

Let us pray,

Lord, give us the wisdom and strength to see beyond societal conventions and rules, so that we may see you in all people.

Amen.

Who is this samaritan woman?

Who had five husbands and is now living with a man whom she is not married to!

The scandal!

Since it is very unlikely that she would have been divorced, since only men could ask for divorce, and if a woman wanted a divorce, her father would have had to approve it.

And, even if she did get divorced once, this most likely did not happen 5 times, and it is more likely that she is widowed 5 times.

Maybe someone should keep a close eye on this 6th man.

5 men dying under in connection with one woman, sounds a little suspicious to me...

But joking aside, this woman does not live the typical ancient Mesopotamian female life.

Being married to 5 different men was not a common occurrence, and especially living with a man whom she is not married to, depending on who the man is of course, not a relative or something, could be considered taboo and heinous.

I can only imagine that she was quite the feminist of her time, quite the rebel, living by her own rules, rather than the pressures of society.

There was something different about her.

In the Gospel we see her getting water at noon time, by herself. For one, that was very unsafe for a woman to do, to be by oneself, and second, most women went together during the morning or evening when it was cooler.

This woman preferred the heat and to live dangerously!

She then engages in a conversation with this male stranger Jesus, whom she doesn't know his intentions or capabilities.

This woman is quite fearless.

It is also important to note that she is well known in this town of hers, because when she proclaims who Jesus is, people listen to her.

Which is not what people typically did when women talked during this time.

This woman was special, unique and held her own.

So why is any of this important?

Its important because Jesus chose her.

This woman was probably seen as a little bit of a rebel, maybe a little feared, certainly respected by some, maybe looked down upon by especially men for not living the “correct” way.

A complex public persona.

She was unwilling to conform to what society pressed upon her, and lived the way she wanted to live.

And Jesus chose her.

Her!

Can you believe it?

Her!

We like to think that God only chooses people who are “worthy”

Who live lives that God would be proud of.

Whatever that means.

Who follow the rules, who live within the boundaries of society.

We think God chooses only those who society deems as

“normal” or “conventional”.

We think God only chooses the “safe” people.

But on the contrary.

We see time and time again, Jesus and God calling on those outside of the norms.

Those who live differently, who walk by the beat of their own drum.

Either because they chose to do so or because life chose it for them, as is the case with this samaritan woman.

Those who push back against societal norms, those who are looked down upon or seen as weird.

God chooses these types of people to be his messengers and prophets.

So why does God do such a thing?

Because it is a proclamation that society does not get to dictate who God loves or chooses to be his messengers, God gets to dictate who God loves and who is his messenger.

It is not our job to decide who is worthy and who is not.

That is God's job.

Our job is to support those proclaiming God's message of hope, peace and love.

And to join in on spreading that message.

The woman at the well wasn't some meek quiet woman.

She was a woman who knew her worth and who was unwilling to allow society to dictate how she was going to live her life.

She was fearless.

And because of this Jesus called her to be a messenger of his salvation.

To proclaim the living water that he provides to all who are willing to drink of it.

The water that does not dry up, the water that fills our souls and awakens us to the realities of God's abundance, power, grace, and care.

God does not create divisions between people based on nationality, sin, race, ethnicity, economic class, power, prestige, or adherence to the law.

We do that.

Instead, God opens his arms to all who are open to hearing his words of love, forgiveness, mercy and grace.

But it doesn't stop there.

The gift that we have received, the living water, cannot be held to ourselves.

Just like the woman at the well, we must be willing to share and proclaim the gift that we were given.

Christianity is not a private religion.

It is a public proclamation of the Love that God has for all of God's people.

In every part of the world, no matter who or what we are.

There are so many people out there who are fighting, fighting to be desired, wanted, loved, cared for, respected, treated as human.

And I want everyone to know that God desires, wants, loves, cares for, and respects you.

I want you to know that here at Grace, you are wanted and needed.

No matter who you are, what you have done or are doing, no matter if you think you are worthy or not.

God doesn't need us to be perfect.

God just wants us to know that we are wanted by him and that in return, we also want God and God's people in our lives.

We complicate things so much as humans, but this faith of ours boils down to one simple concept, loving relationship among all people.

Let us learn to love one another the way that we are now, just like Jesus loved this woman at the well.

Let us remember that there is no one outside of God's love, not a single human or any part of God's good creation.

May we learn how to accept God's call to enter into this living water that only he can provide.

And like the woman at the well, proclaim this love and freedom to all those who will hear.

Amen.