



## Heaven on Earth (Part 14) – Wounded Healer

J.T. English – November 25, 2018

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How are we doing? It's so good to be with you today. I'm not sure on this weekend whether we're supposed to say Happy Thanksgiving or Merry Christmas, so I'll lead with both! Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas! My family and I had a great week. We got to spend some time in Myrtle Beach this past week. It was a trip we were supposed to take in June but couldn't take. We got to take it this week, and the Lord just reminded us of his deep and abiding faithfulness to us. It was really, really wonderful!

Raise your hand if you're still in town visiting friends and family for Thanksgiving. There are a few of you. God bless you! By Friday night, I was like, "Lord, please get me to my own bed." I'm a social introvert, so I love my family as deeply as I possibly could; I just need some alone time. For those of you who have endured until Sunday... Well done! The Lord sees you, and he loves you, and he knows you indeed.

Last night, I was preparing for this sermon. Of course, I was praying and writing and thinking. I'm not sure if you saw, but there was a football game on. It was on much later than it should have been on, but it had seven overtimes. I like to think I had a little something to do with it ending because in the middle of the seventh overtime I prayed, "Lord, if you want the Word of God to go forth tomorrow, you need to end this game right now because I'm not sure I'm going to get any rest or sleep." He did, and the Aggies triumphed victoriously.

I'm eager to be with you today because today is our last sermon in the gospel of John for the fall semester. We're going to take the next four weeks starting next week with it being advent. Then, we'll have a January prayer sermon series, and we'll pick back up in February where we leave off today.

Today is our last sermon in the sermon series in the gospel of John for this fall semester. I'm really excited to be with you and consider this second part of what Jesus is doing in his interaction with

this Samaritan woman, but I thought it would be good for all of us considering we're not going to be in John for the next few months to summarize where we've been so far.

We've only been through about four chapters. What have we learned? What has God taught us? What ultimately is the gospel of John trying to teach us? There are some really profound truths. John opens up his gospel with one of the most powerful theological statements ever penned, ever written, or ever thought.

**"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."** All things came into being through him. All things were made for him and through him. Then, in John 1:14, one of my favorite passages in all of Scripture, John says, "[This] **Word...**" The Creator, the sustainer, the one who has been in relationship with the Father from the beginning who has no beginning and who has no end... "This Word took upon himself human flesh and tabernacled or dwelt among us."

If that doesn't blow your mind, I just have nothing else for you today. This eternal God would take upon flesh and come and dwell with his people. He would begin calling disciples to himself to show us what it's like to live in the presence of God and to follow Jesus who calls 12 disciples mimicking the 12 tribes of Israel. God is establishing his kingdom.

He then goes to a wedding, and he makes this water into wine demonstrating that he is the one John says he is. He is the Creator. He has power and dominion and authority over all created things. Then, he goes to the temple and he cleanses the temple trying to tell his people, "I'm not interested in your religiosity or your spiritual rituals. I'm not interested in your external purity but your internal impurity. I'm much more interested in your heart, so stop participating in this spiritual consumerism but come and follow me."

Then, he has an interaction with this guy named Nicodemus. Nicodemus is a teacher of the law, the guy who should have been expecting the presence of God, the guy who should have recognized who Jesus was, but he completely misses him. It's like this entrapment scene where Nicodemus comes to Jesus, and he tries to trap Jesus in this kind of theological conversation, but Jesus ultimately takes him to school, and he says, "You don't understand, Nicodemus. You're a teacher of the law, but I tell you. You must be born again if you're going to inherit the kingdom of heaven."

Nicodemus doesn't understand these things, and Jesus says to him, "You must be born of water, and you must be born of Spirit, and anyone who believes in me will be given eternal life." Nicodemus leaves frustrated and depressed. I wish we had time to trace Nicodemus' story because his story ends very differently at the end of the gospel of John, but we haven't gotten there yet.

Jesus, then being rejected by the religious leaders and being rejected by the people in Jerusalem... Where does he go? To the most unlikely of places and he meets one of the most unlikely people. He goes to Samaria. We talked last week about Samaria and the Samaritans being this racial half-breed, this ethnic outcast, the people who theologically and sociologically did not get along with the Jerusalemites or the Jews in any way. The tension between these two groups of people could not be overstated enough. It's simply something that you could cut the tension with a knife.

