

Sermon Series: The Bad Samaritan**Part I – “If You Only Knew”****February 04, 2018****John 4:1-15**

Alright, we are in the gospel of John this morning. I'm starting what I thought was a three-part sermon series, but based upon how long I preached this morning it might end up being a four-part sermon series on John chapter 4. It's entitled the "Bad Samaritan." Now, I want to set the scene. We know that at one time, Israel the nation wanted to be ruled by a king. God did not want Israel to have a king, and earthly human ruler – they had him, he was their heavenly ruler, he was the King of Kings, Lord of Lords. But they wanted to be just like the other nations. They wanted to follow this world and its traditions, and so they said, "We want a king! We want a king!" and God said, "No you don't. You honestly don't." "Yes we do, yes we do!" "No, you don't, you really don't." "Yes we do!" "I'm telling you, you really don't. this is what's going to happen to you if you get a king." And he lists them all off, all the ways in which a king is going to abuse them. "That's OK, we want to be just like the world." He says, "Fine. You can have your king." So they have King Sol, who was exactly like God said he was going to be like. Then we had King David, and we had Solomon, David and Bathsheba's youngest son. Solomon ended up having 700 wives and 300 concubines. (Delano's just shaking his head).



Source: <https://ecospective.wordpress.com/2016/04/05/american-theocracy-a-lesson-for-the-religious-right/>

You know what the penalty of 700 wives is? 700 mother-in-laws. No, just kidding, I love my mother-in-law.

God specifically says in Scripture, "Do not marry outside the faith." And there's a reason for that. He knows what happens. I'm willing to be you know what happens, because you probably know someone who's done this: married someone who wasn't a Christian. They were of a different faith. And what ends up happening is this person who was a Christian ends up watering down their faith so much that you can't even recognize it because they want to include their spouse and their spouse's beliefs. Often times that's what happens. That's exactly what happened with Solomon. He allowed these 700 wives, which, many of them were strategic, right? He married the princess of such-and-such nation, because now if you were one of the family you were less likely to go to war with each other. It wasn't that he fell in love with 700 women, a lot of them were political and strategic, but nonetheless, they were not Jews. And would you know, lo and behold, God was right! Slowly, these wives began to influence Solomon, up to the point where Solomon allowed them to place idols, pagan idols, right in the temple. Now, I don't expect everybody to learn all ten commandments. Some people do, it's great if you do. But we should at least all know number one: **You shall have no other gods but me.** That doesn't always mean just another religious figure. Some people make money their god, or power, or influence, or sex, or drugs, or rock n' roll. Lots of people treat things as gods, but God says, "You are to have no other gods but me." And there is Solomon letting other pagan idols into the temple. The penalty for that is God takes the united kingdom of Israel away from him, and he divides it in two: you have the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

Now there are two competing kingdoms. They each have their own king. Then in 722 BC, King Shalmanezar V of Assyria invades the northern kingdom of Israel and conquers it, including its capital, Samaria. Then, to keep the peace – you don't want all these conquered peoples banning together and revolting, revolutionizing, rebelling! That's the R word I'm looking for! You don't want them rebelling, so what you do is you flood the place with people who are loyal to you. That's what Shalmanezar does. He moves in people from Babylon, people from Cuthah, people from Ava, people from Hamath, and people from Sepharvaim, and he floods the northern kingdom of Israel with all these pagans – people who do not follow Yaweh, people who are not of the Jewish faith. God was very clear, you're not supposed to intermarry with people of another faith. He said very clearly in Deuteronomy 7, do not do this.

Well, the people living in the north, in Samaria, did exactly that – just what Solomon did. They intermarried with non-believers and wouldn't you know it, all of a sudden the Jewish religion became this mix of idolatry and paganism and Judaism. You wouldn't recognize it as Judaism. So, they intermarried with people that had conquered their area, and they began worshiping in this mixture of Judaism and idolatrous paganism. Because of that, they were considered half-breeds by Jews. They were not liked at all. They were universally despised. If you were from Samaria, if you were a Samaritan, you were hated! It would be the equivalent to being a Nazi in Israel today. They hated the Samaritans because they had abandoned their faith, denied the Lord, and come up with some sort of idolatrous faith. Which is why, in the Good Samaritan story – well, let's just read that. I want to read that for you. Luke chapter 10. It's a story many people are familiar with. Jesus is asked by some Jews who are sitting nearby, "Who is my neighbor?" because he tells them you are supposed to love your neighbor as yourself. So the guy says, "OK, who is my neighbor?" And in Luke 10 verse 30, Jesus replies, as he often does, with a story. Once upon a time...

"A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. By chance, a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side... passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. Then, a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothes his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'" ¹

So, the Samaritan saw this man lying in the road, he had compassion, and he went to assist him.



