

SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Sermon Title: Where the Spirit Leads
Sermon Series: Refresh: Sharing Christ in Everyday Conversations
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Bryan Eckelmann
John 4:16-26
October 8, 2023

Description:

Jesus uses multiple images, questions and invitations to offer the woman a spiritual conversation. There is no 'spiritual conversation' formula or script (bad news for some of us!); rather, we count on love for the person to urge us and the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Icebreaker (for groups):

What are some of your favorite topics of conversation, the topics that really energize you? Or, what are some of your least favorite topics of conversation, topics you'd like to avoid if possible?

Reflections on the Sermon:

What point(s) did Bryan make about spiritual conversations that could be useful to you?

Scripture Passage: John 4:16–26 (NIV)

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Who: Jesus, Samaritan woman, John is writer, her husbands, her ancestors, Jews, the Father, Samaritans, true worshipers, the Spirit, Messiah, God

What: Taking water from the well, Jesus speaking with woman, five husbands, Jesus is a prophet, where one should worship, worship in spirit and in truth, Jesus tells her He is Messiah, the Father seeks true worshipers

When: Gospel written in about 90 A.D., takes place after Jesus had spoke with Nicodemus.

Where: Jacob's well in Samaria, worshipers will worship everywhere

Why: This was written to show the salvation is not only for the Jews and to declare Jesus is Messiah. To declare that true worship is done in the Spirit and in truth. Both Jesus and the woman were seeking water, not the same water.

How: John uses Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman to reveal these truths

Reviewing the Scripture:

1. In verse 15, what did the Samaritan woman want from Jesus, and why? In verse 16, what was Jesus' response to her request?
2. What is the topic of conversation in verses 16-19? What does she discover about Jesus in these four verses?
3. What is the topic of conversation in verses 20-24? What does the woman learn from Jesus in these five verses?
4. In verse 20, why do you think the woman changed the conversation to focus on a religious controversy?
5. In verses 25-26, what is the topic of conversation? What does the woman look forward to, and why? What does Jesus reveal to her at the end of the conversation?
6. At that time, what were the Jews looking forward to in a Messiah, and why? (See Luke 24:21) Compare the Jews' hope with the woman's hope in terms of their desires of the heart.

Going Deeper:

1. When the woman asked for His living water in verse 15, why did Jesus immediately change the subject to her husband(s) rather than simply reveal that He was Messiah? How do you think it would have gone if He had revealed this at that time? What do you learn from this?

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2. What need had the woman revealed upon entering this part of her encounter with Jesus? What needs or issues does she bring up during each topic of conversation? Is there a spiritual progression of her needs and Issues which you can identify?

3. What had Jesus revealed about Himself upon entering this part of His encounter with the woman? What truths does Jesus reveal during each topic of conversation? Is there a spiritual progression of truths which you can identify?

4. How does the spiritual aspect of the conversation increase, if it does at all, as it progresses?

5. Given that Samaritans did not associate with Jews, how was Jesus taking a risk by being in the “wrong place?” How might you be avoiding certain places or people because of how it might look to others?

6. What do you think Jesus meant when He said that true worshipers must worship in “Spirit and truth?”

7. How does Jesus’ conversation at the well serve as a model to help you envision future spiritual conversations with seeking friends?

Prayer:

Thank You, Father, for Your Holy Spirit, who is Christ in us and Christ for us. We trust You to prepare and soften the hearts of those whom You want to receive Your truths through us. We pray that Your Spirit would also prepare our hearts and minds. May He lead us naturally into our next spiritual conversation, which can happen in an unexpected place at an unexpected hour. Guide us, and give us Your words so our conversations are genuine and focused on bringing Your truths to a hurting and needy world. To this end, may we worship You in Spirit and in truth. For it is in Your name we pray, Amen!