

Mountain View 17 — From Wounded to Witness

Sermon File Type	Sermon
Passages	John 4:27-42
Sermon Series	Mountain View
Topics	Missions; Harvest
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Introduction (Connection):

[Invite to John 4 - fourth book in the NT]

Tension:

Remember the movie *Kung-fu Panda*? It's literally one of my favorites, and Po is this overweight Panda who idolizes Kung Fu and by divine destiny, is chosen as the dragon warrior.

After his kung fu master and the other students do everything they can to belittle him, discredit him, and shut him out, Po gets really upset... and this is what happens [Show clip]¹

Po uses food to try to cope with his wounds of rejection and his failures, and he's ashamed of it.

And I love how the part where Master Shifu walks in and finds him in the middle of his attempts to cope... it's so awkward.

He even says, "I know, I disgust you."

¹ <https://youtu.be/9ID1bEZmvzM>

But what I love about this scene is that it's this pivotal moment in his becoming who he was destined to be and ends up saving the town because his master showed him that his wounds and brokenness can be used to serve others.

Last week we looked at the story of this woman who, for many reasons, was immoral, unnamed, ostracized, and deeply wounded.

Jesus seeks her out, finds her in the middle of her attempts to cope with her pain and wounds, offers her living water, calls attention to her greatest thirst, clarifies a theological division, and confirms his own identity as the messiah.

Most of your bibles will end the section there right after v. 26, so you're tempted to stop reading or section off in the story what happens after this.

But the story doesn't end here; her encounter with Jesus isn't over in v. 26.

There's more to her story and if you like awkward then you're going to love what is about to happen next in her story, because things get really awkward for her.

Exposition:

John 4:27-42 — ***Just then his disciples arrived, and they were amazed that he was talking with a woman. Yet no one said, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"***²⁸ ***Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people,***²⁹ ***"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"***³⁰ ***They left the town and made their way to him.***³¹ ***In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, "Rabbi, eat something."***³² ***But he said, "I have food to eat that you don't know about."***³³ ***The disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?"***³⁴ ***"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work,"***

Jesus told them. ³⁵ "Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest'? Listen to what I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. ³⁷ For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you didn't labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor." ³⁹ Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of what the woman said when she testified, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ Many more believed because of what he said. ⁴² And they told the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said, since we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world."²

So we see three different sections in this text: John tells us what happens with this woman and the town in two parts at the beginning and at the end, with what may seem to be an interruption in the middle when Jesus speaks to his disciples.

We're going to look at what happens with the woman and the town first, since the conversation Jesus has with his disciples is him giving much deeper meaning to what is happening with the woman and the town.³

So today, the woman and the town, and next week, Jesus' word to the disciples.

² [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Jn 4:27–42.

³ Theory of outline influenced by John Piper, "The Food of Christ is to Give Eternal Life" (sermon, Desiring God, August 9, 2009), available online at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-food-of-christ-is-to-give-eternal-life> [accessed online October 22, 2019].

Jesus just told this woman, "I'm the Messiah" and almost immediately after this, the disciples walk in... and it gets awkward.

No one says anything.

They're awkwardly staring at this woman and Jesus with faces that communicate something between amazement and horror, possibly with a dash of disgust.

Did you see what it was that caused these men to be astonished or surprised?

That Jesus was talking with a woman... not a Samaritan woman, just a woman.

Why is this so shocking?

Well, in that culture, women were just simply an add-on to the male-dominated society.

It was common thought among Jews that for a rabbi to talk with a woman, even his own wife, was at best a waste of time and at worst a distraction from ministry.⁴

I know this word probably is misused too much today, but this culture was sexist, misogynistic, and held to a deep distrust, disrespect, and dislike of women.

What's even worse is this woman knew all of this.

⁴ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 227.

When the disciples walked in she knew exactly what they were thinking: “why is Jesus wasting his time with this woman? She’s subordinate; she’s a distraction; she’s a waste of time... she doesn’t matter.”

But Jesus wasn’t hostage to the sexism of his day, he spoke with her; he even knew her whole life story.

He’s not like the others.

And in v. 28, something amazing happens: she runs off.

Is it because things are too awkward for her and she splits? No.

She runs back to her town, leaving what behind? Her water jar.

Here’s what this does mean: Her priorities shifted.

No longer was her priority to quench her thirst...

She wasn’t thirsty anymore. She had tasted the living water and her soul was satisfied.

She runs away, not out of shame and embarrassment, she runs away having had her soul satisfied, because there’s something about encountering Jesus that makes us more satisfied than anything this world can offer.

