

# Relating to the Woman at the Well

## October 4, 2020

**Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church    Pastor Tyson Labuhn**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Today, we're continuing our sermon series on "Forming Relationships." "Forming Relationships" is one of the ways that we glorify God and make disciples for Jesus, as part of our mission statement. Which is to *Glorify God and Make Disciples for Jesus by: Forming Relationships, Experiencing Jesus Together, and Sharing God's Love.*

So far in our sermon series, we've heard how our Triune God is in relationship to Himself, and how He calls us into a relationship with Him as well. And it's in this relationship that we're called to love and serve others so that they too might come to experience God's love.

Because of inherited and actual sins, that calling isn't always easy to hear. Damaged and strained relations can prevent us from forming new relationships. Even relationships that start out strong can struggle. This is true for people regardless of race or nationality, as well as between men and women.

In our Gospel reading for today, Jesus and His disciples stopped to rest as they were traveling through Samaria on their way to Galilee. Now, relations between the Jews of Jesus' time and the Samaritans were strained at best. For while Samaria was located between Judea and

Galilee, there was a deep and long-standing hostility that existed between them.

Earlier, in 722 B.C., the Assyrians had defeated Israel. And it was after that defeat that the Assyrians took some of the Israelites, resettled them in Assyria, and left others behind. Then, they resettled people from foreign lands, next to those who had been left behind. And while those who had been resettled in Assyria kept to themselves, those who had been left behind began to intermarry with the resettled foreigners who were in their land.

In time, the Jews who lived in Assyria returned to their homeland only to find that it had become corrupt and adulterated. They despised and hated those who allowed this to happen. And while both groups believed in the first five books of Moses and celebrated the Passover, the Samaritans were despised and hated by the Jews because they had rejected the other books of the Old Testament and no longer worshiped in Jerusalem.

After His disciples had gone off to buy some food, Jesus sat down next to Jacob's well – which recalls for us in the Old Testament when a new relationship began between Jacob and Rachel – sure enough, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well. Jesus said to her, ***“Give me a drink.”*** Not surprisingly she replies, ***“How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?”*** As their conversation continued, Jesus told her that if she knew the gift of God, and who it was that was asking her for a drink of water, she would have asked Him for living water, and He would give it to her. In effect, Jesus was offering her life and eternal relationship

with Him. Because everyone who drinks of it will never be thirsty again, and it's this living water that creates a spring from within that wells up to eternal life.

Now, the woman wanted this kind of water. And she wanted a relationship that provided living water so that she wouldn't have to keep returning to the well to quench her thirst. But before that happened, Jesus asked her to share more about herself. So, He tells her to, ***“Go and call your husband and come here.”*** And she reveals to Him that she did not have a husband...but Jesus also reveals to her that He is a prophet when He replied that she was right in that she didn't have a husband because of her broken relationships. In fact, she had had five husbands and the one she was with now, wasn't hers.

At this point, it would have been easy for the woman to get offended and end their conversation. But instead, she asks Jesus if she should expect Him to tell her to worship God in Jerusalem rather than Mt. Gerizim, where the Samaritans worshipped. And that's when Jesus shares with her, and us, that a time is coming when true worshippers, in relationship with God and one another, will worship Him in spirit and truth. Continuing the conversation, the woman let Him know that she was looking for the coming Messiah who would reveal all things. And that's when Jesus said to her, ***“I, who speak to you, am He.” ...“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*** (John 3:16)

It was in this ongoing conversation, that the division and animosity that had once separated them was set aside. A

relationship was formed, the woman turned from her ways, and Jesus revealed His true nature to her. And in His call to her, she came to faith and went on to share that faith with those around her. Her family, friends, and neighbors came to know who Jesus was to her, and in turn, they asked Jesus to stay with them for a while. And in the end, they witnessed to her, saying, ***“It is no longer what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is the Savior of the world.”***

Jesus is the Savior of the world! And in our Gospel reading for today, His Word reveals to us that gender, race, or nationality doesn't matter to God when it comes to forming relationships. In an ongoing, one-on-one dialogue with Jesus at the center, even those who were once divided - because of inherited or actual sins - can turn, overcome their differences, and form a new relationship in Him. And it's in this kind of relationship that enables us to live in peace.

Jesus is at the center of our worship here at Our Savior's Way because He is the way, the truth, and the life. And we have been called as His own to join with Him in fulfilling His mission, which is to *glorify God and make disciples for Jesus by: Forming Relationships, Experiencing Jesus Together, and Sharing God's Love.*

In Jesus' name, Amen.