

Lessons from the Samaritan Woman Message

by Annie Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not judging others based on outward appearances but looking at the heart, drawing lessons from the Samaritan woman whom Jesus showed love and compassion. It touches on issues of prejudice, mistreatment of women, racial discrimination, divorce, and the need for forgiveness and love in all relationships. The message encourages humility, honesty, and faithfulness in marriage, as well as the value of prayer, church fellowship, and breaking down walls that divide us.

Scripture: John 4:1, Malachi 2:16, Matthew 19:4, Ephesians 2:14, Titus 2:3, 1 Corinthians 7:13, Hebrews 13:13, Psalm 139:23

Topics: "Compassion", "Breaking Down Barriers"

Description

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Transcript

Praise the Lord for all his goodness to us and that we can meet like this and encourage one another and spend time sitting at his feet and listening to his word. Actually, we want to hear the Lord Jesus speak to us, not somebody, a person, but we want to hear our Lord Jesus speak to us. In the past few studies, we have been meditating on different women who came across Jesus when he was on earth and how Jesus dealt with them and how he blessed them.

We live in a world where women are not treated the same way as men. And we all know that it's a little better now, but in many countries, especially India and Eastern lands where I come from, women were treated so much inferior to men. And in Jesus' time also, it must have been the same, where women were treated inferior and they accepted it.

So when Jesus met with different women and their needs, he understood what they were going through and he looked at them into their heart, not outwardly how they appeared on the outside, but he knew them and he could freely speak to them without any hindrance and he could understand what they were going through because he shared, he shares our burden. In all our afflictions, he was afflicted, that's what Isaiah 53 says. He suffered with us and he understands what we are going through.

So today I want to think about the woman, the Samaritan woman. Most of us must have heard about her and read and know the story about her, even from our Sunday school days. If we turn to John chapter four, we'll read, we can, you can keep our Bibles open to that chapter, but I'll refer to some verses.

Now Jesus was traveling from Judea to Galilee. And just before he left us, some discussion about the Jews, the Pharisees were telling, complaining that he's baptizing more people than John the Baptist, because that was the place, Jordan River, where a lot of people are getting baptized. So the Pharisees took any opportunity to complain about Jesus.

He's doing this. He's not washing his hands. He's not fasting.

He's not doing this. So this time they were saying he's baptizing more people. Anyway, wherever Jesus went, there was controversy, but he didn't let that affect him.

So he decided to go to Galilee. Now, if you see Galilee, to go to Galilee, we have to go, one has to go to Samaria. And Samaria, the Samaritans lived there.

And most Jews, they don't like to go to Samaria because the Jews and Samaritans hated each other. Like they despised, Jews despised Samaritans. There's a history behind that.

I'll tell you briefly, in the time after Solomon's time and his son began to rule, two of the ten of the tribes didn't want to be ruled by Solomon's son. So they broke away and they went to Samaria and made Samaria their capital. Now, they were doing a lot of idolatry.

So God punished them and the king of Assyria came and captured that city, that area and took all the Jews away and resettled them in some other place. And he brought other people from other states to live in Samaria. So they were not actual Jews, but there were a few Jews there.

So they mixed and it was a mixed tribe. And they wanted to follow the Jewish religion and they wanted to worship Jehovah. So they asked for some priests to come and before that, some lions came and killed some of the Samaritans.

So they thought it's because we are not worshipping the Jewish God. So then they accepted the Judaism, the Jewish religion, and they started worshipping Jehovah. But the Jews didn't want the Samaritans to come to their temple.

They said, you are outsiders, you don't belong here. And there were in Moses' laws that outsiders should not come in. All those verses we can read in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

But so they built their own temple there and they started worshipping. That's how the Samaritans, for generations, they looked like that. And the Jews hated the Samaritans and it was like generations of hatred.

The Jews taught the children, the Samaritans, they are not pure people. They are dirty people. We have to be so careful how we can pass from one generation to another.

We might influence our children also. Don't behave like the dirty so and so. And we start despising people and some other race.

And then the children learn like that. They learn to despise and they teach their children. That's why we have to be so careful not to despise any race.

All are made in the image of God and all are God's children. So we should be very careful not to let our children grow into that habit of despising other races, other people. I come from a land in India where although we are all Indians, there's so much of racial discrimination according to color, according to religion and according to caste.

You must have heard of the caste system and the higher caste people, they despise. And if you become a Christian, then you have no caste. You almost become like a low caste.

