

Mountains, Valleys and Caves: Jesus on Mount Gerizim

By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison

John 4:16-26

Jesus encountered a woman with a checkered past. Jesus was “kind” but not “nice” as He spoke plainly and directly with her. He was not mean, judgmental, and bombastic—He just spoke to her. That was remarkable. A Jewish man talking to a Samaritan woman? Not only that, but she was “that woman” in her community. Decent people wouldn’t be caught dead with her. She was despised, rejected, cast-off, unwanted, and shunned because of her past. As Isaiah 53 prophesied, Jesus had to deal with the same rejection not because of unrighteousness but because of His righteousness. John 3:16 is followed in the next few verses with the statement that people love darkness rather than light. Jesus engaged her in conversation. She used a diversion tactic in verse 20 when she went into the old “Jew vs. Samaritan” routine. After a civil war, an alternative site for worship was set up locally in Samaria. The Jews and the Samaritans had hostility toward each other. Jesus responded and redirected the conversation.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had to redirect the conversation about reaching the lost. In his day, 1700s in England, the poor were marginalized and disregarded. They were considered disposable, too. When George Whitefield invited Wesley to preach outdoors to the coal miners early in the morning, Wesley thought the Lord would be offended. However, when he tried it, he realized that audience was more receptive than most who attended church. Early Methodists were overwhelmingly poor. Wesley went to them, like Jesus did with this woman, and cared for them.

Jesus’ conversation on Mount Gerizim in Samaria is the model of invitation. He broke down cultural barriers and invited someone considered to be trash in the community to talk to Him. He listened. He had compassion. He wanted everyone to belong. He invited anyone and everyone to the party in the kingdom of God. She, in turn, became an evangelist.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **invitation**. What lessons can you learn about invitation from Jesus? What lessons can you learn from the woman about inviting others to meet Jesus? Consider inviting someone to watch the episode of “The Chosen” (season 1, episode 8) where Jesus meets the woman at the well. What are ways you can help others follow Jesus?

Luke tells three stories involving Samaritans. The first is in chapter 9, where he tells of the disciples, James & John who ask Jesus to call fire down from heaven to destroy a city in Samaria where the citizens rejected Jesus. The Jews and Samaritans hated each other and had fought wars against one another. Of course, Jesus was not pleased with the request. The very next chapter Luke is the only gospel that tells the Parable of The Good Samaritan. The good guy was not a Jewish priest or Levite but a despised Samaritan. When Jesus healed the 10 lepers, only one returned to say, “thank you.” (Luke 17). This longtime rivalry was full of anger, bitterness, competition, & a wish that the hated other would die. The disciples didn’t understand that Jesus’ ways were so much higher than theirs.

When Jesus proposed to His disciples traveling through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem, the disciples were appalled. Any self-respecting Jew would by-pass it and never travel through Samaria. The trip would save time, but it could be dangerous physically and spiritually, too. **Show MAP** We show 2 clips from Season 1, Episode 8 of The Chosen. It provides another perception of what could have happened. Here’s **CLIP #1**.

After the resurrection and at the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sounded the note of redemption. Acts 1:8 says, *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* Acts 8 tells how this was fulfilled when Philip preached in Samaria where Simon the magician and many others were converted.

Whether Samaritan vs. Jew over religion, or as in American history, Patriots vs. Loyalists over government, or the north vs. the south over slavery, we can see entire **groups** as being subhuman. That's how the Nazis justified killing Jews – they weren't human beings. And groups can see **individual members** of their own tribe as being subhuman.

The woman we'll read about had 3 strikes against her: a Samaritan, a woman, & a history of brokenness. The Jews hated her, but so did the Samaritans in her village. Hers was the worst reputation in town. Jesus saw her, not according to gender, nationality, or her reputation; He saw her as He saw all people – as being created in the image of God. Jesus was on a mission to give her a wonderful invitation into the kingdom of God. He built a connection with her and invited her into His community.

John 4:16-26 p 1056

When Jesus attended a wedding in Cana of Galilee with His disciples, an embarrassing thing happened to the host - they ran out of wine. Jesus' mother, Mary, knowing His identity, asked Jesus to intervene. His reply seems sharp: John 2:4 *Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.* When he turned the water in the six stone waterpots holding between 20-30 gallons of water each into wine that meant the host went from embarrassment to an embarrassment of riches - up to 150 gallons. The bottom line was His disciples believed in Him. But they didn't really know who He was. They watched Him work miracles and they heard His great teachings like that of a Rabbi, but they didn't know who He really was – the Messiah.

