

The Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

John 4:5-42

Jesus was passing through Samaritan territory when he decided to rest by a well. He was tired from his journey and feeling thirsty. It was noon ... the hottest part of the day. No sooner had Jesus settled down to rest than the Samaritan woman approached to draw water from the well.

The story goes like this: Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well and asks her for a drink of water. They talk. In the process, she confesses to have been married five times and is presently living out of wedlock. He confronts her sinfulness. She recognizes him as the Christ, repents, and rushes off to tell others, shouting, "Come, see a man who told me everything I have ever done!"

That's the literal understanding of the text. John is sharing so much more with us in this story.

1. We notice that Jesus is now allow customs ... traditions define the completion of mission from the Father.
2. Once Jesus reaches Jacob's well in Sychar, a Samaritan Town, he sends his disciples into town to get food.
3. The entire opening scene is about going beyond boundaries that have been established.
4. Jesus' conversation with the woman also pushed the boundaries. A rabbi talking with not just a woman in public, but a Samaritan and then asking her to draw water for him in her vessel.
5. Jesus sharing the 'Good News' with someone who was viewed as unworthy by her community.
6. Jesus sending the woman back to town and from that point she is a new person with a new mission.

7. What was the real reason why Jesus had to stop in Samaria and what are the implications for us today. There is a timeless message in that passage.

Our Past Does Not Define Us nor Does it Define our Future

- Our current life is the result of our past actions, choices and experiences.
- Our future is determined by how we act in the present moment.
- Our past does not have to define our future.

All of us have made our share of mistakes. We have also experienced bad situations that were not necessarily our fault. Feelings of regret, guilt, resentment, and anger can weigh us down and affect our outlook on life. We find ... that at times ... we are living in the past even though we know that we can't change the past.

Our past only has a grip on our present because we allowed it. We have to learn to forgive ourselves and also forgive those who have caused us hurt.

No matter what has happened in our past, we can choose how much power over our current life we want to afford it.

Despite the severity or magnitude of our past mistakes, we can choose to look at them differently. Instead of viewing them with constant regret, we can see them as valuable lessons that we can use today.

We can make the conscious choice to forgive ourselves for our past mistakes and constantly remind ourselves that we have evolved, matured, and learned from our errors. Remember that our old baggage is only bogging us down and preventing us from moving forward in life. Constantly replaying a negative event in our head only increases our suffering.

Nobody is perfect and there are probably thousands who have made similar mistakes in their lives.

What if we chose to look at our past differently? How does that relate to our current life?

Jesus made a point to stop in a Samaritan town ... talk to a Samaritan woman knowing her life story ... and loving her enough to share the 'Good News' with her with no regard for her past. What did Jesus see in the Samaritan woman that others did not see?

Our past does not define our future. The choices and actions we make *today* will define who we will become. We can make the decision to learn from our past and apply it in the present so that we can live the life that we were meant to live.

Our Gospel story narrates the dramatic transformation of the Samaritan woman. She begins the story as an outsider and becomes a witness; from her status as a beginner in faith she becomes a disciple sent by Jesus to testify on his behalf. Jesus encounters and welcomes many into the household of faith ... even the least likely and maybe, even, you and me.

Have a blessed week. Amen.