Source: <http://myocn.net/parable-good-samaritan-luke-10-25-37/>

Jesus asks, "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" The man replied...

Now, one of the things you can't pick up – it's kind of like when you get an email, right? It's very dangerous to do serious dialogue through email, because what can you not tell about email? You can't tell tone, you can't tell humor, you can't tell sarcasm. So there are a lot of things in human speech and in human expression that you can pick up on that you can't in the written word. Anybody who knows my cheeky sense of humor knows that it's very dangerous to dialogue with me on email. So, when you just read the words on the page, Jesus asked which man of these three was a neighbor, all it says is:

The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." ²

¹ Luke 10:30-35

² Luke 10:36-37

But certainly, since the hero was a Samaritan, it probably came out more like: [SIGH] “The man who showed him mercy, I guess.”

They did not want the Samaritan to be the hero! Samaritans were despised! They were half-breeds! They weren’t true followers of the faith. Well, from this story, the man was forever known for all time as the Good Samaritan. And when you go over to help someone on the side of the road, that’s what people label you as. “Oh, you are such a good Samaritan!” OK? Well, can you see now why the story of a Samaritan being a hero is far more radical than you might have thought at first? The hated, despised guy was the hero in this story. That’s why Jesus told this particular story that way: to make the point that you can’t judge a book by its cover, or as we said a few weeks ago, you can’t judge someone by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. That’s what Jesus was trying to teach them.

This kind of information is why we have Experiencing God! on Wednesday nights at 6:30. So, if anybody ever wants to come and join us at Experiencing God!, 6:30 on Wednesday nights, you’re more than welcome. (Just a little advertisement there.)



So, over the next three weeks, we’re going to go over a story in chapter 4 of the gospel of John, which I have entitled the “Bad Samaritan,” because if you know the story of the Good Samaritan a lot of people might categorize the person in this story as a bad Samaritan. It begins in verse 1. We’re going to take it piece by piece.

Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John (though Jesus himself didn’t baptize – his disciples did). So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. ³

Now, why would Jesus leave? Because he knew the Pharisees did not like the fact that Jesus’ disciples were making more believers than John. But it wasn’t a Jesus v. John thing. Don’t go there. Too many people, too many people even today think that we are in competition with all the other churches in Hartford. It’s like we’re all fighting over a piece of pie, right? That is not the case. In the metropolitan Hartford area, they call it, there is 1.1 million people. There are 200 churches in Hartford. That means that each church could have a membership of about 6,000, right? There’s plenty to go around. So, we’re not in competition with Center Church or the Baptist Church or the Catholic Church, and they’re not in competition with us. There’s plenty of people who need to learn about Jesus. So, it’s not about Jesus and John, it’s not about competition between churches. Nonetheless, he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

That’s another thing that jumped out at me at this story, because it speaks to the idea of martyrdom. Some people think there’s some sort of – you get some sort of medal for dying for your faith. That’s just stupid, OK? There’s no such thing as an official church sanctioned, Bible sanctioned, biblical sanctioned martyrdom. Now, that does not mean if you were captured by a terrorist organization and they put a scimitar to your throat and they said, “Will you deny Jesus?” I hope we would all say, “No, I will not.” Even though we know it will cost us our head and our life. That kind of martyrdom, yes. But we don’t – Christians shouldn’t go along looking for a fight. It’s not like in the middle of Nazi Germany in 1939 if you were a Jew, you didn’t put your yarmulke on and just march down the street, “Oh yeah? Well I’m a Jew, what are you going to do about it?” I’ll tell you what they’re going to do about it, they’re going to kill you! So, putting yourself in harm’s way because

³ John 4:1-3

you're a strong Christian is just foolish. Nobody's asking you to do that. Jesus doesn't want you to deny him if you find yourself in that circumstance, but you don't look to put yourself in that circumstance! Even Jesus didn't. He knew the Pharisees didn't want him healthy, so he left Judea and returned to Galilee. It's very similar to when the holy family took off for Egypt, right? Right after he was born, when the Magi said, "You better leave, Herod wants to kill your baby!" So, you've got to pick your battles. You've got to decide when you draw your line in the sand. You don't die on every hill. There's a time to die on the hill, but you don't die on every hill. Jesus died on one hill, once. And he was God, right? He could have won every battle he came up against!

He left Judea and returned to Galilee. Verse 4:

He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually, he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁴

Now, what interesting about here, the quickest way from Judea to Galilee is as the crow flies, straight. And most of the time, that's the journey you would take. You could go around to get to Galilee without going through Samaria, and sometimes people did that to avoid trouble. Jesus even says in Matthew 10 to his disciples, when his disciples are trying to bring the message of the gospel to Samaritans and they don't want to hear it, they come back and they're all ticked. "Jesus, you should rain down fire and brimstone and just take them out! They are not accepting this message!" And Jesus says, "Chill. If they don't want to hear it, wipe the dust off the soles of your feet and go around." Alright, so sometimes people did go around. Jesus did not go around this time. He went straight through as the crow flies. That is significant.