And out of the overflow of this living water welling up in her, where does she go?

She heads to her town and starts inviting people to come and see someone who she is considering could be the Messiah.

When I took Evangelism 101 in college, standing on a street corner yelling at people over a loudspeaker wasn't exactly their golden ticket to getting people to jump on the Jesus train.

Street-corner evangelism isn't really recommended these days, but that's exactly what this woman does.

She's running down the streets, going from shops to homes to the Walmart Express telling everyone what just happened.

This should blow our minds; we need to think of what all is happening here, because there's a lot on different levels.

First, Jesus uses a woman to reach a whole town, the same town that his twelve male disciples went into and just got back from, that could have said the exact same thing and invited people out.

Instead Jesus sends in a woman; He sends in the "distraction," the "waste of time," the "second-class citizen," the nobody...

That's kingdom economics, brothers and sisters; in God's kingdom...

The marginalized becomes the missionary.

In this case: women.

Jesus establishes that the kingdom of God will not be defined by the sexist marginalization of women.

Women are absolutely essential in the mission of God for the world, and anytime we, the church, do not empower both men and women to be engaged in the mission of God, ministry will suffer.

I'll tell you this: out of all the people in my life, the one who has taught me the most about Jesus and living in deep relationship with Him is my wife, Kaitlin.

And in second is a tie between my mom and my dad.

Women are absolutely indispensable in the mission of God, and I'm sorry if I've ever done anything to communicate otherwise.

Women, you are not an afterthought in this mission; you are not second-class citizens in God's kingdom, you are not to be put on the fringes of ministry.

We need you—we need your giftings, your passion; it's not good for men to try to accomplish God's will and purpose in the world alone.

Now, I still hold to a conservative view on scripture and certain roles in the church, so don't think I've gone totally crazy.

Then there's something else happening on another level here: this woman is marked by scandal, right?

She was deeply ashamed of her life, of all she was, of all she had done; everyone knew she wore a scarlet letter, yet it is her that Jesus sends.

Here's another thing that happens in the kingdom of God:

The wounded becomes the witness

Isn't this contrary to our thinking? This doesn't make sense.

Usually, it's the wounded who need to be tended too; in the medical tents in wartime, you don't usually see the soldier with a gaping hole in his leg trying to tend to the scratch on the medic's cheek.

You don't see the cancer patient asking about the bruise on the oncologists forearm.

It's usually the healthy who are tending to the sick; not in God's kingdom.

God uses the foolish to shame the wise, the weak to shame the strong.

This wounded woman becomes the witness.

Not only that, but she goes to the very people who marginalized her for all she had done.

All these people in this town knew who she was, they knew her story and the extreme brokenness of her past and her deep wounds.

The very people she was attempting to avoid become the aim of her assignment from Jesus.

It is so hard to be missional to the people that you grew up around and know your history... which is why I'm grateful I'm not a pastor in Cary, NC, because I'd have someone show up at church one Sunday that I went to middle school with, remember who I was such a little dweeb back then, and walk out.

See, I've got it easy here... if you grew up in Wayne County, its so hard, because not only is your past so well known and held against you, but even your ancestors' histories are held against you!

"Wait, aren't you Myrtle's great grandson? She stole that waffle iron I let her borrow back in the 70's! How about you bring that next time?"

Yet, this woman doesn't let her history hinder her from boldly sharing Jesus with those who knew her so well.

You see, when you isolate yourself from people for shame, or hold back your witnessing because of your history they may know, you are removing yourself from the very targets of God's grace.

Is your own history hindering you from reaching out to the people around you?

And there's something else happening here that is quite amazing.

This marginalized, wounded woman runs to her town, and starts inviting people to come and see Jesus.

What was the platform she uses for that invite? Her wounds.

That's another thing about kingdom economics, brothers and sisters; not only do the marginalized become missionaries, not only do the wounded become witnesses, but in Christ's kingdom...

The wound becomes the word

This woman says, "Come, see a man who told me everything I have ever done..." the very thing that has characterized her life for so long, the deepest place of pain and sorrow in her life becomes the very thing she shares to invite people to Jesus.

The very thing she was working so hard to hide away from becomes the very testimony she shares to lead people to Jesus!

Brothers and sisters, every one of us is wounded, whether it be self-inflicted from our own sin and brokenness, or someone else sinned against you, and you've been carrying that wound your whole life.

It would make sense for us to believe that our wounds would have to heal before we can be of any use in mission and ministry, right?