Where does this rabbi go after he's rejected in Jerusalem? He makes his way through Samaria, and he meets a woman at a well, the Samaritan woman. He meets this woman who has this incredibly deep wound. Some scholars would say it's because of her sexual infidelity. Others have suggested it's actually probably not sexual infidelity like adultery but it's actually probably deep loss. People have probably divorced her. Perhaps they've died. Regardless of what it is, what we do know from the text is this is a woman with deep wounding.

We talked about how all of us have wounds. The Samaritan woman, much like us, defends and deflects and doesn't want Jesus to enter into her wound, so she changes the subject, but Jesus says to her, "I know your wound. I know what you're hiding." He says, "I didn't come here and you shouldn't come here just for physical water, but you can actually have access to eternal water, water and springs that have no ending and no end in sight."

Then, we pick up these verses. What's incredible about what happens at the beginning of John 4 is it's just two people having a conversation. There is nobody around. The disciples are gone. Jesus is interacting with this woman who you would never expect him to have this kind of interaction with. We pick up our text today in John, chapter 4, verse 27. If you have your Bible, I invite you to turn there. John 4, verse 27.

**"Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you seek?' or, 'Why are you talking with her?' So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?' They went out of the town and were coming to him.**

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, "There are yet four months, then comes the harvest"? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.' Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.'

So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.' After the two days he departed for Galilee. (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast."

Here are the main points I want us to kind of think about today and consider together. *Jesus disciples the overlooked, he heals through wounds, and he dwells with his people.* If you have your Bible still open, look back to verse 27. Again, Jesus and the Samaritan woman are there by themselves. There is nobody around, and Jesus' disciples (the next crop of leaders for the church) walk up to Jesus, and the text says, "**They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you seek?' or, 'Why are you talking with her?'**"

1. *Jesus disciples the overlooked.* Last week, we talked about how odd it is that Jesus is having an interaction with a Samaritan. It's just a bizarre thing that he would be spending time in Samaria with a Samaritan. Like we have already said, they're ethnic outsiders, racial outsiders, theological outsiders, and social outsiders. They're just outcasts. They were considered to be ritually unclean and theologically wrong, so the tension is enormous, but that's not what surprises his disciples in verse 27, is it? It doesn't say they were surprised he was talking with a Samaritan. What does it say?

They were surprised he was talking with a woman. It's not just that he's talking with a Samaritan, but he's talking with a woman. At this time, for a rabbi to talk to a woman was at best a distraction and at worst seen as sexually promiscuous. Ancient Jewish tradition held that to speak to a woman about the Torah, the very thing Jesus had been doing in our text from last week, was the greatest of all evils. Some people suggested if you're going to teach your daughter or your wife the Torah you might as well allow them to go into prostitution.

In contemporary thought, there was literally no reason to teach a woman theology. There was no reason to teach a woman the Bible. It was a waste of time. The overarching belief, according to Jesus' disciples, was that the mission of God is taken forward by men, strong men and not by women. Women are an afterthought. Women aren't important in the mission of God. Women have no place in this redemptive history of what God is doing in the world. As long as we can create disciples of men, then maybe we'll reach the women. Let's reach the men.

Jesus' disciples are reflecting their cultural worldview. Unfortunately, it's still reflected by many in the church today, isn't it? That strong men alone take the mission of God forward, that women are not necessary for the mission of God. The disciples believed women were add-ons and unnecessary afterthoughts to the mission of God. They had succumbed to this bizarre and weird cultural narrative about gender and not the biblical narrative about gender.

We see in Genesis 1:26, it says, "**Then God said, 'Let us make [humanity] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the [world]...'**" The very beginning of the Bible does not begin with sexual distinction; it begins with human sameness. What does Adam say to his wife when she is created? "Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, you are like me! You are same from me."

Often we forget that our shared humanity precedes and is more important than our sexual and biological distinctions. Jesus' disciples had seen that. They allowed gender to become more definitive of this person than the fact that she was a person and that she bore the image of God. The Bible teaches both men and women are created in God's image not one created in God's image and the other one a derivative from God's image, but we both share in God's image as his representatives, according to Genesis.