If you read, remember the story of Sadhu Sundar Singh. He was one of the higher castes and when he became a Christian, his parents didn't want, his father, his mother had died. His father didn't want him to accept him.

So when he came to visit his father, he wasn't even allowed to sit in the house. He had to sit in the veranda outside and he was given some food to eat and he couldn't drink water from the cups which they used. They poured water into his hand and he had to sip the water from the cup of his hand.

That's how people are treated if they become Christians. So Jesus was passing through and he was led by the spirit, he said. Every step of Jesus was led by the spirit.

He came as a man. It's not like as an almighty God, he knew what he should do next. He came as a man who took humanity, but every step he was led by the spirit.

Remember, after his baptism, the spirit led him and said, now you have to go in the wilderness and you're going to be tempted by Satan. So every step he was led by the spirit. And so this time also, after this controversy with the Jews, he and his disciples decided to go to Galilee.

And normally people don't go through Samaria. They take a longer route and they want to avoid the Samaritans. But Jesus decided, he said he must go through Samaria.

See, the Holy Spirit told him, there's something special for you. There's someone special for you. You have to meet.

So he had to go through Samaria. And this lady who he had to minister, the Lord worked in her also because he had a purpose in her life. She was in the right place at the right time.

She had to come that way. And so Jesus went and it was the hottest time of the day. And Jesus came to a well, it was Jacob's well.

And then, you know, the history, Jacob gave that well as a gift to Joseph. So he sat at the well and he sent his disciples. He sent his disciples to get some lunch.

For Jesus, doing the will of God was most important, more than the hot time of the day, whether it's hot or cold, whether he was hungry or not. Doing the will of the Father was most important. That's another lesson we can learn from Jesus.

If we choose our earthly comfort and whether we have eaten or not, or whether everything is convenient for us, then we may miss some of what God, something of what God wants us to do. And to tell the Lord,

Lord, whether I'm hungry or not, whether whatever state I am in, I'm content, Lord. I want to do your will.

Your will is most important for me. I want to be in touch with you so I can hear your voice every day, every moment, where I should be, what I should be doing. Help me not to miss your will.

So that was the way Jesus lived. And when Jesus was waiting at that well, we know that story. This woman comes.

And Jesus didn't judge by looking at the outward appearance of that woman. He knew straight away what type of woman she was. And she was a Samaritan.

So she came and she was surprised to see this man at the well. Why did she choose the noon time to come? We know, we've heard that also many times. Most, mostly in eastern countries, most women come early in the morning.

It's like a, it's like an outing for them. They all get together and they get their water pots and they come as a group, talking about what they're going to cook and what's happening in their lives. And maybe the latest gossip.

It's a fun time. It's like a women's group. They gather together and they go to the well.

But this woman came when no one was there. We know why. Because she was shunned by the others.

She had three negative things in her to deal with. First of all, I said how women are treated. She was a woman.

Secondly, she was a Samaritan, but all of them in that village were Samaritan. Thirdly, she had a bad history, unfortunate history. We may think it's a scandalous past, but actually if you think about her life, it's sad and a tragic, not a scandalous past that she had.

She had multiple marriages. We don't know whether she had divorced multiple times or whether she was widowed. But in the eastern countries, it's the man who takes the decision to divorce her wife.

Any small thing. If she's not good looking or if she's burnt the food and didn't cook it properly a few times or if he had a past friendship and he liked that other woman better or she hasn't born any children. Or in India, very common is she didn't bring enough money.

In India, we have this habit of dowry where the bride has to bring a large amount of money and it grows. The earlier, it was like a smaller amount. Now, they ask for a posh car, a beautiful house and so much of jewelry, gold and diamonds and rubies.

It's like a saving for the husband. It actually doesn't go to the husband very often. The husband's father takes it to get his daughter married.

And people don't call it dowry because it's illegal to ask for dowry. But they put it under some other name and that practice continues even now. So, sometimes the bride's father agrees, okay, I'll give you so much and so much cash and so much of jewelry.

But in the last minute, he may give like one gold bangle less. Or one item is less. And the poor girl goes there, she knows what she has to face.

She's harassed. Oh, look at your father. He has no dignity and he's so stingy.

He couldn't even give this one bangle and she's harassed and harassed and harassed. And many women, they think that it's better to end their lives. Or it becomes so much the husband says, go back to your home and bring that one bangle or whatever you didn't bring.

