



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### March 3, 2024

### Know the story of others

Recap of sermon from March 3, 2024

Scripture: 4:7-15

She had five husbands and the man she was living with now wasn't her husband. That wasn't a lot to go on, but Jesus knew this about her. He knew the pain that must accompany that history. He knew the loss, the abandonment, the ostracization that must have been a part of her story.

She was at the well at noon, long after most of the women had come and gone. Was she avoiding the whispers, the sideways glances? It may have been no fault of her own, but that kind of history would have made life difficult for this woman in an unnamed Samaritan village.

Jesus and his companions were traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee. The most direct route for his journey was through Samaria, but it was far from the most popular route. Most Judeans would have taken the route along the Jordan River to avoid traveling through enemy territory. Do not forget this fact, they were indeed in enemy territory.

The animosity between Judeans and Samaritans was political, theological, and generational. The heart of the matter was the location of worship. For the Judeans, which later became the root of the word Jews, the Temple was the central location of worship, commerce, culture, and politics. Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God, and all other expressions of worship were invalid.

The Samaritans, on the other hand, never wanted the Temple to be built. They traced their roots to Jacob's traditional places of worship and the shrine he built in the mountains. The Samaritans and Jews disagreed on the center of worship, the nature of the prophets, and the interpretation of the Law. These differences boiled over many times into violence, both sides thinking that their understanding of Scripture and God's will was correct.

And now this Samaritan woman and Jesus find each other at the well and something remarkable happens. They talk. They listen. They realize that that each has something to offer.

She is a woman who needs to be seen for who she is, not for her long story of woe. He is a man who needs a bucket so he can drink. Despite their cultural differences they learn that

they each have what the other needs and they come to a deeper understanding of what God may provide.

She gets to the root of their differences, who is right? And he goes deeper than that and gets to the heart of the matter. Their theological

differences are unimportant compared to the truth that all people thirst for God. She learns, becomes and evangelist for Jesus, and brings the people to him. At the end of the story, Jesus performs what may have been his greatest miracle—he says with the Samaritans for two days.

"Jesus had to go through Samaria" is the first verse of this passage. No he didn't, not geographically. He had to go through Samaria because "God so loved the world," even Samaria. God so loves the world, even those with whom we disagree. God so loves the world, even those with wrong theology or (what we think of as) misguided interpretation of Scripture.

Jesus had to go through Samaria, and maybe we do too. Our communities are divided by deep cultural and political divides. These divisions are often made deeper through theology and our interpretation of Scripture.

For many, the solution to the divide is to win. "Our (right) side" is right and must prevail over "their (wrong) side." We will win with good arguments, witty comebacks, perfectly crafted strategy, and if those don't work than plain brute force.

But Jesus wasn't interested in winning—not in the sense we are used to. He won by seeing the woman at the well for who she was. He won by going back with her and staying in "enemy territory" for two days. I think that may be our best hope too, to go through Samaria and see our enemies for who they are, thirsty people in need of buckets, beloved Children of God in need of the bread of life which we can break together.



**Next Week: The Fifth Sunday of Lent**  
**Luke 8:1-15, the women who accompany Jesus**