

**The Rock: 08-21-2022**

**A year with the master**

**The encounters**

**Title:** The woman at the well

**Scripture:** John 4:1-27

(Black bible Pg. ESV)

**Theme:**

How can we keep the Jesus (biblical) perspective of humanity, when the world around us has such different views on what humanity even is?

**Introduction:**

I want to start this morning by acknowledging that this is not the first time, nor will it be the last time that we visit this powerful story in John 4.

There is just so much here for us to learn, and one thing that I find most important is perspective. Perspective, we need to be reminded, is framed out and formed within our world-views.

How we see the world, our environment, our culture. I reflect back on those long drives from home to Vergennes and back, as I pastored there.

Lisa, Allie and I would have quite the conversations sometimes on those drives. Doing our best to solve all the world's problems in that hour and a half.

Each of us having different views and opinions on so many things. Sometimes the conversations could get heated, at least on my part.

Yet we would never get to a place where we wouldn't associate with or talk to each other anymore.

To see how we understand ourselves first, in light of others, and the world around us, is vital. Each one of us here today brings with us our particular world-view.

Created and framed out primarily by our upbringing, the culture we grew up in, and our beliefs (discovered and taught).

We then look at everything through that lens; the good, bad and ugly, we have to admit this and start here if we are ever going truly understand others. Are we honest with ourselves about our views? About our assumptions of others?

Do we allow them to be challenged, and are they based on Biblical truth. Because, and if you remember nothing, remember this: We are about winning people to Jesus. We are not to be about winning the argument of ideas.

If we make it our aim to win that fight, and lose the person, we have actually lost. Because what we discover this morning is that Jesus always cares far more about the human being in front of Him, than He does about ideas and opinions.

Every one of us has prejudices, assumptions, and perspectives of others that will be either helpful or harmful as it relates to our spiritual growth.

The Biblical view of justice, mercy and the love of God means, at least in part: Learning to see everyone and every situation as Jesus would.

Eugene Peterson, in The Message translation of the Bible puts 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 this way:

**-2 Corinthians 5: 16b-17a (MSG)**

"...we do not evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don't look at Him that way anymore, now we look inside..."

It is right here, in this spot, where we are called to start and I've come to this text in John 4, where many of you will be familiar with, but I don't want to assume.

I want us to look at this woman at the well encounter from the three perspectives found. I want talk about how Jesus felt about the Law and justice, in order that we can ask ourselves if we are headed in the right direction as we grow in Christ.

### **The Story:**

Here in John, we find Jesus and the disciples headed back up north. Having left Judea for Galilee, they wander through Samaria, a place where no good Jew would go.

The reality of the times said that these Samaritans were considered, 'half-breeds', and a defiled people. They had intermarried with the non-Jews around them after the Kingdom of Israel (their ancestors) went into exile in Babylon.

Over time they were seen as worse than Gentiles and were to be avoided at all cost, in order to remain pure and clean according to the Law.

Kind of bizarre if it weren't for the fact that nothing has really changed in these past 2,000 years.

Every culture, race, and ethnic group, knowingly or not, has a group of "the other", which they were all brought up to look down upon.

Unless we make a conscious decision to NOT think that way, we will all at some level remain prejudice. We are after all, human beings.

If you think you aren't prejudiced, ask yourself this: How angry do I get when I hear prejudiced people? How quickly do I want them to shut up, go home and never be heard or seen again?

That is being prejudiced -it just happens to be your own view. It just happens to be prejudice against prejudice people. I am not arguing in circles, rather simple trying to acknowledge how our culture is at the present time.

Perspective! Let's be honest with ourselves and the problems we face, because Jesus faced them as well and is about to take great risks by even talking to this woman.

Why? She is ethnically unclean:

**-John 4:5-7 (ESV)**

"So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

Here He is, in the heat of the mid-day sun and He asks for a drink. Makes perfect sense, right? We're by the well, here is some water, and I'm thirsty.

He makes Himself vulnerable before a woman who is coming to the well in the middle of the day, all alone to gather water.

She is there when no other ladies are, and there are reasons for that. You see, gathering water in those days happened in the early morning hours or later evening hours.

Things weren't so hot and dusty at those times. But you never went in the middle of the day, unless of course, you had no choice.

Unless you are a social outcast in your own village. Jesus takes a risk to move beyond the established ethnic and social barriers of the day and steps into her world.

In this I see, and I hope you do to, is His humanity, His world-view once again. Let's think about it.

One's worldview is formed in large part by one's upbringing, yes? If that's so, let's think about Jesus' mom, Mary. Real people, in real time, dealing with real issues in first century Palestine.

She was unmarried, a teen, and pregnant. A social outcast, carrying the savior of the world. I am certain, that while she was carrying Him in her belly, she too had to endure that same lonely walk at odd times of the day, to the well in Nazareth.

Even after Jesus was born and was growing, the questions and snickers still lingered. He would see how they treated His mom. All those rumors and the gossip that kept going around about His mom and Dad's less than stellar character.

Do you think that kind of treatment of His Mom settled into His heart and mind as He grew? Do you think that perhaps that helped frame out His world view? I am certain of it.

I know, He is God...but don't forget, He was Mary's boy, and He saw and heard things about His mom that no boy should have to hear. He saw the pain and hurt in her eyes because of how they treated her.