Or if she has a child, if it's a girl, then she suffers more. She sent back and said, you come back with whatever was promised and bring some more because it's a girl now. So, multiple reasons why people divorce their wives.

And we don't know what was this poor lady's background, why she was divorced five times. And maybe, who knows whether she was divorced or whether she was widowed. It doesn't say, but all we know is she had five husbands and she was living with a man whom she was not married to.

Now, I want to just mention about this living in relationship. That's also very common now. Lot of young people, they go to college and then they want to rent a place to live.

And sometimes, they don't find the proper housing and then they have to share the house with the room with a man. And they choose that. Sometimes, very often, they choose that lifestyle.

And it's a convenient thing. There's some protection for that girl, but she's exploited. Many times, the husband robs her of her money in some way.

She has to spend more of her salary for the living expenses and he takes advantage of her. Then what's her future after that, having lived with this man? Do you think she'll be able to get married in a proper way? She's gone too far to expect a happy married life. A happy married life is our birthright for all of us.

But what can girls like this do after having fallen into this kind of trap? That's why we as mothers, we have to be very vigilant and teach our daughters. We take this decision. Don't take this wrong turn in your life.

When you go to college, better to be more strict with yourself than go into a path of a liberal, generous way of living and doing what the other people are doing. If you want, you share your room with a girl. But even that, choose a Christian girl.

Don't choose a girl who will have boyfriends into her room. And then again, you'll fall into this trap. That's why in these days, we have to teach our girls, our daughters in a very wise way, not frighten them.

But say, when the right time comes, God will lead you to the right husband. But until then, don't waste your life. Don't lose your virginity.

Don't make mistakes which you'll regret later. So this poor woman, she had a history of five husbands and living with this man who was not married. Everything was negative for her.

But see the love of Jesus. He cares for such women. He didn't come to save righteous people who everything was right in their lives and had a good Christian upbringing and didn't make any mistakes.

There are people like that who God has chosen into his kingdom. But God's love is so great. He gathers people from all, every background into his kingdom.

He doesn't judge by outward appearance. He looks at her heart and he said, I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. So this woman comes back and Jesus knows everything about her.

And he uses the right words. Even there, the Holy Spirit guided him and said, he told the woman, can you give me a drink of water? If you have your Bible open to John 4, we can read that. He asked her for a drink of water.

And she's surprised. She knows this is a Jew and the Jews have nothing to do with the Samaritans. He was surprised.

He said, how is it that you're a Jew? And she knew that she must have guessed he's a rabbi also. How is it that you're a Jew and you're asking me, a Samaritan, a despised woman, you're asking me for a drink? And Jesus said, woman, if you knew who it was who's asking you for this water, you would ask me because I will give you living water to drink. And she said, oh, if you can give me that living water, I'll be happy to have it.

Then Jesus tells her, go call your husband and bring him. And Jesus touched the point personally, had a personal touch in her life. And he knew this is the point where let me test her and see.

And she passed the test. She was humble and she was honest. That's where she passed the test.

And she said, I have no husband. So Jesus saw, he said, you're right. You're right in your answer.

Because you had five husbands and the one you're living with is not your husband. You're not married to him. And she passed the test and that humility and that honesty was what Jesus saw in her.

Now, if you compare John chapter 3, the previous chapter, that's why it's good to study God's word and learn from God's word. If you just turn back to the previous chapter, Jesus met, there was a man called Nicodemus who came to see Jesus at night. First of all, he came at night.

It was different from this poor lady. He came at night because he didn't want anybody to see that he's coming to Jesus. And he was a learned man.

He had a lot of, and he was a well-known, famous person, accepted person, respected person in society. He came to Jesus. And what did Jesus tell him? He told him the basic thing, salvation.

You need to be born again. The well of salvation, he told him. And what happened to him, we know.

He couldn't even accept that basic thing, born again, because the price was too much. And he went away. Whereas this woman, he taught her greater things.

He taught her greater things. He said, I'll give you living water. You'll never thirst again.

He was talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You know, when we think of water in the Bible, there's a well of salvation. We read that in Isaiah.

And in Psalms, it says about refreshing pools when we go through weeping. And John chapter 7, we read about the rivers of living water. If we come to Jesus and we drink of him, he'll give us rivers.

He'll give us living water. And out of our innermost being will flow rivers of living water, which will be a blessing to many. It will bless us, refresh us, and bless many others.

And this lady, this unfortunate lady, she was so fortunate to hear more truth from Jesus. And she could receive that living water. And we know in the end, not only was she blessed, God, Jesus used her to be a blessing to many Samaritans.

