**Jesus and the Samaritan Woman**

**The Word**

Read together John 4:1-26

**The Big Idea**

Jesus crosses cultural, gender, and moral barriers to encounter the woman at the well. He confronts her with the deep thirsts and aches within her soul but also offers her the grace, meaning, and purpose she has been longing for.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. We focused a lot on the boundaries Jesus crossed to encounter this woman (racial, cultural, moral, etc.). Take a moment to assess your own willingness to cross boundaries and engage with those who are very different than you. What specific issues, types of people, or experiences come to mind?

2. Consider Jeremiah 2:13: “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that can’t hold water.” After five failed marriages, we might say that the Samaritan woman went to men as her “earthly cisterns” hoping they would bring her soul satisfaction. What are one or two “earthly cisterns” you tend to go to hoping they will satisfy the thirsts of your soul instead of God himself?

3. What would you say to a faithful church-goer who says, “Honestly, I’ve tried Jesus, and he hasn’t delivered on his promise to satisfy the thirsts of my soul. I’ve pursued him, but I remain insecure, unsatisfied, and desperate for something more in my life.”

4. On Sunday we didn’t discuss the conversation Jesus and the Samaritan woman had about worship in v. 19-24. What do you think Jesus means when he talks about worshipping God “in spirit and in truth?” What does that look like practically speaking?

**Digging Deeper**

In John 6:25-40, Jesus has a conversation with the people about bread that has some of the same themes as his conversation with the Samaritan woman about water. As you consider that passage, what does it add to this theme of Jesus as the satisfaction of our longings?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Seeing this encounter through Jesus’ eyes:

 A. He was willing to cross massive historical and cultural boundaries

1. The Jews and Samaritans were historical enemies. After most of the Jews were carried off into exile, some were left behind who then intermarried with foreign people. When the pure-blood Jews returned from exile, this created great tension and conflict between the two groups (See Luke 9:51-54 for how the disciples felt about Samaritans)

2. Samaritans are half Jew-half Gentile

3. The Samaritans were considered ritually impure and Jews would never drink from the same vessels (see v. -)

 B. Jesus was willing to cross a gender boundary

 1. The disciples are shocked upon seeing Jesus speak with a woman (v. 27)

2. A famous 1st century rabbi put it this way: “one should not talk with a woman on the street, not even with his own wife, and certainly not with somebody else’s wife, because of the gossip of men. . . It is forbidden to give a woman any greeting.”

 C. Jesus was willing to cross a moral boundary

1. This woman was a notorious sinner (5 failed marriages). Her coming alone in the heat of the day reveals her moral status in the community

2. Jesus is a righteous rabbi

D. Despite these barriers, Jesus sees her as “Harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.” She is an image bearer to be loved and restored.

E. But notice that, in crossing these boundaries, Jesus isn’t wishy washy, or compromising in his convictions, or skirting around tough issues (see v. 17-18 and v. 22)

F. Are we, like Jesus, willing to cross boundaries in order to engage others with grace and truth?

 1. 1 John 2:5-6 calls us to walk as Jesus walked

2. 2 Corinthians 5:16 calls us to no longer view people, “according to the flesh” (kata sarka)

3. Consider the categories/boundaries Jesus might call us to cross in order to love and engage others with grace and truth (political, racial, sexual orientation, socio-economic, moral, etc.)

II. Seeing this encounter through her eyes

A. The heart of this conversation centers around water and thirst. It begins with her encountering a man who is thirsty for water, but it ends by the tables being turned and her realizing just how thirsty her soul is

B. Her initial experience is probably one of fear and perceived threat (a man who doesn’t withdraw from the well as would be culturally appropriate)

C. It then moves to intrigue and curiosity as he starts talking about a living water that can satisfy forever

D. It then moves to conviction and shame as she learns that, in fact, this man knows everything about her, including her deepest place of brokenness.

E. It then moves to joy and freedom as she discovers the grace and love Jesus has for her

F. She ends the conversation by leaving behind her water jar and becoming a spring of water herself, overflowing with joy to her village who then come to believe in Jesus on account of her testimony. Her status in the community is radically changed.

G. The typology of wells in the Bible

 1. Wells are where future spouses meet (see Gen 24, Gen 29, and Ex 2)

2. This woman has been so desperate for a man, and in Jesus she has found the man she’s been searching for her whole life who alone can give her the security, meaning, and acceptance she longs for.