The Bible gives us a picture of men and women partnering together as each other's necessary allies moving the gospel and the kingdom of God forward. Anytime we do not empower both men and

women to be engaged in the mission of God the church and the mission of the church will suffer. Don't hear me the wrong way. Gender matters, especially in light of all of the cultural conversation that is going on about being male and female.

We do not believe and the Bible does not give us a picture that men and women are interchangeable. Male is male, and female is female, but image-bearing precedes gender and sexuality. Men and women are each other's necessary allies, but this woman is not receiving that message from Jesus' disciples, is she?

What kind of a message is she receiving from Jesus' disciples? "You're subordinate. You're less important. The mission of God can go forward without you. God is not interested in partnering with you for taking the kingdom forward. He only needs us. You're other than. You are distinct from. You're not as important in what God is doing. We are important with what God is doing. Jesus should be with us. Why is he with you?"

I know, just given my experience as a pastor, many women, though not having this exact experience, have had similar experiences in the church. I want to say, "I'm sorry," but I want to tell you something really important based upon this text here. You are absolutely indispensable allies in the mission of God. Indispensable and necessary, the mission will not go forward without you.

Women need to hear that. You are not an afterthought to Jesus. He sees you. He loves you. He knows you. He sees you as an ally. He sees you as a friend. You're not a threat to him. You're not a threat to anybody else in this church. You're not less than. You're absolutely needed. He sees you, he loves you, and he wants to use you in powerful ways.

We need your minds. We need your heart. We need your leadership. We need your gifts. We need your strengths. We need your weaknesses. We need your vulnerabilities. I want you to be studying God's Word with us in Bible studies and classes or the training program or the residency. I want you thriving as leaders in Group Life. I want you serving as leaders and volunteers in every single one of our ministries because you are absolutely indispensable allies in the mission of God, and the disciples often forget that, and the church can forget it sometimes, too.

Men, look at me. I'll say *we*. I'm one of y'all. Men, we do not have a monopoly on the mission of God, but sometimes we act like we do, and we need to stop. The Bible is really clear to us when we go about mission by ourselves in Genesis 1. What does it say? When man is alone it's not good. We are

in absolutely dependency and in need on women coming alongside of us and moving the mission of God forward. If we pursue mission by ourselves, it always goes badly.

Strong male leadership is never intimidated by strong female leadership. Only weak male leadership is intimidated by female leadership. Your responsibility as a man, whether it's your wife, your daughter, your mom, your kids, your friends in your Home Group, or your friends in the training program...

Wherever it is, your responsibility is to encourage, exhort, challenge, and champion them as they become disciples of Jesus and not to view them as threats, not to view them as outsiders, and not to view them as outcasts but to view them as sisters. The Bible says when men pursue the mission of God alone it's not good, but we are in need of our sisters to come alongside of us, and they are in need of us coming alongside them, but the disciples missed that.

The disciples see this Samaritan woman as a threat or an outcast to the mission of God, but Jesus sees her as a friend and as an ally. Jesus was not hostage to the sexism of his day, and the church can't afford to be hostage to the sexism of our day. At The Village Church, we desire to be a family of God seeking and pursuing the mission of God together as fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters.

Friends, we cannot afford to be a single-parent household, and we can't afford to be only children. We need fathers and mothers and we need brothers and sisters in order for this mission to go forward. One of the greatest joys so far as I've been on staff here at The Village Church is watching our leaders, our elders, work through the challenging idea of biblical complementarity, of what it looks like for men and women to partner together in ministry.

It was an 18-month journey of our elders considering the Bible together, and they put together a paper that outlines our belief about men and women partnering together for ministry, and here's what I can say. All of that work is already bearing fruit in the life of the church. I've seen countless stories of men and women sharing with me or just watching it happen in the life of the church. I don't believe right now we're a church that would be surprised, like the disciples were, but we can't afford to be, and we can never be that.

We need to be a church that champions each other as we get to be disciples of Jesus. Believe me. I wish I could spend my whole sermon on this text, but the last thing I'll say about just this one verse

is this verse is highlighting that racial prejudice and sexual bias have a long and demonic history in the life of God's people, and only the gospel, embodied by the family of God as we follow and imitate the way of Jesus, is the remedy. We cannot afford to miss this.