The whole village, Samaritans came to know her. It's almost like John said, about John it was said, they heard him and they followed Jesus. Just like that.

They heard this lady and they followed Jesus. That's how, that's what we learned from this story of this true incident of what the Samaritans knew. Now, I want to say something more about this Samaritan woman and this prejudice.

We learned some things about it, about her. I said that she was from a despised group. And here I want to say a little bit about minorities, how we can deal with minorities in our life.

I said how the Samaritans were treated in a despising way by the Jews. In India also, I said there are different groups and one group looks down on the other because of caste or culture, even though we look alike. I'll tell you an incident which happened to show you how deep this caste system and this cultural difference is.

When I was working in this leprosy hospital before my marriage. Now, leprosy is a terrible disease. It has a lot of, it starts with the skin patch, but as the disease develops, people get deformities.

Their hands and their feet are deformed and their nose gets sunken and they're badly deformed. So, in this leprosy hospital, there were people from all different castes, but the relatives didn't want to take care of them because there's a stigma of leprosy. Because they know that it's an incurable, those days it was incurable and a lot of deformities and nobody will marry someone from that family who has a history of leprosy.

So, in this leprosy hospital, there were all these women who were from different communities and many of them came to this hospital and accepted Jesus because they knew that they needed treatment for a long time and they were like cast off from their family. They may have to spend their whole life in this institution. So, when I was working, I used to go to the women's ward and then see how they were faring and if they had any new deformities or any ulcers because they had no sensation.

Some people would get ulcers. So, I noticed that the one girl there who didn't have any deformities, she just had some patch, but everybody scorned her, made fun of her, like the ugly duckling, like anything needed to be done, they'd say, oh, you go and get it. Or somebody needed like a bedpan or something, they'd ask her, you get it.

And she was a young girl, so I was surprised how she was treated like that. But I knew because all the people in that area, their surnames would end in a certain way, and I knew they were from that area. But this girl's name didn't have that type of surname, so I thought she's different.

But outwardly, we all looked like the same. So, then I asked her, why do you all harass her like this, why is it? So, they said, oh, she's a Madrasi, you know, people from South, the people in the North, this hospital was in the North, they despise people from the South, they call them Madrasi or Tamil people, and they think that they are inferior. Now, I was thinking it's so funny, they all had leprosy, they were all having deformities.

But this particular girl, because she was a Madrasi, she was despised, and they harassed her and they made her do the menial job. So, I told them, look, I'm also from the South. I'm also from a place like you might call Madrasi.

And from that, do you think, shall I go back to my place? Because I was the only doctor there who was treating them. So, do you think I should go back? She said, oh, no, no. So, they said, oh, no, no, we want you to be here.

You're not actually a Madrasi from like another part of, that's called Kerala. Then I said, that's all South India. So, I was thinking even among the leprosy people, this caste system is so prevalent, one despising the other.

And I think like, so I was thinking how it is so prevalent and our children grow up here and they're learning this. How can we, we must help our children not to have this despising attitude. We shouldn't tell them, speak to them like this.

Oh, don't have this disgusting habit that these people have, you know, doing this or doing that. They are, don't, we shouldn't, we should be so careful that our children don't have that habit of despising. Some of us in, you know, grown up in India, we've had people working in our home and we, how we treated them, even though just because they were poor, we treated them in a little lower way.

They're not allowed to sit with us at the table. They're not allowed to talk when they have to come in a different entrance. It's so prevalent in India and we have to judge ourselves.

We have to say, Lord, Lord Jesus, you came from heaven, King of kings and Lord of lords. And you came to earth and you identified yourself with us. You lived like us and people didn't know that you're the son of God.

They just thought you were just an ordinary human being. And they thought even worse about you. And you took that shame.

I have this beautiful verse, in all the affliction, he was afflicted. Sometime back, there was some terrible thing which happened in a part of India. There are a lot of Christians in that area and our government is a Hindu government.

So they started attacking the Christians, burning their houses, burning their churches. And the most terrible thing which brings tears to my eyes is they caught it. And this happened just a few months ago.

They caught a couple of women who were Christians and they stripped them naked. And they made them parade down the street. And the people of the other religion were laughing and scoffing.

And I thought of these poor women, how will they ever show their face again to the world? How will they ever come out and face the world? What a shameful thing they went through. Then I thought of Jesus, who for our sake on the cross, just a loincloth he had. And he was nailed on the cross and lifted up so everybody could see him, laugh at him, despise him, mock him.

