

## I'm a Nobody...+

### Gospel: John 4:3-42

**Jesus** left the Judean countryside and went back to Galilee. <sup>4-6</sup>To get there, he had to pass through Samaria. He came into Sychar, a Samaritan village that bordered the field Jacob had given his son Joseph. Jacob's well was still there.

I'm a nobody. I'm born woman without a name. I live in the city of Sychar during the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. You think you know me because you think you've heard my story countless times before.

**Jesus**, worn out by the trip, sat down at the well. It was noon. <sup>7-8</sup>A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water.

So many of you have judged me without getting to know me. The things you think you know about me are based on what has been written about a nobody like me. I live in the land of Samaria – that's true. They say I've had 5 husbands, but you don't know why. You don't even know my name nor if I'm old or young, if I am rich or poor, if I'm intelligent or not. Do I have kids or not? You don't even know where I slept last night, on the floor or on a bed. You don't even know if I have some medical illness or not. I haven't been to this well for 14 days! You don't understand my worries or what my life has been like. NO you only hear one moment of my story, and passed moral judgement on it. I've been with you all this time and yet you haven't even glanced at me. I've seen you, and I've smiled at you and you don't even notice me.

I'm a nobody who you have judged. I don't even know if I have the strength to carry all the judgement you have placed on me. Do I even have the strength to carry this jug back from the well?

Gosh, it's warm, I finally feel well enough and have the strength to go to the well even though it's the middle of the day. Will there be anyone at the well or has everyone taken precautions and stayed home?

Great, there's a man sitting at the well. He looks like he's not from this land. He looks as tired as I do – is he a carrier?

Keeping my social distance of 6 feet I drop the bucket down the well and begin to pull it back up filled with water. He says something to me, a woman! Does he not know the rules?

**Jesus** said, "Would you give me a drink of water?" (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, "How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans.)

I look up from what I'm doing to see if he is truly talking to me - a stranger, a nobody. He's the outsider in my land – not me. He's breaking the rules to talk to me. He's breaking all social conventions to talk to me. He's stepping across the lines. He's disrupting the status quo. I'm surprised.

"How is it that you, a Jew is asking me for a drink?"

Was I blunt enough? That should end our conversations just like all the ones before. Does this Jew think that he's better than Samaritans? After all we Samaritans are the *true* descendants of the Israelites.

<sup>10</sup> **Jesus** answered, "If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking *me* for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water."

<sup>11-12</sup> **The woman** said, "Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this 'living water'? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?"

<sup>13-14</sup> **Jesus** said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."

**<sup>15</sup>The woman said, “Sir, give me this water so I won’t ever get thirsty, won’t ever have to come back to this well again!”**

Living Water! Ha! If I can get a hold of what He is trying to sell me, then I’ll never have to make this long walk to get water from this well. He’s rather arrogant don’t you think? Does he think he’s greater than our ancestor Jacob?

(SHIFT TO BEING KNOWN)

He’s still looking at me with tender and gentle eyes. His eyes and voice draw me in and I can’t help but sit and listen to him. As he explains this living water that gushes up eternal life, he SEES me. He truly SEES me, and his voice draws me into believing what he is telling me. He’s not talking about quenching that everyday thirst of “not enough.” Disease.

Good news, this is a treatable disease and Jesus is offering something more through “living water.” Jesus is offering eternal life, eternal satisfaction, eternal peace and contentment. He tells me that he’s fulfilling my need to be loved, honored and valued. He is telling me that HE is enough. He will give us strength and courage during times like these.

(YOU ARE TAKEN OFF GUARD)

Wait, did he just ask me to go call my husband? Do I give him the same old line, or do I tell him the truth?

**<sup>16</sup>Jesus said, “Go call your husband and then come back.”**

**<sup>17-18</sup>“I have no husband,” she said.**

**“That’s nicely put: ‘I have no husband.’ You’ve had five husbands, and the man you’re living with now isn’t even your husband. You spoke the truth there, sure enough.”**

How does he know? How did he know that I had 5 husbands? My life has been filled with tragedies more than one woman can stand. Gossip has spread that I’m a scandalous woman. Do you understand that I was mere property to this patriarchal world? Do you

know that I couldn't divorce them? Only the men could do this? I've been passed on from one husband to the next and had no voice. So often others have caught a glimpse of my life and made moral judgements about my character rather than inviting me to share my stories.

I'm not scandalous, rather desperate to be truly known. I'm not wanton, rather in need. I'm not living in sin but rather in hope – hope that Jesus will keep his promises.

I speak the truth for the first time to Jesus and I feel relieved. He doesn't make me feel unloved. Jesus sees that I am a gift. He holds my tragedies and flaws with tender hands. You can see my suffering pain reflected in his eyes.

Is he a prophet? Or is he the Messiah? I want to know. I am curious.

