

## Bring Someone – Come Meet God

Week 4

By Pastor Mandy Barkhaus

You know that thing that that we do, you know, scrolling through Netflix for half the evening, looking for something to watch. And then by the time you pick out something to watch, it's either too late or you, you, you you're not in the mood to watch anything anymore. Or you panic and you pick something, and then it turns out to be awful.

So I did that, but with books on the library app. So I scrolled forever on the library app looking for a book to check out. I read probably like 50 reviews, and I finally landed on one that I swear said a Stephen King like thriller. Okay, I checked it out. I loaded it on my phone, I dove in, I started reading it, and from the very beginning, from page one, I'm like, on on edge.

Every line feels like it's hiding something. I'm basically playing detective in my head. That nice neighbor secretly hiding something. That mailman who shows up twice? Definitely in on it. The cat that walks by through the scene. Definitely possessed. I mean, I did read Pet Cemetery. So I'm reading at night, I am. I got my phone of inch from my face.

I'm scrolling. I'm my heart's pounding. I keep telling myself it's coming, it's coming. Here comes the plot twist. Any second now, every time I scroll to a new page, I'm like, this is it. This is where the twist comes and I make it 34% of the way through the book, 34%. And I realize I read the wrong review.

It's not a thriller at all. It's not a mystery. It's not a suspense book. It is none of that. There is no murder suspect. There is no plot twist. I had read the wrong review. I brought my own expectations into the book, and I found suspense where there wasn't any. And I am certain that I missed the whole plot of the story because I brought expectation expectations into it.

We do that when we read the stories of the Bible to we come in, we think that we know the story already. We bring our own expectations of the story and experiences, and sometimes we completely miss the original message that it was trying to convey. Well, today we're going to read a story of Jesus, and it's the story of Jesus and the woman at the well.

And many of you know this story, but I want us to read it like it's a brand new story, because there's way there's more going on than just Jesus standing at the well, handing out living water like it's sample day at Costco. So there's a lot of scripture today. I'm just warning you that, there's way more background that we could dive into, but we're going to do the best that we can to to listen to the story and to to see what we can learn from this.

So this is John chapter four. And first we're going to start with, verses one through 15. Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John. Although Jesus, his disciples were baptizing, not Jesus himself. Therefore he left Judea and went back to Galilee. Jesus had to go through Samaria. He came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, which was near the land Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his journey, and so he sat down at the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, give me some water to drink. His disciples had gone into the city to buy him some food. The Samaritan woman asked, why do you, a Jewish man, ask for something to drink from me?

A Samaritan woman. Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other. Jesus responded, if you recognized God's gift, and who is saying to you, give me some water to drink, you would be asking him and he would give you living water. The woman said to him, sir, you don't have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where would you get this living water?

You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave this well to us, and he drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock. Jesus answered, everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks from the water that I will give will never be thirsty again. The water that I give will become and will become in those who drink it.

A spring of water that bubbles up into eternal life. The woman said to him, sir, give me this water so that I will never be thirsty and never need to come here to draw water. So the part where it says that Jesus had to go through Samaria. It's not because there wasn't any other roads. In fact, most Jews avoided Samaria altogether.

They would rather walk the long way around Samaria than actually set foot in Samaria. Now, this was because of a century old feud, going back to when the Assyrians invaded the northern Kingdom and some of the Jews stayed behind, and they they married foreigners. And that was seen as an unforgivable betrayal. But Jesus, he goes right through.

In fact, it says he had to go through. Why? Because God had a meeting set up on his calendar. And he. It was this divine appointment. A woman had no idea she was about to meet God. And she had no clue that something even bigger was about to happen. So we have to read this passage through the eyes of the first century Jews.

And if you are a first century Jew, you know the history. You know the long standing feud. You know the rules and the laws. And without this lens, we'll miss what's really happening. Kind of like if you read a third of a book thinking it's a suspense book and you're going to completely miss the point. So if we don't get what's at stake here, we miss the whole story, because this wasn't just simply a man stopping at a gas station and having a conversation with a woman at the soda machine for them.