Now, it says in verse 6 that Jacob's well was there in Sychar and *Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well.* Jesus, tired from the... does that stick out at all? Jesus is God, right? Jesus gets tired? Yes, Jesus gets tired. You see, Jesus wanted to have a completely human experience, and there's a reason for that. Paul tells us in Philippians this way:

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. ⁵

Jesus was born as a human being, he wanted to have the fully human experience, that was the plan. Why? Why would Jesus want to have a fully human experience? There's a good illustration in a story I shared a couple – I don't know, maybe two or three years ago, maybe even longer, because it was back when Sheila was here – at a Christmas Eve service. It's a great story that really illustrates this point, and I want to share it with you. It goes like this:

There once was a man who did not believe in either the Virgin Birth of Christ, nor the spiritual meaning behind it, and was even skeptical about God. He and his family lived in a farm community. His wife was a devout believer and diligently raised their children in the faith. He sometimes gave her a hard time about her belief and mocked her religious observances. "It's all nonsense! Why would God lower himself and become a human like us? Such a ridiculous story!" he said.

Well, one snowy day, she and the children left for church while he stayed home. After they had departed, winds begin to grow strong and a snowstorm quickly turned into a blinding blizzard. The man sat down to relax before the fire for the evening, but then he heard a loud thump – something hitting against the window. He paused, and then heard another. He looked outside but couldn't see anything, so he ventured outside for a better view. In the field near his house, he saw the strangest thing: a flock of geese. They were apparently flying south, but had been caught in the snowstorm. The storm had become too blinding and violent for the geese to fly or find their way. Stranded on his farm with no food or shelter, they were unable to do more than flutter their wings and fly in aimless circles.

The man felt sorry for them. He wanted to help. He thought, "Hey, I have a barn, and a barn would be a great place for them. It's warm, it's safe – surely they could spend the night and wait out the storm in my barn." So he bundles up in all his warm weather clothes and he ventures outside and opens the door to the barn. He waits. He watches them, hoping that they would notice now these open doors and go into the barn and stay safe. They did not. They either did not notice the barn, or did not realize what it could mean

⁴ John 4:4-6

⁵ Philippians 2:6-7

for them. He moved closer to get their attention, but they just fluttered away out of fear. They man went back into the house, came back with some bread, broke it up and made little bread trails to the barn. Still, they did not catch on. He was starting to get frustrated. He went over and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they just panicked and scattered in every direction, except toward the barn. Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn where there was warmth and safety and shelter.

Totally frustrated, the man exclaimed, "Why don't they follow me?! Can't they see that this is the only place where they can survive the storm? How can I possibly get them into the one place where they can be saved?" He thought for a moment, and he realized they just wouldn't follow a human. He said to himself, "The only way I could possibly save them would be for me to become a goose. If only I could be one of them, then I could save them. They would follow me and I would lead them to safety."

At that moment, he stopped and considered what he had just said. His words reverberated in his mind: "If I could only become like one of them, then I could save them." Finally, at last, he understood God's heart toward mankind, and he fell on his knees in the snow and gave his life to Christ. "If only I could become like one of them. Then they would follow me, and I could save them."

John 8, verse 12:

*"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."*⁶

That's why Jesus became human, so he could show us the way. So, as a human, yes, Jesus got angry. He got sad. He got hungry. And he got tired, because he was having our human experience. Jesus walked our walk, lived our life, experienced what you all experience. He can identify the struggles in your life. When you have someone you love who is very ill, perhaps even dying or has died, he's been there. He's had friends die. He's had friends get ill. He understands. Do you think you're being persecuted or mocked? He understands. He has walked our walk.

So, he sits down next to the well, tired from the long walk about noontime. That's significant too, I don't want to go too quickly past that. Around noontime. You see, this is a desert climate. Water is very important, and most people went to the well two times a day: first in the morning to get all their water that they needed to wash or cook or clean; and last thing at night to get them through the evening. So, that was like the rush hour, morning and evening. That's when people went to the well. If you showed up at noontime, there was most likely a reason, and the reason usually was you didn't want to be seen. The people who went to the well at noontime were like, the lepers, who had been ostracized from the community; tax collectors, who were viciously hated; prostitutes. People who did not want to be seen went to the well at noontime. So, Jesus was at the well at noontime.

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water.

The Samaritan woman comes at noontime.

