate love to everyone, including our enemies, meet people where they are and that we should worship God at all times.