This what Jesus was doing. This was a scandal. Waiting to happen like this was shocking. That Jesus was having this conversation. Men didn't talk to women in public alone. Sometimes not even their wives or daughters, right? That just wasn't a thing. And definitely if you were not a respected rabbi, which Jesus was, Jesus was a respected rabbi or teacher.

But here's Jesus. He's tired and worn out, which shows God's human side. And he's sitting by this well, and he's starting a conversation with this woman that would change her life. Meanwhile, the disciples are off there. They're buying food in Samaria, which is something that they would have never done before. So Jesus is already, helping them to rethink what they think is normal.

So then Jesus offers this woman this living water and, that first of all, that's a whole other sermon, right? We can go we can talk a lot about the living water. But she doesn't get it at first. She's like, I don't I don't get it. So, Jesus explains it again. It still doesn't click. She says, just give me the water so I don't have to come back to this.

Well, but as Jesus often does, he leaves it for her to discover. That's how that's, often how God works. Jesus meets us where we are. Your lunch break, your low moments, the middle of a normal everyday life. That's where Jesus will meet you. Now, if we continue reading on, there's even more shocking things coming up about this woman at the well.

So we'll pick up again at verse 16 through 26. Jesus said to her, go get your husband and come back here. The woman replied, I don't have a husband. You are right to say I don't have a husband. Jesus answered, you had five husband, and the man you are with now isn't your husband. You've spoken the truth. And the woman said, sir, I see that you are a prophet.

Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you and your people say that it is necessary to worship in Jerusalem. Jesus said to her, believe me, woman, the time is coming when you and your people will worship the father. Neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You and your people worship what you don't know. We worship what we know because salvation is from the Jews.

But the time is coming and is here when true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth. The father looks for those who worship him this way. God is spirit and it is necessary to worship God in spirit and truth. The woman said, I know that the Messiah is coming, the one who is called the Christ. When he comes, he will teach everything to us.

And Jesus said to her, I am the one who speaks with you. So here's this woman. Her story is complicated. She she's not just a Samaritan, but she's a Samaritan woman. And she is a woman with a past. She's had five husbands, and the man she's living with now is not even her husband. So she is carrying the weight of her choices, her reputation.

She's probably carrying a lot of shame as well. So here it is. It's noon. The scripture says it was. It was about noon, which is the hottest part of the day. Now, most women would go to the well at the early in the morning or late at night in order to avoid this. The heat. But this woman here is at.

Here is at the well at noon. Now, some say it's because she was too ashamed to face the other women, who were fetching water. Another commentator, pointed out that she's from Sychar, and there's actually a well that is closer to that town. But instead she walked 30 miles to this well at the middle of the day.

And and that might indicate that she was completely outcast and not welcome at the town's well, at all. So here she is. Here she is, right in the middle of her messy life. And Jesus meets her there, and he doesn't avoid her. He doesn't look away. Instead, he sees her. He he names her pain. Not to add more shame to her, but to offer her something better.

Because that's the good news of Jesus. Your past doesn't disqualify you from what Jesus is offering. In fact, your past can become the very soil where grace takes root and grows. And Jesus says to her, you don't have to stay on the outside anymore. You don't have to be out an outcast anymore. There's no more traveling to Jerusalem to meet God.

There's no more being defined by where you live or what you've done. Rather, you can worship God. You can meet God right here, right now, in spirit and in truth. So what does she do? John? Chapter 428 through 30 and then 39 through 40, the woman put down her water jar and went into the city. She said to the people, come and see a man who has told me everything I've done.

Could this man be the Christ? So they left the city and were on their way to see Jesus. Many Samaritans in that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's word. When she testified, he told me everything I've ever done. So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they asked him to stay with them. And he stayed there two days.

Many more believed because of his word. And they said to the woman, we no longer believe because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this one is truly the Savior of the world. So this woman doesn't wait until she's cleaned up her life. In order to tell people she doesn't wait for her, for her life to be in order, she runs and tells others her testimony is simple.

Come and see. Come and see this Jesus man. Come and see the man who's told me everything that I've ever done and still offered me living water.