I am convinced that in the midst of being Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the man, understood the heart of God and remembering His mom, He saw the same kind of brokenness and pain in this woman as she walked toward Him that day at the well. What is her story?

He knew His mother's pain and understood His Father's heart, and He empathized with this woman.

The love of God and the true justice of God is always heart and head. Jesus is looking to get beyond opinion and feeling, and in the request for water, we actually see her brokenness.

For she too brings a certain perspective to the conversation as she challenges Jesus:

**-John 4:9b (ESV)**

"How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)"

It implies a couple of things. First, That Jesus must be up to no good, and might want more than water. Second, there must be something wrong with Him, because even her own people won't have anything to do with her.

Yet, here is this Jewish carpenter wanting some water. That leads to an incredible dialogue between the two of rabbit-hole questions.

On the surface they seem good, but Jesus is never just about the surface stuff, He wants her to open up within her own



assumptions in order that she see herself and her need:

**-John 4:10-12 (ESV)**

"Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."

We see here that she is not quite there yet, as she takes off down another rabbit hole about ownership of the well. We move from the ethnic issue to the religious issue.

Who really is God's chosen? Jacob gave us this well, we own it, not you Jews? Are you greater than Jacob?

Jesus refuses to take the bait, as He continually re-directs her. This is important to remember, all of us. Because we tend to get into this habit when the Lord gets a little closer to us than we want.

Challenging us to look at ourselves and the things perhaps we need to fix and lay

before Him. We are always good at finding someone else who is worse, or believes differently and say: "Hey, at least I'm not like them, right?"

He challenges her to re-think how she thinks:

**-John 4:13-15 (ESV)**

"Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

Now, all of a sudden, she is the one who wants water! Here is where it turns onto the road Jesus has wanted her to be on the entire time.

Jesus makes the request that gets to the heart of the matter.

**-John 4:16 (ESV)**

"Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

He tears down the social barrier here in His request and her response gets to the

"why" she is at the well in the middle of the day. She is a social outcast who now tries to avoid the very painful direction this conversation has turned:

**-John 4:17a (ESV)**

"The woman answered him, "I have no husband."

Jesus lets her know that He already knows all that. Yet here He is, still talking with her. It's a beautiful thing really.

Jesus wants her to see her need, that He is walking along with her on her journey, until she can begin to see it. It about people, not position and opinions.

**-John 4:17-20 (ESV)**

"Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

"Look, I don't want to talk about that? Who's the prophet? Who has picked the right place to worship. We call that deflection, and I see it all the time

when we get just a bit too close to a problem.

We get all theologically egg-headed, or begin to make excuses about how someone else is worse, or well, you pick it. Point being, is we all tend toward this if we aren't careful.

Jesus is getting to the heart of the matter, which is her heart before God. He wants restoration and healing, not another Pharisee.

Let's just admit here this morning that self-reflection is not fun! We need to admit that this line of questioning or preaching for that matter, unsettles us at times.

I have to remind myself of this all the time. Because, if we want to grow in Christ as well as in healthy and good relationships with one another, 15 minutes here in church working our way around superficial questions and trite responses won't ever get us there.

It is also true, as is the case with this woman, that it is too painful to go there. That is why it is critical that we have one another, because we need one another.

Genuine Christian friendship and fellowship is essential, and one of the

prime reasons why we look to grow beyond these walls and into mid-week groups.

Now, I wonder too, (and this is just me), if in our perspective we may not be missing some of this story. What do I mean?

Well, my first assumption is that she is simply a woman who couldn't keep a husband, or perhaps someone who just jumped from relationship to relationship.

Again, my assumptions and perspective along with my apologies. Because they are not always right and are based on a particular world view.

WHAT IF- and her culture would have functioned this way, she was actually used and cast off by these men. There are always two sides to every story.

She had no rights in this society, so it was re-marry; or turn to prostitution to survive, most especially if she had no family to depend on.

That turns things on its ear just a bit doesn't it. Again, perspective is everything. Remember, this is just my speculation, don't build a theology around it.

However, we will never get to this kind of justice, mercy and love if we don't

first challenge ourselves in light of who Jesus is and what He wants to do in our lives.

We also need to learn to look beyond what we "perceive" to be the obvious, and remember that every human being has a story to tell.

Just as she is beginning to see that Jesus is more than a guy looking for water, he is a Prophet, the boys come back from their trip to the local subway for lunch and don't like what they see.

**-John 4:27 (ESV)**

"Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"

Peterson puts it this way:

"Just then His disciples came back. They were shocked. They couldn't believe He was talking with that kind of a woman. No one said what they were thinking, but their faces showed it."

Let's do our best to never get to that place. They knew nothing except she was a woman, a Samaritan woman at the well in the middle of the day. She was up to no

good, and her reputation was probably less than stellar.

Yet, as we close, there was only one person there whose reputation would suffer because of this encounter. Jesus! He initiated the whole thing, and it is very clear He doesn't care one bit about what others think.

He is winning an Image Bearer, first - opinions and perspectives will come after.

So, when we go about our day to day lives, how are we doing? Do our words and actions line up? Are they like Jesus, our master?

Outside of these doors we are called to the ministry of reconciliation. This encounter with Jesus teaches us at least one thing today:

That this ministry of reconciliation is risky from the world's perspective, but has great reward from Heavenly one.

Let's keep our focus on Jesus and how He did things, and everything else will fall into place.