Racial reconciliation and biblical complementarity are at the very heart of what Jesus is doing, and Jesus is trying to show his disciples, "Your prejudice and your bias is actually what's going to prevent the mission from going forward," but as we seek to be a multi-ethnic family of God of fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters of all tribes, tongues, and people, it is then that the gospel goes forward.

The last thing on this topic is I just want to remind you what this Samaritan woman's experience would have been like. Just think about her standing there talking to Jesus and a group of men come up and she just leaves because she knows what they think about her. She's an outcast, an outsider, a threat. This woman had every excuse to not participate in the mission of God. "I'm not educated. I'm theologically wrong. I'm socially an outcast. I'm not of the majority culture. I am not like them."

What did Jesus say in John, chapter 3, to Nicodemus? He said, "**The wind blows where it wishes...**" You don't get to manufacture it. You don't get to tell it where it will go. The Spirit will blow where the Spirit blows. They thought the Spirit was going to blow in Jerusalem, but where is it blowing? It's about to blow in Samaria through a Samaritan woman.

God does what he wants. We don't manufacture anything. The Spirit goes and the Spirit does what he wants and what he wishes because Jesus disciples the disadvantaged, he dignifies them, and he draws near to them whether we want him to or not. It's what his mission is doing. Jesus disciples the overlooked, but here's what's incredible about this passage.

2. *He heals through wounds.* Look back at the text with me. We learned last week that this woman is wounded. She has five husbands, and the man she's with right now isn't even her husband. Verse 28 says, "**So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?' They went out of the town and were coming to him.**"

Now, jump down to verse 39. It says, "**Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.'**" We cannot afford to miss this. This woman who just verses earlier, perhaps minutes earlier in terms of actual time elapsing, is hiding

from Jesus. She's deflecting. She's defensive. This wound goes so deep in her she wants to do anything but talk about her current relationship status. It's so painful. It's so embarrassing. It's so shame-filled, but Jesus heals her wound. Then, what happens?

After Jesus heals her wound, she goes back to her town, and the very thing she was just hiding becomes the thing that propels her into mission. The very thing she didn't want to tell anybody about, the very thing she was just hiding from Jesus becomes the very thing she leads with in her sharing of the gospel. She says in verse 29, "**Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.**" Everything that she was hiding becomes what she leads with. The very thing she hid from Jesus actually becomes the thing that propels her into mission.

Friends, we talked last week that every single one of us is wounded. Every single one of us is carrying shame and guilt and embarrassment and pain and sin and being sinned against, but our wounds don't keep us from living on mission; it's our wounds that actually fuel our mission, according to this text. The thing she was hiding becomes the thing she wants to display.

You guys know my wife and I have been walking through a challenging and difficult season. I just want to continue telling you as we get updates. We just want to testify to the Lord's faithfulness. My wife is one of the strongest people I know. You guys know my story. I came to faith in college. I met Macy two weeks before I came to faith at a grocery store. Basically, at Kroger in the snack aisle. If you find a wife in the snack aisle, you're doing pretty good. Anytime I go down the snack aisle now, I go, "You never know what God's going to do in this aisle. He's going to do something great."

We meet. I come to faith two weeks later. Then, she ends up being at the very first Christian event I ever went to. I remember thinking to myself, "God, would you provide somebody in my life like that? Somebody who loves Jesus, who loves the Scriptures, who wants to live on mission, who is lovely and gracious and kind and humble and honors you with all that she does. Maybe, Lord, would you be gracious one day to give me a wife like that?"

I never in a million years... I could take you back to the seat I was sitting in. I never in a million years thought it would be Macy, but great is thy faithfulness! He has been so kind to me to give me a wife like Macy. I can testify and say that even after years of theological education and years of pastoring there is nobody in my life who has taught me more about Jesus than Macy. There's nobody in my life who has taught me more about Jesus than my wife.

She embodies his humility. She embodies his hope and confidence. She deals graciously with me in the midst of my brokenness and sin. She has also suffered greatly. Something you guys might not know about our story is that over the course of our marriage we received word once when we were living in Louisville that her brother was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and we buried him a week later.