Not in God's kingdom... our wounds don't keep us from mission.

Our wounds are redeemed by God for mission.

Application/Challenge:

Friends, here's the biggest thing I want you to take away from today.

Our deepest wounds are often our greatest opportunities for ministry.

When you hide your own wounds and thirsts from those around you, you're taking the very tools God uses to save souls off the table.

Don't hide your wounds because Jesus uses your wounds! He redeems them for his mission!

And don't wait either!

You don't have to wait for God to do something through you after your wound is healed... in fact, God uses your wounds to heal, the same way he used Jesus' wounds to heal us.

1 Peter 2:24 — "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. **By his wounds you have been healed.**"⁵

Can't you see? Jesus left acceptance, perfection, and glory to become the marginalized missionary.

⁵ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1 Pe 2:24.

Jesus became the wounded witness.

Jesus used his wounds to heal.

You think God only wants to use your strengths and successes in his mission?

No, no, he is most magnified in using our weaknesses and wounds.

In fact, weaknesses and wounds are his favorite tools to use to call souls to believe in Jesus.

So don't hide your wounds from those around you.

In v. 39-42, people come to Jesus and believe in Him because this woman confessed her own wounds, brought them into the light, put them on the table for Jesus to use for his mission.

Jesus can do the exact same thing through you; his saving power is not limited by the depth of your wound, his saving power is magnified by the use of your wound.

Conclusion (Cast Vision):

Can I give you a modern-day example of this kind of grace? Kanye West.

You may not know this about me, but I enjoy Christian hip-hop and rap music.

I remember I'd hear music by Kanye West and like immediately have to change the channel because he gained his platform by rapping about incredibly explicit and immoral sexual relationships, drugs, alcohol and much more... the stuff parents do everything they can to keep their kids from.

Kanye West says, within the last year, he's given his life to Jesus Christ and on Friday his newest album dropped.

Guess what it is called? *JESUS IS KING* and I've been listening to it all weekend, and never, ever could I have imagined coming out of Kanye West's mouth lyrics like these:

"I bow down to the king upon the throne; my life is his, I'm no longer my own."⁶

"King of kings, lord of lords, all the things he has in store, from the rich to the poor, all are welcome through the door, you won't ever be the same when you call on Jesus' name. Listen to the words I'm saying, Jesus saved me and now I'm saying, I know God is the force that picked me up. I know Christ is the fountain that filled my cup. I know God is a lion. He has opened up my vision given me a revelation. This ain't about a dead religion, Jesus brought a revolution, all the captives are forgiven, time to break down all the prisons, every man, every woman, there is freedom from addiction, Jesus you have my soul... all my idols let em go, all the demons let em know, this a mission not a show, this is my eternal soul..."⁷

And his album ends with a song that just repeats, *"Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, Jesus is Lord."⁸*

In an interview with Apple Music, Kanye said, "Now that I'm in service to Christ, my job is to spread the gospel, to let people know what Jesus has done for me. I've spread a lot of things. There was a time I was letting you

⁶ Kanye West, "Closed on Sunday," track 4 on *JESUS IS KING*, Universal Music Group, 2019, Spotify.

⁷ Kanye West, "God Is," track 8 on *JESUS IS KING*, Universal Music Group, 2019, Spotify.

⁸ Kanye West, "Jesus Is Lord," track 11 on *JESUS IS KING*, Universal Music Group, 2019, Spotify.

know what high fashion had done for me, I was letting you know what the Hennessey had done for me, but now I'm letting you know what Jesus has done for me, and in that I'm no longer a slave, I'm a son now, a son of God. I'm free."⁹

Kanye has surrendered over his deep wounds to the Father and God is using him to reach millions of people with the life-transforming grace of God.

Are we going to sit back and be critical? "C'mon, is he really a believer? How could God save someone like Kanye? Shouldn't he have at least waited until he was a bit more mature in the faith and a bit more distanced from his provocative history?

No, no. The marginalized has become the missionary. The wounded has become the witness. And the wounds have become the word.

Jesus is still doing this today, and he can do this with you.

[Invite people to surrender their wounds and scars to the use of God; Pray]

⁹ Lance Strong, "Born Again Blowhard: Kanye West Says Sunday Service-Inspired 'Jesus Is Born' LP Dropping on Christmas," (article, Hip Hop Wired, October 24, 2019) available online <https://hiphopwired.com/826132/kanye-west-jesus-is-born-album/> [accessed online October 24, 2019].