<sup>19-20T</sup> **The Woman said, “Oh, so you're a prophet! Well, tell me this: Our ancestors worshiped God at this mountain, but you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place for worship, right?”**

<sup>21-23</sup> **Jesus said, “Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you Samaritans will worship the Father neither here at this mountain nor there in Jerusalem. You worship guessing in the dark; we Jews worship in the clear light of day. God's way of salvation is made available through the Jews. But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter.**

I can't believe this Jew is talking to me a Samaritan. Can I trust this man? He's on my land. I can't wrap my head around this. Where can I worship this Messiah? We, Samaritans, believe that the Temple on Mt. Gerizim is the only holy place to worship. Those Jews believe the Jerusalem Temple is. He's erasing religious lines again. He's crossing the lines of tradition. Why? I'm captivated as He goes on to explain.

<sup>23-24</sup> **“It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly *themselves* before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration.”**

**<sup>25</sup> The woman said, “I don’t know about that. I do know that the Messiah is coming. When he arrives, we’ll get the whole story.”**

**<sup>26</sup> “I am he,” said Jesus. “You don’t have to wait any longer or look any further.”**

I feel His tender patience with me as a newcomer to understanding what it means to have faith in God’s promises. Is it truly that easy to worship The Messiah? I don’t have to get everything right and perfect? I know that I am a sinner and yet God still pours out Grace for me through this Messiah sitting with me at this well. And he tells me all I need to do is be myself in worship?

And all this started with a little thing like a cup of cool water, offered in love, and it came to be the beginning of a salvation journey.

**<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked. They couldn’t believe he was talking with that kind of a woman. No one said what they were all thinking, but their faces showed it.**

**<sup>28-30</sup> The woman took the hint and left. In her confusion she left her water pot.**

Other people are coming our way. As usual, I’m being dismissed. They sneak a sideways glance at me, and don’t see me.

Jesus is holding my gaze and sees me. I can’t help it, but I believe what he says. I feel like I’m in a fog of new understanding and new hope. I’ve got to go back to the city and share what I’ve just experienced with people.

**Back in the village she told the people, “Come see a man who knew all about the things I did, who knows me inside and out. Do you think this could be the Messiah?” And they went out to see for themselves.**

**<sup>31</sup> In the meantime, the disciples pressed him, “Rabbi, eat. Aren’t you going to eat?”**

**<sup>32</sup> He told them, “I have food to eat you know nothing about.”**

**<sup>33</sup> The disciples were puzzled. “Who could have brought him food?”**

**<sup>34-35</sup> Jesus said, “The food that keeps me going is that I do the will of the One who sent me, finishing the work he started. As you look around right now, wouldn’t you say that in about four months it will be time to harvest? Well, I’m telling you to open your eyes and take a good look at what’s right in front of you. These Samaritan fields are ripe. It’s harvest time!**

**<sup>39-42</sup> Many of the Samaritans from that village committed themselves to him because of the woman’s witness: “He knew all about the things I did. He knows me inside and out!” They asked him to stay on, so Jesus stayed two days. A lot more people entrusted their lives to him when they heard what he had to say. They said to the woman, “We’re no longer taking this on your say-so. We’ve heard it for ourselves and know it for sure. He’s the Savior of the world!”**

They believe me because what they have heard! Jesus told me one thing. He held MY truth. He saw ME. He noticed ME. He paid attention to ME and counted ME worthy of his attention and concern. He didn’t see me as a Samaritan woman, but as a human being, a precious child of God. I truly believe this man to be the Savior.

I went to the well as a Nobody but then came back as Somebody. I went to the well with an empty jug and came back empty handed but full of living water.

Jesus didn’t shame me and only wants the truth. Jesus exposed my needs and failures which freed me for discipleship. “Come and see a man that told me everything I ever did”...and he loved me anyway. That’s my testimony – the proof of how God is working in my life. Come and see – it’s an invitation. You will experience it as well when you open yourself up to be vulnerable and to be truly seen through God’s eyes. You will experience the living water.

(TAKE OFF THE SCARF.)

Being seen. Noticing others. Giving those around us, our time and attention, is such a small thing. Yet when Jesus does this for me – He changed my life.

How powerful that is. And how easy it is for us to offer to those around us. To slow down in order to really see – that is, notice, give attention, and convey a sense of

worthiness to our friends, our children, our spouse, our coworkers, our neighbors, the person sitting 2 rows behind you on the left or right, and those we don't even know.

God's love given to us through Our Lord Jesus Christ is the living water poured out for you. We are not to store it up in an empty jug, but to pour love out to others, to creation and nature. If we can do this goodness who knows what may follow!<sup>1</sup>

I'm Nobody...Who are you?

Are you a Nobody too?

Well, don't we make a pair.

We are nobodies....and yet Somebody in God's eyes – forever loved, forgiven and fed with the bread of life and living water.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

SERMON: (step down & share this)

Today, I took the risk to take a Biblical story and place ourselves in it in a non-traditional way. I pray that you found this helpful in seeing a different perspective to this well-known story. Perhaps, at some point you could identify with the woman, or not. As I grow into becoming a Pastor without training wheels, I have witnessed many of these moments where people have felt like Nobodies. And yet, when they experience unconditional grace and mercy and love through Jesus Christ, they feel seen – truly seen with all our imperfections, worries, and sorrows. It is in these moments that I want to extend an invitation to “Come and see”. Come and see what love the Lord Jesus Christ wants to give to you without works of perfection, but freely and lovingly. Come to the Table of Grace that is FOR YOU.

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<sup>1</sup> David Lose – Daily Bread