And he went through all that. And he said, because of his love for us, he did that. And he identified.

And I thought when we go through, when we people like these women going through some shameful experience, or people look down on us, or they don't look at us even, or they despise us in some way. Or

some racial comment, they say, we can think of Jesus and we can get comfort. Lord, in our affliction, you were afflicted.

You bore our suffering on your body. And you took the shame for us. You didn't have to do that.

You could have been in heaven, living in the heavenly mansions, one with the father. But you chose, because you saw us suffering and going straight to hell, you chose to bear that affliction, that shame. If you see Isaiah, if you read Isaiah 53, read it, dear sisters, read it again and again.

He was afflicted. He was bruised. People didn't want to look at him.

They turned his face away when they didn't want to look at him. He was bruised and marred so much. We read that and we get comfort.

Our Lord, he suffered so much for us. How can we ever despise another human being? Let us also bear. Let us go with him outside the camp, as it says in Hebrews, bearing his reproach.

So another thing I was thinking of in minorities was we have to teach our children. Now our children face discrimination in school. First of all, they are Christians.

When they go to school, most people are not Christian, and especially they have some Christian standards. They don't watch the movies which other people, other children watch, or they don't have the same video or whatever those gadgets are. They don't have the modern things and the same type of video games they don't play.

And their friends tell them, where are you from? You don't even have this. You don't know about this game. You don't know this.

And you don't have this modern iPhone. You don't have this iPad and whatever these things are. You don't have that.

And they're despised, and they're dressed differently than the other children. And they come home. And I remember our children saying in their school days when they were despised and looked on and laughed at, they found comfort at home.

When they came home, they found the home, the home atmosphere was a comfort for them. Dad and mom are there for them. They can understand them.

They can encourage them. They can love them. They can comfort them.

And all that they lack in the world, they can get in the home. Our home should be like that for our children. We have to teach our children.

Doesn't matter if you're treated badly in school. You love them. In this world, you face injustice.

When you grow up, you may not get the job you deserve. You may not get the things that you, the way you may not be treated the way you should want. You want other people to treat you.

People may despise you, may laugh at you. This is a preparation. God wants you to deal.

Dad and mom won't be there with you. God wants you to deal with all these situations. Take this as a warning.

Don't be bitter towards anyone. Forgive them. Love them.

If you get a chance to do some good to them, take that opportunity. I remember in my school days, in one of my classes, there was a girl. She was a boarding, rich girl in the boarding school.

And we were day students. And they felt like they were superior to us Indians who studied in that school. And I didn't have much to do with her.

Then one day in one of our classes, the teacher, for some occasion, they distributed some special candy to everyone who was sitting in the class. It so happened that this particular girl had just gone to the restroom or something. She wasn't there when the candy was distributed.

And she came back and she found that everyone else got the candy, but she didn't get. And she was a little upset. And she said, and everything was over.

So then I don't want to praise myself, but something the Lord told me, you give your candy to her. And I gave my candy. It was such a small thing.

It was such a small thing that usually things like that, I take home and break it up and give it to all my siblings. But I thought, OK, this is too small. Let me give it to her.

And she was so, so happy. And she was so thankful. And for the rest of my school days, she was my friend.

So I was thinking the people who sometimes the people who despise us and who are mean to us, God may give us an opportunity to do some small thing and we can get their love and they'll respond. And maybe we can tell them about the Lord. They can see what is it that made her do this good thing for me.

It must have been Jesus. Maybe we can tell them about the Lord. So don't criticize our children for anything about their marks or anything, but encourage them and don't speak negatively about anybody to our children.

Encourage them. If they are bullied at school, say that's OK. Dad and mom are here.

If you get a chance, talk to the teacher and say, my child is suffering like this. Can you please help? Maybe the teachers can do something. But some children, if they don't get that proper comfort from their parents, I'm not saying about Christian homes, but in non-Christian homes, they're not comforted.

They become bitter and sour, and they may be the ones who years later, they take a gun and come and shoot people. So it's very important for us to teach our children how to face injustice in this world. And the Lord Jesus, he understood this stigma which this American woman faced.

And we, when our children face injustice and things like that, we have to help our children to deal with these things. And nowadays, in these days in schools, all these gender issues come up, and we don't know how to help our children to deal with that. Last year, it was a girl who came, and this year she has become a boy.