That was enough for revival. It was one story. It was one woman. And a whole village was changed. So what about your story? Everyone has a story. Your story might be hidden from

people who are sitting next to you in this room, but Jesus knows, right? Jesus knows your past. Jesus knows your present. He knows what you're dealing with right now.

And here we sit today. All of our stories combined. We're sitting today on the south side of Lincoln. We have many stories. We may be one church, but we have many stories. And I believe that the whole town of Lincoln can be changed because of our stories. We're just one church with many stories. But what if we could be that church that brings revival to Lincoln so that more people can know that they belong, that they are included.

That they can find the love and joy and peace that Jesus offers. This living water. He calls it. What if? Well, of course it's. It's up to us. What we do with our stories. Well, we all have a story. But here's one story.

Hi, my name is Jeff Fillmore, and I've been coming to horizons for about nine months now.

I started coming to horizons because I was searching for something deeper, something beyond the everyday routine. Life can feel overwhelming at times, and I realized I needed a place where I could find peace, clarity, and purpose. Horizons offered that space for reflection and connection, not just with God, but with a community of people who are also seeking hope and truth.

I wanted to grow spiritually, to understand my faith more fully, and to be part of something that encourages compassion, service, and personal growth. What I love about horizons is the people are welcoming. The messages are meaningful and there is a genuine sense of community. The truth is, many of us are carrying things that others never see. Quiet battles with anxiety, depression or trauma.

Addiction or other mental health challenges that can feel incredibly isolating even when you're surrounded by people. That's why I want to share something I'm excited about with you today. This fall, horizons will be starting a recovery support group. It's a space where people can come just as they are, be met with understanding instead of judgment, and find strength in community.

This group is being offered in partnership with Nami, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. It's a peer led group. It's not therapy or teaching. It's a safe place to listen, share and remind each other that we're not alone. For me personally, starting this group is important because I've seen firsthand how addiction can affect families. It touched my own, and I know how hard the journey can be.

I want everyone to know they are never alone in their struggle. The group will be open to anyone at horizons, and anyone in the wider community who is living with a mental health

condition. You don't have to have a diagnosis or have it all figured out. Just come as you are. We're hoping to begin sometime this fall and we will share more details soon.

In the meantime, if you're interested or have questions, we'd love to talk to you. Text the church number and someone from our team will get back to you. Because healing happens in community and sometimes the most important thing we can do is remind each other that we're not alone.

Jeff has a story, and his story led him to reach out to me with this vision of a of a group. That that would meet a place where people can share their own stories, find support, and walk together toward recovery. And we invited Jen Watson Williams and Tom Barkhouse, who also carry stories and have a passion for this kind of ministry.

And we are we are excited that we are able to to offer this this fall. See, God can use your story to change someone else's.

And the truth is, is that when we listen to God, your story can change lives. But sometimes we have to be open to listening to the story that Jesus wants us to hear, not the story that we bring to it, not what we think Jesus is telling us, but what Jesus is actually telling us. Everyone has a story.

Everyone has a purpose. And when you begin to live in that purpose, we can change the world with the message of Jesus. It was the woman at the well. She had one story and her entire village was changed. She told somebody to come and see. And we can do that to. We can bring someone with us because somebody brought you here.

So? So let's all be bringers, imperfect, messy, but joyful bringers of hope and good news. Let's pray.

Gracious God, we are imperfect. We have messed up. We have made choices that are that are harmful and hurtful to ourselves and to others. We've hidden from your light and your good news because, we were scared or because we just didn't understand. We chose not to tell people to come and see, because maybe we felt like we didn't have our life together.

And so how could I possibly bring somebody with me if I don't even have it all figured out? But, God, your message for us today, the message of Jesus, is that that Jesus shows up, shows up in our life when we least expect it. Sometimes right in the middle of of the messiness. And, and then we can look at this woman at the well and knowing that that she had the courage to go and, and, and tell others, God, help us to have that same kind of courage. To be the light in Lincoln so that we can share with others the hope that that Jesus brings. And we say all of this in Jesus's name, Amen.