

Let's Knock Down A Few Barriers!

John 4:6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

John 4:7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

Social distancing isn't really a new thing. You find it right here in the story of Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan lady at Jacob's well.

It is high noon, give or take. It is the hottest part of the day – not the best time to be out drawing water.

If you weren't careful, you could do yourself in with the heat. Usually, the ladies – and it WAS the ladies who did the actual work – would come to collect water in the late afternoon after the worst of the day's heat had passed.

But this humble lady socially distanced herself, arriving at the well at noon when hardly anybody else was around.

This lady who'd had five husbands – and was with a man who was not her husband. Five husbands – that's more than my sister, Geraldine.

Our Lord is all about knocking down barriers. He overcomes even social distancing wherever it may occur. Come what may, he develops and fosters relationships with his children even during the most challenging of times.

He engages with this lady at Jacob's well, and in the end she becomes an evangelist. God uses this sweet, troubled lady to spread the news that Jesus the messiah has come – and is in town, even, offering the water of salvation from a well that never runs dry.

Our Lord will use anybody – and I do mean anybody – for his purposes. He's not even past sending a Georgia boy to Pennsylvania. And I thank God for that.

I think Jesus himself must have felt the conversation was something special. As they abided there for two days with that Samaritan community, I imagine Jesus sharing the whole story with John and the other apostles – processing with them this long mid-day chat with this troubled but thoroughly delightful woman who runs – literally runs – to share the good news of Christ with her neighbors.

She's living on the fringes of her community because she has a lot of baggage – five husbands' worth. Yet she becomes the evangelist. She becomes the vehicle whereby those who had shunned her and treated her badly came to know and have relationships with the messiah, Christ the Lord.

"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did," she tells the villagers. "Could this be the Christ?"

Have you ever known anybody with baggage? Perhaps you have a little bit of baggage yourself? Well, we worship a God who moves past your baggage – past social distancing in all its forms.

There are so many messages for you and for me in this beautiful story. It's one of the most beautiful stories in all of scripture.

In dealing with others who have sinned, leaven your truth-telling with compassion.

And whatever your own relationship with God – however new a Christian you may be – don't be afraid to talk to others about what and who you know.

Do that, and others will accept God's word from you – just as someone who's thirsty gratefully accepts a dipper full of cool water on a hot day.

- **Pastor Charlie**