

Rev. Peggy's Sermon Notes for March 15, 2020

The Woman at the Well - John 4:1-42

True Story: A lady named Susan was living on the streets of New Orleans. She was addicted to cocaine and her life was in a downward spiral. But, she was introduced to Jesus Christ by a friend and today her life is different. She is now off drugs, working, and attending church.

Recently, she asked her Sunday School class for some financial help and prayers – not for her, but for a mission project she was doing in New Orleans. She didn't want money for her trip expenses to and from New Orleans, but for items in gift bags that she wanted to present the girls working in some of the New Orleans strip clubs. Inside those gift bags could be things like a bottle of bubble bath, a sleep mask, and other thoughtful gifts she thought these girls would appreciate. Inside each gift bag would be a personal note from Susan telling her personal story of how she once was where they are and how Christ had touched her life and healed her of her destructive tendencies. She passed on these bags, not in judgment, but in the pure message of God's love. Susan is a true picture of God's grace and love received and God's grace and love passed on to others.

Our story in John 4 is about a woman who also experienced God's love and grace in Christ and went on to share her story with the townspeople who had formerly avoided and rejected her.

I hope you'll read her story and that you'll learn things beyond what I mention:

Such as:

1. Jesus (a Jew) crossing racial, cultural, and religious barriers to converse with a Samaritan (and a woman at that). (Jews and Samaritans hated one another.)

2. This is a woman shunned by her neighbors, but she became a person who pointed others to Jesus.
3. We may not approve of another or agree with another, but must we hate? Jesus calls us to love one another – to do the right thing for one another even when we don't feel like it. (Jesus will change our “want-er.”)
4. Maybe we are just blinded by our own prejudices toward people like the Samaritan woman of the well, but we are also blinded to the fact that we are the Samaritan woman – we, too, have fallen short of the grace of God and God's grace is extended to us, as well.

I also read about another way to look at this story which I'd like to share with you. Maybe if we look at this story differently, instead of head-on, we might see other things:

For example:

1. There is a Samaria in all of our lives. Maybe Samaria is not a place, but an experience – the experience of a malignancy attacking our body, the death of a spouse, dealing with a child addicted to drugs, coping with financial crisis, the loss of a job, etc. We don't want to go through this experience, just like the Jews didn't want to go through Samaria. Sometimes we don't have a choice – things happen.
2. There is a ministry for us in our Samaria. The Samaritan woman discovered it there at Jacob's well in her encounter with Jesus. Here was a woman who was scorned and humiliated so badly by the women and town folks that she went to the well when she thought no one would be there. She found more than physical water to drink. She found the living water – redemption in Jesus Christ. She experienced God's unconditional love and acceptance and forgiveness through Jesus that day. She had a ministry in Samaria. She went and told the townspeople about this man who changed her life. She shared her story, her experience, and God used her to

touch lives. *You and I have a ministry for Jesus even in what we're going through. God will use our experiences to touch others for His glory.*

3. On our spiritual journey, our Samaria is for passing through - NOT to stay in. God will give us grace and strength to go through our Samaria experience. Sometimes when we go through difficult things, we tend to blame ourselves or God. We need to stop the blaming, learn to trust God and let God give us strength and grace to go through it. May God use my story, your story, and our experiences to bless others.

May We Remember: God will bring good out of whatever we are going through - even though we may not see it for a while or understand it fully.

I hope you'll read the story in John 4 and share with me your thoughts.

Blessings,
Rev. Peggy