

# The Samaritan Woman

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, everyone. It's nice to see you this morning. Kids, there are coloring packs. Come down and get those. Parents, come bring your kids down. There's pencils and packs to come and get.

I have had the wonderful privilege this week of being at summer camp. Put your hand up. Give me a shout out if you've ever been to summer camp.

I see a couple of wonderful people here. Thank you for shouting at me. This week, the youth of our church have been looking at the start of John, the first couple of chapters of John.

We've seen that John shows us that Jesus is the Word of God, that He is God Himself. How John the Baptist came to prepare people for Jesus.

And last night, we looked at the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3.16. And we were all challenged to commit our lives to Jesus.

[ 1 : 06 ] And for the first time, there were three young people who did commit their lives to Jesus. And that's it. Come on, let's cheer that. It's wonderful news that that verse gives us that there is eternal life and that by believing, we will not perish.

And so it was a great joy that some of our young people committed for the first time. Another young guy, just so excited. He became a Christian last year and he was just so thankful for what God had done.

He was just like, I just want to recommit. I just want to pray again. I'm just so thankful. And so it's a really wonderful week that our youth have had. And they will be all kinds of tired and excited and hyped up and probably a little bit sunburnt when they get back this afternoon for church.

So I have the privilege of bringing you the final talk for summer camp. We're going to just dip in to one part of John this morning as we look at what God's word brings to us today.

And even though you haven't had the lead up to it, God will still speak to us today. So let me pray that God will indeed do that. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the week that the youth have had away.

[ 2 : 23 ] God, thank you so much for those three young people who have committed their lives to you. And for the other guy who has recommitted his life. God, we thank you that it is only through you and through your spirit that we can have life because of what Jesus has done.

Be with us this morning as we look at this part of the Bible. Give us open ears and open hearts to listen well, to be shaped to be more like you, Lord.

Amen. Have you ever been really embarrassed? Really ashamed? Imagine you're at work and your boss is the worst.

Might not be that hard to imagine. I'm not sure why Nick's laughing. His boss isn't here. And your colleagues, you and your colleagues were always whinging about how bad your boss is.

And you've just come back from another meeting with your boss and you've been reminded about how incompetent this boss really is. And so you just send your mate, your colleague a quick email on the latest update of the saga of the incompetent boss.

[ 3 : 34 ] And then you get a call from your boss to come back into the office. And you wonder what it's about. But then as you're walking back in, you realize you didn't send that email to your colleague.

You sent it to your boss. I don't know why Rach is nodding. I hope that's never happened to her.

And as you walk in, the blood just starts to creep up your face. Oh, no.

What is my boss going to do? Am I going to be publicly shamed, embarrassed in front of everyone? Am I going to be fired? Have you ever been in that kind of position before?

Shamed, embarrassed, and you feel like your life has been placed into somebody else's hands? Can you imagine what it would be like to stand not just before someone who knew one embarrassing or shameful act, but the God who knows them all?

Every shameful and hidden thing we've done. Today, we're going to meet a woman who had been deeply ashamed. We're going to see what happens when this deeply ashamed woman meets Jesus himself.

[ 4 : 48 ] And we're going to see what happens. Is Jesus going to shame her further? What happens in this situation? We're going to be looking from John chapter 4, verse 1.

Please have your Bibles open in front of me, or the verses will be on the screen. From verse 1. Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John.

Although, in fact, it was not Jesus who'd baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given his son, Joseph.

Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from his journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. So Jesus had been on a long journey, and he's in a place called Samaria.

Samaria is part of what formerly was Israel, God's nation. But it split, after Solomon's time, into the northern and southern kingdoms.

[ 5 : 57 ] The northern kingdom was formerly known as Israel, but that becomes Samaria. And they are taken into captivity by Assyria. And over time, people from other nations, other religions come in, and it becomes a melting pot of people.

A melting pot of people and a melting pot of religions. And they were like the black sheep of the family. They disagreed with the Jews on how they should be worshipping God.

And so there was always conflict between the Samaritans and the Jewish people. And this is why the story of the good Samaritan is so amazing, because we don't expect Samaritans to be good, because they were just the enemies.

And so Jesus is in enemy territory. He's in Samaria. Tired from a long journey. He sits down, noon, the sixth hour, the middle of the day.

And he's thirsty. And he's tired. And so he's sitting at the well. The second half of verse 6. Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.

[ 7 : 05 ] It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, Will you give me a drink? His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. And so we're introduced to this woman.

She'd come to draw water. We don't know her name. She's just referred to as a Samaritan woman. But now imagine for a moment what it was like at this time.

You don't have running water in your house. Toilets, they weren't full of water. You had no showers, just like some of the campers have been pretending this week. But instead, maybe you had to walk a kilometer to get water every day.