The day I accepted the job at The Village Church, I got a call two hours later that her dad was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. We moved here. He was in town. We buried him 63 days later. She is somebody who has walked through grief and pain and suffering certainly with lament but also with hope, and she has embodied that and modeled that for me, and if I'm being honest with you, that's what made this last season so challenging.

We walked into a doctor's office and we were starting to talk about life expectancy and perhaps amputation. I began thinking to myself, "The person who embodies and models the way of Jesus to me, I cannot imagine or fathom life without her." It was overwhelmingly dreadful and terrifying to me.

We walked out of that doctor's office, and Macy was the one who initiated a prayer. She prayed, "Lord, would you receive glory from this? Would you bring people to saving faith in Christ through this? Whatever you do, whether you bring healing to me or not, I want you to receive honor, I want you to receive glory, and I want you to draw people to yourself."

Meanwhile, I'm in a puddle of tears next to her just wondering what is happening to my life. Here she is, and we're experiencing this incredible wound in our lives, this thing that was bringing so much pain, so much shame, so much anxiety, and so much woundedness, and she embodies this way of hope, asking that the Lord would bring healing through her wound.

I want to introduce a term to you that maybe you're not familiar with. It's the idea of a wounded healer, that somebody might receive healing through your wound. I think that's what we see happening here with the Samaritan woman. Here's this woman who has received unbelievable amounts of grief and guilt and shame and embarrassment, and all she wants to do is hide. All she wants to do is self-protect and defend, and Jesus begins to heal her. What does she do?

She becomes a wounded healer. She goes back to her town. She doesn't lead with healing. She doesn't lead with victory. She leads with her wound. She leads with her weakness. She leads with

her vulnerability. Maybe more than anything else here's what I want you to hear me say today. Your deepest wounds are likely your greatest opportunity for ministry.

Your deepest wounds, your deepest pains, your deepest regrets, your deepest frustrations, whether it's through your sin or somebody else's sin to you or perhaps just living in a broken world, it's those places where God desires to use you, and they become your greatest opportunities for ministry.

I believe this with all of my heart, that God is more interested in using your wounds than he is interested in using your gifts. I believe God is more interested in using you in your weakness than he is in your strength. It's our deepest wounds where God's grace is most evident and clear. The very thing you and I want to hide and protect and defend against and kind of project out is that thing.

Whatever that is for you, when you begin to accept the invitation to open that wound to Jesus and say, "Be with me and heal me," it's there. It's that space where God's grace becomes so evident in your life. It's that space where God's grace doesn't just stop at your life, but it begins making its way out to the community around you. The invitation to have our wounds healed by Jesus is also an invitation to allow other people to be healed through our wounds.

What if God wants to bring healing to somebody in your world or in your sphere of influence not after your wound but through your wound? So many of us think we can bring holistic discipleship or healing to people once we are well, but what if God wants to bring healing to you in your wound or in your sickness? What if God wants to use your wound to bring healing to the person next to you who doesn't know the wound you've been hiding for years? What if exposing that vulnerability not only would bring healing to you but those around you?

Your wounds don't scare Jesus. He's not put off by them. He's not put off by you. He's not afraid of you. Your brokenness is not off-putting. Rather, it's something he's intimately aware of. There are so many incredible things about this passage, but verse 39 says the Samaritans believed. They believed the woman's testimony.

"We know you have suffered. We know how much pain you've gone through. We know what this sinful, broken world has done to your world, and you are leading with your wound and vulnerability because you're experiencing healing from Christ the Messiah, the Savior of the world."

This quote by Henri Nouwen is both deeply encouraging to me and deeply haunting. He says, "Nobody escapes being wounded." Can I get an, "Amen"?

"We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not, 'How can we hide our wounds?'" Think Genesis 3. "...so we don't have to be embarrassed,' but 'How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?'" Do you see how different that is? What if we spent less time hiding our guilt and shame and pain and more time thinking about how others might experience healing through our vulnerability and pain?

When our wounds cease to be a source of shame and become a source of healing, it is then that we have become wounded healers. Friends, the very heart of the mission of God is not showing our victories but our weakness in Christ's victory. The very heart of the mission of God for you wherever God has you is not showing how gifted you are but how wounded you are and how Christ is making you whole through his victory not yours.