And how will our children deal with that? We have to teach our children, because if you speak strongly against it, they might get into trouble with the teachers, because the whole world is going in a different direction. We have to teach our children wisdom. That's OK.

That's her choice. But we are happy that you are so and so, and you are precious to us. Don't judge other people.

Let them be. They are free to choose what they want to do with their body. Sometimes the teachers may call our children and say, are you sure you're a girl? Don't you want to be a boy or something like that? We have to teach our children, be happy, be content with the way God has made you.

You're a girl. We are proud of you. We are happy that you're a girl.

And if you're a boy, we're happy that you're a boy, and you're going to get a good job. And if you're a girl, you're going to be a mother, and you're going to have some children, and you're going to love your children. We have to teach our children in these days wisdom, and not to judge others, but to teach them wisdom, and they can be a true witness in this generation.

We have to teach them, help them to cope in life, and we have to teach them the value of prayer. Whenever you're in a situation like this, when people mock you, and despise you, and laugh at you, pray the value of prayer. Jesus can help you, just like he helped that Samaritan woman.

Jesus can help you and bring you through this. Teach them the value of prayer. Teach them the value of the church.

How we have good friends in the church. Doesn't matter if people in school despise you. In the church, we have good friends.

So teach them those values. So that's why we need to teach our children not to harbor any bitterness or anything. Then another thing which this unfortunate but fortunate woman faced was that she had multiple marriages.

Now these days, divorce is so common. Every other person I meet here, or even in India, has something to do with divorce. Either the parents have divorce, or they themselves have divorce.

Think of children who have grown up in a broken home. How much of scarring they must have faced in their life. First of all, seeing the parents fight.

Every time they fought, they must have thought, will my parents separate? What will happen to me? Think of what suffering they must have gone through in their childhood. And they grow up with one parent, or a stepfather. And maybe the stepfather abuses the daughter, the stepdaughter.

That's so common. Then divorce is so common these days. And how do we deal with it? First of all, we have to think those of us who are not married.

I'll begin with it. When you approach marriage, don't think of divorce as an option at all. We give our vow in front of the church, in front of people, and in front of the Lord.

Jesus, God is our witness that we are going to be faithful and true to that husband, till death do us part. So those of us who are thinking of getting married, think of this. I have made this promise and this

commitment for life.

Okay, once we are married. Don't think of, look at all the negative things which happen. Don't look back at some person you liked in the past, and you wish you had married that.

Remember now that you're married to this man, and you're faithful to him. Faithful to him till the very end. Don't look at anybody else.

Don't compare your lot with anyone else. Maybe he doesn't help you with the dishes. You know what? It may be like this.

He might do things wrong. If he helps you, he might do something wrong, the wrong way. And you have to do, you have to teach him.

This is the way we do it. And this is the way I want it to be done. So don't be quick to say, oh, he doesn't help me.

He doesn't do this for me. Do as much as you can by yourself. And if you want help, ask him in a nice way.

Don't ask in a nagging way to upset him. Don't, don't look at, try, do your best to be a good wife. Do your best to make your home a happy place.

And you know, sometimes in India, people are, face divorce for, difficulty for becoming a Christian. I'll tell you one true story which happened. There was a sister who came to our church.

She's from, she was from a non-Christian background. And she heard the gospel. She was married.

She heard the gospel and she accepted Jesus into her heart. And she decided to follow. And the people of that religion, they have a mark on their forehead to show they belong to that religion.

So when she went home, the Lord convicted her about this. So she put a smaller mark. Because the mark for that religion is like a wedding ring.

It's a mark to show that you're going to be faithful to your husband. And only widows take off that mark. So she, she decided to put a small mark, that mark of that religion.

And the husband was, he said, hey, what happened? You forgot to put this mark? Oh, yeah, she, she was, she laughed and then she put the mark again. For some days and weeks, she fooled her husband. But she used to come to the church and be, wanted to follow.

Then somehow the husband felt like she's not the same as she was before. She's doing everything. She's cooking and cleaning and doing the laundry and everything.

She's good at, but she's something different about her. And he, you know, spied and investigated and found out that she's going to a Christian church. And she's accepted Jesus.

She must have thought she's becoming Christian. So we used to meet and we used to pray together, she and I. One day when she went back, the husband asked her, have you become a Christian? She said, yes. He beat her, thrashed her black and blue.

Back and face and black eye. She beat her so badly. And I heard about it and I felt so bad.