If you lived in a hot place like Judah, and you had to go and get water, when would you go?

Anyone? When would you go and get water if you lived in a hot place?

In the morning. In the morning, in the evening, when it was cool. Most women would have gone first thing in the morning when it was cool, first thing in the evening. But this Samaritan woman comes out in the middle of the day, the worst possible time to get water.

[ 8 : 16 ] Maybe she's coming out in the middle of the day to avoid seeing the other women of the town. To avoid scorn and shame and embarrassment. Just this one line about this woman makes us think, well, what is she hiding?

Why is she so embarrassed? Is there something that is causing her to feel shame? Because shame has plagued us as humans since Adam and Eve first bit the fruit and hid from God.

We live in a dangerous world and we have the same instinct to hide our failures. We run away so that we are not damaged. So that our families are not damaged and our reputations are not damaged.

Shame is a combination of failure and pride. We fail due to our weakness and we fail to live up to the expectations that we have and of other people's expectations.

And so we can go to almost any length to cover up our shame before other people. Pride-fueled shame can have great control over our lives.

[ 9 : 28 ] I'm sure we've all felt this desire to just put our head under a rock and hide somewhere. Maybe we're hiding our failures and our shame right now from the people we love.

Not wanting to let them down and not wanting to lose face. And so it seems that this woman is hiding something deeply shameful. So shameful that she would rather make her life much more difficult.

Going out in the worst possible time to get water and face the consequences. And so what does Jesus do to this woman who appears to want to hide?

What does Jesus who knows all about this Samaritan woman do? Verse 7. Jesus said to her, will you give me a drink?

He asks to, he talks to her. He asks for a drink. To us it doesn't seem like that big, you know, you're going to any coffee shop and I as a male could ask a female, can I please have a drink?

[ 10 : 35 ] And they will gladly give me a drink as long as they also get my money. But this is a totally different situation. The woman is shocked. Verse 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. The woman is shocked because there are so many counters going on here.

Not kitchen counters, but as in the word against. So it's counter-cultural. It's counter-religion. It's counter-gender. It is counter-everything going on.

Samaritans did not talk to Jews. They were the enemies. They worshipped God in the wrong way. They were of a different religion. They did not talk. Men and women, if they weren't of the same family, if they didn't know each other, they did not talk.

It was counter-cultural. It was counter-religious. It was counter-gender in every situation. But Jesus doesn't shame her. Knowing her life, he extends an olive branch of peace and speaks to her.

[ 11 : 49 ] And she asks, you're a Jew. I'm a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?

This is just crazy. Jesus responds in verse 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.

Verse 14. 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.

Jesus said, if only you knew who I was, I would give you life. Water welling up in you, life welling up in you like living water that would give you eternal life.

And only I can give you that. Now this woman hears this and she's only thinking about her direct needs. Her need for water every day, not having to walk a cave.

And so verse 15, the woman said, Sir, give me this water so I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water. Give me that bucket of water that never runs out.

[ 12 : 55 ] That would be really convenient. I could pour it out. I could bathe in it. I won't have to come out here every day. And so Jesus gets to the point. He gets to the heart of the matter.

He said, go call your husband. Verse 17. I have no husband, she replied. Jesus said to her, you are right when you say you have no husband.

The fact is you have had five husbands. And the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true. The woman had been trying to hide, it turns out, because she had had five husbands.

And she was now with a man who was not her husband. This would have been absolutely shocking. This would have been shameful. And even thousands of years later, to have had five marriages and five divorces.

This would have been shocking. This would have certainly set tongues wagging. It would have likely caused great shame on her family. Just think about the pain and divorce, the pain and grief that one divorce causes a family.

[ 14 : 09 ] Let alone five. No wonder she doesn't want to see the other women. She would have been embarrassed and ashamed, even thinking about what the other women would have said to her.

Maybe you felt this low. That feeling of, I've ruined everything in life. There's nothing I can do to fix it. It's just easier to hide.

Move house. Move school. Change friends. Because I'm never going to live this down. People don't look at me the same anymore. And yet, what was Jesus' response?

Jesus, the one who knew her deep shame and depravity. Deeper than even she would admit. Jesus crossed cultural barriers to her.

He offered her living water. He offered her everlasting life. Jesus offered her something that she tried to get, but she couldn't get anywhere.

[15:09] He offered her family. He offered her adoption into God's family. And this is one of my favorite things about our Savior Jesus.

He doesn't come blind to earth. He's not surprised that we sin. He's not surprised by our depravity. It's not like he meets this woman and Jesus is shocked.

He knows what people are like. He knows us. He knows what it's like to be human. To be frail. He's not like us. He doesn't turn a critical eye to this Samaritan woman and say, you know, fix yourself up.

