



Sermon Growth Guide

March 30, 2025

“Forgiven”

2 Kings 5:1-5, 9-15b

Key Verse: John 4:13-2

“Then Jesus declared, I, the one speaking to you – I am he.”

Big Idea: Realizing that Jesus knows all about us and loves us unconditionally, frees us to receive the new life He offers.

Foundations

This is a familiar and beloved story. And as beloved as it is, the woman in the story is often maligned as a prostitute or some woman of ill-repute. The story does not say that. What it does say is that she has had a rough life. She has had difficulty in her relationships. Her divorces and current living situation put her in a precarious situation – socially, economically, and religiously.

While she lives in this town, she is an outcast. The Jews hate her because she is a Samaritan. As you know, when the Jews returned to the Holy Land after exile, they conflicted with the Samaritans – those who had been left behind and whose religious practices over time had become a mixture of Israel’s faith and pagan gods. The Samaritans won’t associate with her because of her messed up life. And then, she is a woman in a culture where faithful Jewish men prayed every morning, “O Lord, I thank Thee that I was not born a woman.”

She has a thirst for something better than what she has and along comes Jesus, who speaks to her! And so begins her unfolding understanding of who Jesus is. As Pastor Tim said in his sermon, quoting Ephrem of Syria: “She got the better of a thirsty man; showed dislike of the Jew; heckled the Rabbi; was swept off her feet by the prophet; and she adored the Christ.”

Understanding God’s Word

Together read the text (John 4:13-26). In John 4:4, we read the words that Jesus “had to go through Samaria. This was not because it was the quickest or shortest route to Jerusalem. Why do you think he “had” to go through this difficult place? You have also seen the many barriers in this story that would discourage any kind of conversation. In what ways does Jesus go about breaking down barriers in this account?

Applying God’s Word

Go back to today’s text but begin with verse 10 (John 4:10-26). Count the number of times this woman is referred to as “you.” We don’t know her name. Nicodemus was named in his conversation with Jesus in chapter 3, but this woman remains anonymous throughout. Why do you think John tells the story this way? What could be the purpose in not knowing her name?

Witnessing God’s Word

Jesus went out of His way to meet this woman and engage her in conversation. She was where she was because she was avoiding her failures, her hurts, and her loneliness. Do you know someone who is avoiding experiencing pain? Is there some way you could offer the living water of Jesus?