*And Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"*⁷



Source: <https://themasterstable.wordpress.com/2008/04/03/jesus-example-the-samaritan-woman/>

⁶ John 8:12

⁷ John 4:7-9

That's right! No self-respecting Jew would have anything to do with a Samaritan woman, let alone talk to her – especially a Samaritan woman who came to the well at noontime! You knew bells were going off. Something's up, why is she here now?

She's shocked. In verse 10, she says, *"Why are you asking me for a drink?"* Jesus replies in verse 10 *"if you only knew..."*

*"If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."*⁸

She doesn't quite get it yet.

"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

She's sold.

*"Please sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."*⁹

Oftentimes, I know this happens to me but perhaps you can identify with it too, oftentimes we can't see the forest for the trees. And that's why Bible study is so important. You learn so much when you study God's word, stuff you never knew about. For instance, I never knew when I was younger all that much about jaguars (except that they can't beat the Patriots), or anacondas, or large insects, or the Amazonian rain forest. Until I got to see as a youngster Marlin Perkins and Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom! Anybody remember Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom?

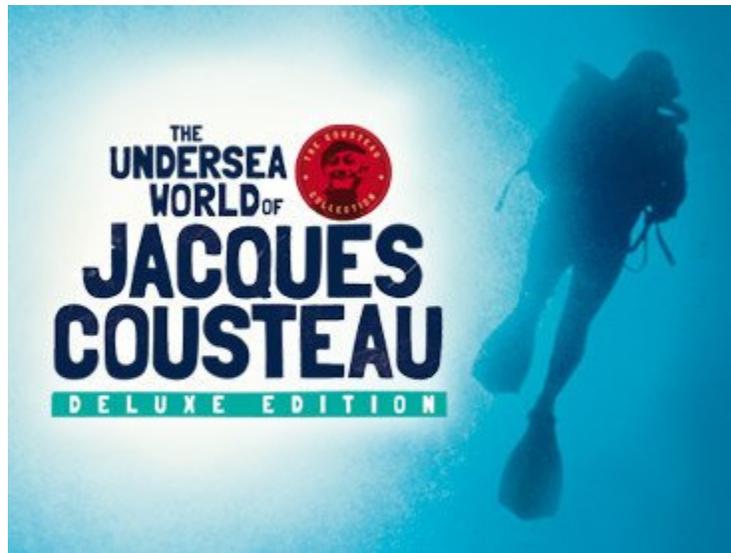


Source: <https://unexplainedufos.blogspot.com/2013/01/mutual-of-omahas-wild-kingdom-50-years.html>

Yeah! There are some old folks here! Today, all you young folks, you get whole channels – you've got the National Geographic channel, you've got the Animal Planet channel, you've got Discovery – all kinds of animal stuff! But when we were growing up, this was it! Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. I learned so much about animals and wildlife as I did watching Marlin Perkins. Same thing with the ocean, the ocean covers $\frac{3}{4}$ of the earth's surface, yet we know very little about it. So how do I learn about things in the ocean? The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau, and his ship the Calypso!

⁸ John 4:10

⁹ John 4:11-15



Source: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Undersea-World-Jacques-Cousteau-Deluxe/dp/B0087365EM>

(Bringing back some memories for some old folks here!) Well, similarly, Jacques Cousteau taught me about the ocean, Marlin Perkins taught me about the animal kingdom, similarly there are layers to this onion (the Bible), and the deeper you go the more amazing things you will discover. That's why we have Experiencing God! at 6:30 on Wednesday nights! You're all welcome!

The Samaritan woman here cannot see the forest for the trees either. All she sees is some guy offering him some water from a deep well, and he doesn't have a rope or a bucket! And what's all this about "living water?" You see, she just met Jesus, and there's a big difference between knowing Jesus and **knowing** Jesus, right? You ever seen those segments on late night comedy shows or whatever when they go on the street, the "man on the street interviews," and they hold up these pictures of famous politicians and they try to have them – "Can you identify who this is?"



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjI3jzmVYA>

And when they hold up the picture of the current Vice President, whoever it was at the time, and they're all like, "Uhhh..." They can't identify Richard Nixon or Abraham Lincoln or John Kennedy, they have no clue. And they all vote! Anyway, if you can identify somebody's face on a picture, great, good for you, you know who that is. That does not mean that you **know** them. You could pick them out of a lineup. We can all pick Jesus out of a lineup, we've got a good idea of what he looks like. But do we **know** Jesus? How much time have we spent with him? This woman just met Jesus. Obviously not having spent any time with him, she doesn't **know** him. However, she is interested in his living water. Wouldn't you be?

Jesus says in verse 10, "*If you only knew.*" We're supposed to be able to do more than just pick Jesus out of a lineup. We're supposed to be able to teach others about him. Why is this called the Bad Samaritan? You're going to have to come back next week to find out, because I am plum out of time. Would you stand and pray with me?