Come on. Get better before I can even talk to you. He knows and loves us. He loves us as we are so we can become like him through his death and resurrection.

In our lives, there are often times to dwell on the love we have from other people. There's Mother's Day and Father's Day. We get cards from our kids and they've done some masterpiece work of art in them.

[16:18] I'm just speaking for my kids here. And at the bottom of these kind of cards, it'll say, with love. You know, Valentine's Day rolls around. Alyssa and I don't do anything for Valentine's Day because it's Isaac's birthday.

But our wedding anniversary is just a couple of days before it. And so, you know, we'll give each other cards. And on the bottom, it says, you know, with love or I love you so much or, you know, hugs and kisses.

Those kinds of things. We mark special occasions and we tell people how much we love them. And we think about and we dwell on the love we have for people.

When was the last time that you stopped and read the card from Jesus that is God's word that says, I love you. I want you in my family.

I want you to have a life from this living water. Maybe, you know, together we could make a whole new line of greeting cards. Because it's important in our relationships to remember, it's important to remember that people love us and that we love other people.

[17:27] But it is so much more important that we remember God's love for us. Regardless of our shame. Regardless of how depraved we are.

The Samaritan woman meets Jesus, speaks with him briefly, and then she rushes back into town. She leaves her water jar behind. She is in so much haste.

And the disciples come back to town with food. Come back from town with food. And it appears that Jesus sent them, not just with the task of food, but of harvesting people.

Not just to buy food, but to share the news of Jesus and to see this town come to know and love him. But they haven't done that. But this is exactly what the Samaritan woman does.

Verse 28. Then leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.

[18:29] Could this be the Messiah? They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Then down in verse 39. Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.

He told me everything I ever did. So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them. And he stayed two days. And because of his words, many more became believers.

The Samaritans believed because of the witness of this woman. Meeting Jesus had been so radical, so life-changing, it caused her to do something that she may not have done for years.

To go and talk to other people of the town. She'd been trying to hide by getting water in the middle of the day. She meets Jesus and she rushes back to talk to these people.

She'd been impacted by Jesus so much that instead of hiding, worried about her own shame and embarrassment, she charges into town and starts telling everyone.

[19:37] Jesus knew everything about my sordid past. And she says that like everyone would have known about everything she'd done. But it's like a positive thing.

Jesus knew everything and he offered me life. I know, I'm surprised too, everybody. It's okay. But is he the Messiah? Is he the Christ?

Come and see. That old cliché, love conquers all, really is true here. It's the theme of so many movies. But it's true.

Particularly when we see the love from God. You know, the one who invented love. This love changed lives. And this one woman who met Jesus, she was not put down or abused or shamed further.

But this one woman saw her whole town get converted because of her ministry. How are we going, brothers and sisters, responding to God's counter-cultural love for us?

[ 20 : 43 ] That even though God knows all of our dirty and depraved and shameful secrets, he still loves us. He still wants us in his family.

Have you ever responded like the Samaritan woman? So aware of what you have gained in Christ, so aware of the contrast between your sin and the love that you would, it would cause you to do something for Jesus like this.

To say to people, Jesus knows everything I have ever done and yet he loves me. Come, come and see this Jesus. He is great and he loves you.

Or would this be a little bit too embarrassing? You know, to think maybe, you know, I've got good friends. The people at work think I'm a normal person. I don't want to spoil that by talking about Jesus too much.

I don't like talking about Jesus. I actually prefer to hide away what I do on the weekends. People know I go to church but I don't want to be forcing my beliefs on them throughout the week.

[ 21 : 59 ] Brothers and sisters, if we know the vast gap between what we are like and what Jesus has done to make us new, how can we pretend like nothing has happened.

Jesus said a little later in John, if you're ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of you. Now God did something shameful.

He went from being divine and he put on flesh. Flesh that was whipped, a crown of thorns placed on his head.

he was hung on a tree and killed. Killed so that our shame could be killed. Know that Jesus loves you.

Know that Jesus loves you despite you and let me encourage you to be just like this Samaritan woman to share that love that Jesus has even when it might be embarrassing.

[ 23 : 08 ] Let me pray for us. Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you so much to your word to us this morning. Thank you for Jesus' love for all of us and particularly this Samaritan woman who reminds us so much of ourselves.

Lord, you know what each of us is like. We try to hide and pretend and mask our shame and our embarrassment and the failures that we have done but Lord to you we are an open book and yet Lord you love us.

You sent your son so that we could have eternal life so that we would not perish but could be brought into your family. Father, thank you that you take away our shame that you take away any embarrassment that we have and you nail it to the cross.

Father, help us not to dwell on the mistakes that we have made but to dwell on your love for us to remember your love for us and Lord make us passionate and fearless to share this love that you have given us for the people around us.

We ask this in your son's name. Amen.