In The Chosen, Season 1, episode 8, we meet the “woman at the well.” You can find the link in your interactive guide in your sermon journal. Jesus is alone at Jacob's well in the heat of the day. He sent his disciples into town so He could meet with her alone. Meeting her was the purpose of His visit. She has 3 strikes against her. She is a Samaritan (inferior religion), a woman (inferior gender) and has such a bad reputation other Samaritan women rejected her, too (inferior person). You can't get any lower – even the Samaritans rejected her. Jesus does the unspeakable: He talks to her. And He asks for a favor. She goes into the whole Jew vs. Samaritan routine, but He invites her to a new life. Watch.

The Chosen. Season #1 Episode 8

44:03 **“Would you give me a drink?”** That bad, huh? You a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan? And a woman. You know it's not safe for you to be here alone out here.” **“Or you. Why haven't you come with others? And why so late in the day? Don't women go the wells in the cool of the morning?”** Yeah, well none of them will be seen with me so I have to come at noon in the heat of the day. **Why won't they be seen with you?** Long story. Aren't I unclean to you? Won't you be defiled by this vessel? **Maybe some of my people say that about your women but I don't.** And what do you say? **45:20 I say if you knew who I am, you'd be asking me for a drink. And I would give you living water.** Wouldn't that be nice? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob who dug this well? Your water is better than his? Would, except that you have nothing to draw water with and this is a deep well. Besides what do you need from me if you have your own supply of living water? **Long Story.** But Jewish water is better than Samaritan water? **That's not what I said.**

45:50 **I know Jacob. And everyone who drinks this water will thirst again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty again.** Wouldn't that be nice? **The water I give will become in a person a spring of water leading up to eternal life.** Really? Prove it. **46:22 First, go and call your husband, then come back. I will show you both.** I don't have a husband. **You are right. You've had 5 husbands and the one you are living with now is not your husband.** I see. You're a prophet. You're here to preach to me. Usually, the one good thing about coming here alone is I can escape being condemned. **I'm not here to condemn you.** I've made mistakes. Too many. But it's men like you who have made it impossible for me to do anything about it. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain but you Jews insist Jerusalem is the only place for true worship. **They say that because the Temple is there.** Yeah, exactly where we are not allowed.

I'm here to break those barriers. And the time is coming when neither here on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. So where am I supposed to go when I need God? I've never received anything from God, but I couldn't thank Him even if I did. **Anywhere. God is spirit. And the time is coming and is now here, that it won't matter where you worship but only that you do it in Spirit & in truth. Heart & mind. That is the kind of worshiper He's looking for. It won't matter where you're from or what you've done. Do you believe what I'm telling you?** Until the Messiah comes, & explains everything & sorts this mess out, including me, I don't trust in anyone. **You're wrong. When you say that you've never received anything from God. This Messiah you speak of. I am He. The first one was named Ramin. You were a woman of purity who was excited to be married. But he wasn't a good man. He hurt you and it made you question marriage and even the practice of your faith. The second was Farzad. On your wedding night, his skin smelled like oranges, and to this day, every time you pass by the oranges in the market, you feel guilty for leaving him because he was the only true good man you've been with, but you felt unworthy. Why are you doing this?**

I have not revealed myself to the public as the Messiah. You are the first. It would be good if you believed me.

You picked the wrong person. **I came to Samaria just to meet you. Do you think its an accident that I'm here in the middle of the day?** I am rejected by others. **I know. But not by the Messiah.** And you know these things because you are the Christ. I'm going to tell everyone. **I was counting on it.** Spirit and Truth? It won't be all about mountains or temples? **Soon, just the heart.** You promise? **I promise.** This man told me everything I've done. Oh, he must be the Christ. Come see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Uh, Rabbi, we got food. What would you like? **I have food to eat that you don't know about.** Who got you food?

Peter: Wait a minute. You told her? And she can tell others? What food? **My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.** Peter: You told her who you are? So does that mean we're going to stay here for a couple of days. **It's been a long time of sowing but the fields are ripe for harvest.** Peter: And so it's time. Let's Go.

Isa 55:1-3 "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;

Isa 55:6-9 "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Everyone is invited, regardless of what we think of ourselves. Our past performance is no indicator of God's love for us. The flip = whoever we look at and think "No way!" is wrong. What's impossible with us is possible with God. If we're honest, we don't connect with people who are substantially different from us. But Jesus went through Samaria, spoke with a woman, and a "bad" woman at that. And who knows, maybe she was the first one to understand that Jesus was the Christ. Don't underestimate the grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Asbury's mission = Helping Others Follow Jesus. Why? Because Jesus is THE BEST. Not only could He turn water into wine, have wonderful teachings, but he came that we might have life

in this life and in the life to come. He welcomes us into the community of the Holy Spirit and the community of His body, the church. This is your invitation to come to Christ.