

WOMAN AT THE WELL

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

BIG IDEA

08/30/26

What does the Gospel have to say about racial division? In this powerful message from John 4, we look at Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman and discover a Savior who refuses to let cultural, ethnic, and racial boundaries limit His love. Jesus crosses the walls that divide people and calls His followers to do the same—embracing God's beautiful design for diversity and becoming active agents of reconciliation. This message challenges us to move beyond simply saying we love everyone and instead examine our hearts, confront prejudice, listen to experiences different from our own, and take meaningful steps toward healing and restored relationships. The Gospel doesn't just reconcile us to God; it creates a reconciled people who tear down the walls that divide the world.

CONNECT Spend 10 minutes getting to know each other as a group by answering the following question.

Are you more likely to take the fastest route somewhere or the scenic route? Why?

DISCOVER Read John 4:4-9, Revelation 7:9-10, & Psalm 117 out loud and answer questions focused on the details of the biblical text.

- 1. Jesus crossed a deeply rooted cultural and ethnic boundary when He entered Samaria and spoke with the Samaritan woman. What does this reveal about the character of Jesus and the nature of His kingdom?**
- 2. Revelation 7:9–10 describes people from every nation, tribe, people, and language worshiping before God. What does this picture teach us about God's purpose for ethnic and cultural diversity? How should that future reality shape the church today?**
- 3. The sermon states, "Racial equity isn't refusing to see our differences; it's refusing to let our differences determine someone's worth." How does the doctrine that every person bears God-given dignity shape a Christian understanding of race?**



REFLECT

Review the following and use this time to discuss how your thoughts and feelings are affirmed and/or challenged.

Matthew 22:37-40 NLT Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

Galatians 2:11-14 NLT But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn’t eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter’s hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, “Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?”

4. Referencing Matthew 2, the sermon describes two dimensions of Christ's mission: restoration and reconciliation. What is the relationship between being reconciled to God and becoming people who pursue reconciliation with others?

5. In Galatians 2, Paul confronts Peter because Peter withdrew from fellowship with Gentile believers. Why does Paul treat Peter's behavior as a matter concerning “the truth of the gospel” rather than simply poor manners or personal prejudice?

APPLY

Use this time to discuss how the Big Idea and scriptures impact your view of the world around you.

6. Repentance involves more than acknowledging that something is wrong. What might genuine repentance from prejudice, favoritism, indifference, or racial hostility look like in a person's relationships and behavior?

Prayer Requests:

GO DEEPER - TAKING ACTION

1. LISTEN — Whose experience of race have I dismissed because it doesn't match mine?

Think about conversations you have had—or avoided—with people whose racial, ethnic, or cultural experiences are different from yours.

Journal or discuss through these questions:

- When someone describes an experience with prejudice or racism that I have never personally experienced, what is my instinctive response?
- Do I become curious, compassionate, skeptical, defensive, dismissive, or uncomfortable? Why?
- Have I ever tried to explain someone's experience away rather than simply listening to it?
- Whose voices do I trust immediately? Whose experiences do I instinctively question?
- Are there people whose stories I primarily know through news, politics, social media, or stereotypes rather than through actual relationships?
- What might I learn if my first response were, "Help me understand," rather than, "Here's why I disagree"?

2. EXAMINE — What assumptions about people did my family, neighborhood, political tribe, or even church teach me?

None of us develops our worldview in isolation. We inherit stories, attitudes, fears, loyalties, jokes, suspicions, and assumptions from the environments that formed us.

Consider your formative years.

 **Family:** What was communicated about people of other races or cultures—directly or indirectly?

Neighborhood: Who lived around me? Who didn't? What conclusions did I draw from that?

 **Church:** What did my church teach about race and reconciliation? Was the subject addressed, avoided, minimized, or politicized?

 **Politics and media:** Which voices have most shaped how I interpret racial issues? Have I ever allowed a political identity to determine my conclusions before Scripture does?

Journal or discuss through these questions:

- Are there groups of people about whom I make assumptions without realizing it?
- Do I associate certain races or cultures with particular behaviors, values, intelligence, danger, success, morality, or social status?
- Where did those assumptions originate?
- Which of them have I actually examined in light of Jesus?
- What belief might the Holy Spirit be asking me to unlearn?

3. CONFESS — Where have prejudice, indifference, fear, stereotyping, or favoritism lived in me?

Confession isn't agreeing that racism exists somewhere in the world. It is having enough courage to ask God what exists in me.

Journal or discuss through these questions:

- Is there any racial or cultural group I instinctively distrust?
- Whom am I less comfortable sitting beside, inviting into my home, learning from, or being led by?
- Have I laughed at, tolerated, or remained silent around racial stereotypes?
- Have I confused familiarity with superiority—assuming my culture's way is simply the "normal" or "right" way?
- Have I been indifferent toward another person's pain because it did not affect me personally?
- Have I ever cared more about proving that I am not racist than understanding whether another person has been wounded?
- Where have fear, pride, favoritism, indifference, or self-protection shaped my relationships?

4. REPENT — What relationship or behavior must actually change?

Repentance goes beyond feeling uncomfortable or guilty. It turns in a new direction.

Look back over everything you have written so far & ask:

- What has God revealed that I cannot simply acknowledge and then continue unchanged?
- Is there a person I need to apologize to?
- Is there a stereotype I need to stop repeating or tolerating?
- Is there a voice or perspective I need to begin listening to?
- Is there a pattern of avoidance I need to break?
- Is there something I need to stop saying?
- Is there something I need to start doing?
- Where would repentance cost me comfort, approval, convenience, or belonging?

Jesus didn't merely affirm that Samaritans had value from a safe distance. He crossed the boundary. He drank from their cup, shared their table, entered their homes, and stayed among them. Reconciliation therefore moves us toward relationship.

- Who is outside my normal social circle?
- When I look at my closest friendships, meals, celebrations, and relationships, how much room is there for people whose experiences or backgrounds differ from mine?
- Is there someone I have kept at a distance because difference makes me uncomfortable?
- Is there a broken relationship where God might be asking me to make the first move?
- Where could I practice hospitality instead of merely expressing good intentions?
- What would crossing a boundary look like for me—not as a project to “fix” someone, but as an opportunity to genuinely know and love them?

Write down one person you could invite to coffee, lunch, dinner, or simply a meaningful conversation—not to debate racial issues, but to build a genuine relationship.

When I will take it: _____

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