I thought, oh, I wish she had been protected, that she didn't have to get this. So somehow I met her in a common place where we used to meet her and her face was still swollen. So I said, I'm really sorry that all this happened to you.

You know, her face in that pain, her face was shiny. And she said, Jesus was beaten. I'm so happy that I could bear a little bit of suffering for Jesus.

He was beaten much more. He died for my sin. This is a small thing.

In many, and he threatened, he threatened to divorce her. He said, I don't want a Christian wife. You can go, you can go back to your home.

And he threatened her. That time she didn't have any children. So she thought, and we used to pray.

She and I used to pray. We used to pray over the phone whenever she got an opportunity. She was a working woman.

So sometimes in some place in between, we'd meet and pray together. I said, you'll be a good wife. That's all the Lord wants you to do.

And I told her verses in 1 Corinthians, I'll tell you the verse later. Paul says, if your husband is converted, you'll be a good wife. Don't divorce, don't leave him.

And he tells the husband also, if your wife is not converted, don't send her home. You'll be a good husband. So I read those passages to her and I said, I will pray.

So we prayed and he saw she's so good to him. She goes out of the way to make special meals to him and serve it warm and takes care of him. And she did so much to him that he started changing.

He said, he must have thought, my wife is so good to me. Even though I beat her and I did so much to her, harmed her. She could have left me and gone back to her home, but she's still sticking on with me.

And I've been just growling at her and he started changing. And she told me he's changed a little bit, but still he didn't allow her to go to church or meetings or anything and slowly changed. You know, when they built a new house for the house dedication, he told her, call the elder in your church to pray for this house.

So we had a chance to go to that church and pray. And when the first child was wanting to be blessed, she said, we'll take the child to church and we'll ask the elder to pray for that child. He changed so much.

He came to the church and I don't know whether in the end, whether he really accepted Jesus, but he said, when it was time to go to church, he said, get ready and go to church. Leave all this, go to church. So much he changed.

I know many women like that in CFC Bangalore and in other places where they were almost at the point of divorce and the Lord saved their marriage. So don't think of divorce as a thing that you are going to, that's an option. God hates divorce.

That's what Malachi says. And Jesus also said in Matthew 19 verses 4 to 9, he says about divorce, he says, you can read that and what the church teaches about divorce, you know, if you look up the CFC website, you can read a lot of messages on divorce. So whatever the conditions are, put up with that.

If your husband is not faithful and thinking of some other women, that's also very common these days where people meet other women in the workplace, but don't think of that as a reason, unfaithful husband as a reason to divorce, show more love and pray that woman out of his life. I have seen that also happen. And ask the Lord, you don't have to tell others, but ask the Lord to do this one thing for you, take that woman or that woman out of his life and give him back.

But sometimes it doesn't happen. But remember, the Lord is our husband. Be faithful to him.

Don't give room to anything the devil brings, fighting with your husband or passing rude or punishing him by not having sex or not cooking food. Don't do any such thing. Be a good wife.

God will bring your husband back. Even if it doesn't, the Lord who sees will reward. And forgive whatever the husband has done in the past.

Don't bring it up and say, you did like this so many years back, you were like this or your past friendship and don't keep nagging. Just leave that matter because if God has cleansed, why should we keep remembering? If God chooses not to remember, why should we remember? So those are the things. And those of us who are young wives, be careful to guard our relationship with our husbands.

Many wives, young wives, they have been foolish. They call other girls and spend time with them. And the husband feels neglected.

Don't give room to that. When the husband is at home, make the home that's his home as well as yours and let him have the preference and the attention that he needs. And if you're a mother like me, don't come in the way of your married children.

Don't keep expecting, criticizing them or making demands on them. Don't come in the way. When they want to talk, let them talk to you.

Don't come. Don't be a wedge in them. Don't interfere in anything and then give them their space.

So those are the ways in which we older women can help the younger women. In Titus, we read about how older women can help the younger women. Those are the things which we can do.

Now, if we are already divorced, that's unfortunate also. Don't condemn yourself. Think of this American woman whom Jesus loved and he used her to be a blessing to many others.

Don't condemn yourself if you're already divorced. But see what God's word is. Have a low profile in life.

Don't think like, oh, I'm somebody to teach other women. And think of ourselves in a sober way. Have a sober estimate of ourselves because in some way we have not obeyed what God has wanted us to do.

Unfortunately, maybe in the unconverted days, things are happening. Oh, it was the husband who divorced us. But if you're already divorced, then don't condemn yourself.

Get comfort from the Lord. Draw close to him. God's word is there for us also.

