

SYNOPSIS

It's one thing to Grace Bomb people who are "like us." But what about other people who we perhaps might even hold something against, for whatever reasons? Back in Jesus' day there was a great dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Samaritans, not unlike many of the racial, ethnic, or cultural divides that exist today. By looking at Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well, we see that all people are one faith step away from the Kingdom of God, and God shows no partiality in His offer of Grace, so neither should we. Jesus dismantles the walls between them, and informs us to have the same posture in removing any barriers of our bias in loving our neighbors today.

BIG IDEA

God shows no partiality in offering His grace, therefore neither should we.

KEY TEXTS

John 4:4-26
James 2:8-9

SERMON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

A story about hostility between people groups – or a judgmental spirit within yourself.

SLIDE 1: Graphic (or optional prop) – Assemble a premade wall or fence with five labeled planks to represent a barrier between the woman and Jesus. This wall hinders her step of faith towards Jesus. This may not be possible given your preaching context, but graphics are available. This is a visual aid upon which we see a barrier being dismantled by Jesus, enabling her to trust in Him.

The Barrier Prop/Graphic as a way to set the context of the Jew/Samaritan historical divide.

- **Racism** (it is helpful here to explain the origin of the Samaritans, and the bad blood between them and the Jews of Jesus' day: intermarriage with pagans in the OT, a counterfeit temple (later destroyed), Samaritans only held to the Pentateuch, and were considered "unclean")
 - Racial slur hurled at Jesus: "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" John 8:48
- **Sexism** - It was uncommon for a Rabbi to stop to talk to a woman
- **Hot Mess** - She had what would be considered a scandalous private life.
- **Religion** - The Jews considered the Samaritans counterfeit and unclean
- **Misunderstanding** - She was in the dark about Jesus' true identity

This cultural divide is helpful to have in mind when Jesus was doing ministry in Judea and then needed to head north:

SLIDE 2

And he had to pass through Samaria. 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. John 4:4-6 (ESV)

- Jews would typically add 3 days to a journey to avoid going through Samaria.
- But Jesus “had to go” – for His mission, not merely logistics.
- Noon – sixth hour since sunrise. Hottest part of the day.

A shocker enters the story:

SLIDE 3

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) John 4:7-9

- A woman in public, to have a conversation – countercultural for a Rabbi – contemporary Rabbis would feel like this was wasting time.
 - **(REMOVE SEXISM)** - as this was no barrier for Jesus to not love her.
- He asks a favor that involves using her vessels (which again cuts against cultural taboos)
 - Catching spiritual germs / becoming unclean
 - **(REMOVE RACISM)** - as this was no barrier for Jesus to not love her.

SLIDE 4

SLIDE 5

So Jesus answers her to show her greatest need, and who supplies it:

SLIDE 6

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.” John 4:10

Don't miss the power in the simple object lesson at a time without indoor plumbing:

- Water – villages need it to live, and it is refreshing in the desert
- Living Water – need it to live, and it is refreshing for the soul

We see her misunderstanding Jesus' object lesson:

SLIDE 7

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." John 4:11-12

- Jacob is Israel, the last patriarch who is the progenitor of the 12 tribes.

The question is, "Are you greater than the top dog patriarch?" Jesus answers YES:

SLIDE 8

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." John 4:13-14

- Jacob cannot impart living water, eternal life. A lineage, a heritage, a last name, cannot.
 - **Only Jesus can meet our greatest need – and His gift culminates in eternal life.**
 - Has the idea of running water, a fresh underground spring
 - An endless supply of life – a balm for the parched soul – now and forever
- The problem with going to other wells in search of life is that they leave you thirsty.
 - **Success, security, relationships** – Jesus heals the soul

Although still misunderstanding, she is intrigued:

SLIDE 9

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." John 4:15

What happens next seems odd, but her spiritual eyes need to be opened:

SLIDE 10

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." 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." John 4:16-18

SLIDE 11

- Only someone with God-given revelation could have known these facts.
- Engaging her would have been culturally shameful
- **(REMOVE HOT MESS)** - *as this was no barrier for Jesus to not love her.*

(Not changing subject) She goes after the elephant in the room:

SLIDE 12

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." John 4:19-20

- We disagree about our religions, I am intrigued, but stuck – help me!
- What's the right place of worship – still a church folk problem
 - People have deeply entrenched convictions about their places of worship.
 - Grace / getting married in a church building.

So Jesus is going to settle the matter:

SLIDE 13

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews." John 4:21-22

- 1 - Salvation is from the Jews – as the Creator's specific revelation was delivered to them.
- 2 - Jesus fulfills the entire OT law and prophets

Then Jesus is going to drop the mic:

SLIDE 14

"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:23-24

SLIDE 15

- The place of worship for both parties is now obsolete: there is now a new place of worship – not this mountain or that temple but THE HEART.
- **(REMOVE RELIGION)** - *as this was no barrier for Jesus to not love her.*

And as far as we will get today, we see her open and ready to have the last barrier removed:

SLIDE 16

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." John 4:25-26

SLIDE 17

- Jesus speaks without metaphor to clear up any *misunderstanding* of who He is.
- **(REMOVE MISUNDERSTANDING) - as this was no barrier for Jesus to not love her.**
- Now she is able to step into faith, and find the true love of her life, and water that never runs out the story concludes as she runs, the town comes, many believe, Jesus stays two more days – and there is a great harvest of souls for heaven from the “outcasts.”

Personal Application for those feeling on the “outside.” Maybe you could relate to her?

- Hot mess / Misunderstanding / Wrong Religion / Etc.
- You might be standing behind some barriers, but Jesus is reaching through inviting you to take a step of faith!

Grace Bombing Application:

Every human being is one step of faith away from the Kingdom of God. One step away from becoming a brother or sister in Christ, which is a bond that runs deeper than blood.

- We have no basis to withhold Grace to any “outsider.”
- James clearly reminds us this:

SLIDE 18

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. James 2:8-9

Closing Charge: Let’s be like Jesus on this and not allow favoritism or partiality to block anything as we extend small tastes of His grace to people. It might even be a great idea this week to pray over and seek out Grace Bombing a neighbor because they are not “like us.”