For people like that, we can get all the promises are for us or whether we are divorced or not. All God's blessing is for us. So, but in the church, don't try to be a leader.

That's what God's word says. And have a humble and sober estimate of ourselves. Now, I've covered a lot and our time is up, but maybe we can, I don't even have time to go through what we have done.

But there's a lot for us to meditate on and think about. And may the Lord help us, whatever state we are, to be true and faithful to him and live a life that is ready for his coming. And learn from Jesus not to judge from the outward appearance of people.

When we see someone coming to the church dressed in a gaudy way, in a showy way, don't judge them and say, oh, this woman, she's not going to enter God's kingdom. Look at her as one who needs the love of Jesus, who needs the compassion of Jesus and how Jesus used that woman as the Samaritan woman to, because she was humble and because she was honest, God, Jesus used her to be a blessing. The Samaritan people, they said, now we believe not because of your words, but we have heard for ourselves.

And they came to believe in him as a Messiah. Many of the Jews and the Pharisees, they missed it. But this despised group of people, even the disciples despised them.

At one time, the disciples said, shall we call down fire to burn up these Samaritans? Even the disciples couldn't understand. But you know, Jesus, at the end of this chapter four, in closing, I want to say, Jesus told the disciples, lift up your eyes and look. Look at the fields.

They are ready for harvest. Look at the fields of human beings. Till now, you had a fog covering your eyes.

You looked at people as Samaritans. You despised them. The fog has been lifted.

The dividing wall between Jews and Samaritans has been broken down. It says, we read in Ephesians, Jesus broke down the wall which separates Jews and Gentiles. And Paul carried on that.

It was difficult for him. People hated him for doing that. But Jesus said, this dividing wall has been broken down.

Don't build another wall. Last Sunday in church, we sang this song, build bridges, not walls. I don't know how that goes.

But God called us, just like Jesus did between earth, between our fallen human race and heaven. Jesus was the bridge. The cross was the bridge where Jesus died on that cross.

He made a bridge for us, broke down the dividing wall which Satan built and brought. He broke down that wall and he made a bridge between earth and heaven is hell. We fall straight into hell fire, but the bridge is there.

It brings us straight into that heavenly city. So how good Jesus has been to us. Let us not build up another wall dividing us between this race and that, between this group of people and that group of people.

Let us break down everything because Jesus has already broken down. Let us not build that wall again, but live in having love and compassion for others. Jesus said, look at the fields, ready for harvest.

Human beings, Samaritans, they're ready to come into God's kingdom. And he says, pray, pray that the Lord will send us. If he's praying for us, you'll be one of those who bring the harvesting.

The sower and the one who gathers, the one who reaps will get the wages. Let's do our part. The time is so short.

Let us do our part to do what the Lord wants us to love people of all races, to love our enemies, to love and forgive, to make our homes a haven for our children. And give up all the prejudices and the walls which separate us and bring us all into, bring everyone who come across our path into God's kingdom. I have a lot more to say, but our time is up.

May the Lord bless you and bless each one of us and help us to be like this despised woman whom God used in his mercy. He doesn't look at outward appearances, but he looks at our heart. He sees, are we honest? Are we humble? Then all the blessing is there for us.

The blessing of Abraham. I bless you and make you a blessing. Shall we close in prayer? Our Heavenly Father, there's so much in your word which you want to teach us.

Every page is so precious. Every page is full of promises, full of hope for us. No discouragement, but love and compassion and hope for us.

We want to receive your word, Lord, and all that you want to give us. Help us, Lord, to become like you, Lord Jesus. Oh, Lord Jesus, we thank you.

Thank you for bearing that shame, affliction and being wounded and afflicted for us. All that you went through, we can never understand it. Only when we get to heaven, we can see how much you did, how much you suffered for us.

What a lot you did for us so that we could be taken out of this kingdom of darkness and brought into your kingdom of light. Thank you, Lord Jesus. With all our heart, we thank you for all that you did for us.

Help us, Lord, to be true and faithful to you. Help us not to despise anyone, Lord. Help us to love all your children.

Help us to love your enemies. Help us to do everything that you taught us to do. The time is so short, Lord.

Please take away the fog from our eyes. Clear our vision, Lord, and we pray that you will help us. Give us your grace.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit. By our strength, we cannot do it. Give us your power to be witnesses for you, to live the type of life, the kind of life you want us to live.

We ask it in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/811RNX32VHg.mp4>

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