God does not use just our victories for mission; he also uses our wounds, and the wound you've been hiding from Jesus is meant to be healed and will be one day at the resurrection of the dead, but in the meantime, it's possible he wants to use that wound to bring healing to others. Jesus disciples the overlooked, he heals through wounds, and finally...

3. *He dwells with his people.* Look back in the text at verse 40. **"So when the Samaritans came to him they asked him to stay with them..."** If you write in your Bible, I would highlight that. **"...and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.'"**

Who are the people of God? In this day, the Samaritans were not. It was supposedly just the Jewish people, that Jesus was going to come to Jerusalem triumphantly and enter into the temple, and God's presence is reinvading the world through God's religiously and ritually pure people in Jerusalem, but Jesus has just been in Jerusalem. Right? We just talked about this. He was just in Jerusalem, and what did the Jerusalemites say to him?

"Get out of here! We don't want to be in your presence. We're comfortable with our religious rituals. We're comfortable with our mundane spirituality. Our religion is not based upon the presence of God; it's based upon human practice." Then, he goes to Samaria to the people where God's presence

was never supposed to go, to the people who were ritually unclean and who were theologically wrong and who were socially outcasts and ethnically different, but John 1 reminds us this is exactly what's going to happen.

Think back to John 1:11-13. **"He came to his own..."** Read, he came to Jerusalem. **"...and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him..."** Read, Samaritans. **"...who believed in his name..."** The Samaritan woman. **"...he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."**

The very people who you would think would accept and expect and yearn and want and desire the presence of God miss it, and they think their religious and spiritual lives can go forward without the presence of Jesus. Why? Because they don't see themselves as wounded people. They see themselves as a victorious people.

Then, you read about the Samaritans, the people who were wounded, who were the outcasts, who were desperate. They're the ones who think, "Would anybody miss us if we weren't here? Are we even a part of God's plan? Does God even desire to use people like us? We're just sinful, broken, wounded people." They meet God face to face, and rather than asking him incredible theological questions or rather than trying to deflect and hide, what do they do? They simply say, "Would you stay with us, Jesus? Will you stay here?"

At the very heart of the Christian life is this deep yearning and desire and expectation around the presence of God in our lives. The psalmist talks about it this way. He says, "Like a deer pants for streams of living water, so my soul longs for you." Often we think about that verse as kind of a doe that's just healthy and prancing along in a green pasture walking up to a nice lake or a flowing river.

That's not what the psalmist was trying to say. What's the psalmist trying to say? You are like a deer that is dehydrated and minutes away from death, eyes bulging out, tongue swollen, and froth coming out of your mouth because you haven't experienced water, and you're so desperate for water that you will do absolutely anything to find some.

Are you that desperate for the presence of God or are you okay, like the Jerusalemites were, for simple religious and spiritual practices? Are you so wounded and so aware of your shame and your weakness and your brokenness and the sin you have caused or the sin that has been done to you that the only solution is the presence of Jesus?

That's where the Samaritans are, and they just say, "Will you stay with us?" How do you get the presence of God in your life? It's not through ritual. It's not through a program. It's not through biblical literacy. It's not through a Home Group. What is it? Ask. Just ask. Frederick Bruner says an abiding relationship with Jesus is as simple as living and asking life.

Are you hurting, in pain, wounded? Are you scared? Jesus wants to be with you. He wants to stay with you there, not in your wholeness, not in your health, not in just your healing, but in your woundedness. One of the things I love about this passage, too, is it says the Samaritans originally believed because of the woman's testimony. Then, they hear Jesus, and they say, "Wow! That's way better!"

Much like when you hear a sermon at The Village Church. You need to know this. You cannot rely on Matt or me or any preacher up here to keep your attention. Our only goal is to show you the hero. If you are not living a Christian life that is dependent on the daily presence of Jesus in your life, we are incredibly weak and poor substitutes. It's even bad to say *substitute*.

The presence of Jesus in your life is your only hope. We, like the Samaritan woman, are simply trying to be wounded healers and say, "We are ones who have experienced healing by the gospel. Look at him! Look at what he has done! Look at what he has accomplished!" It says that the Samaritans believed not because the Samaritan woman testified but because Jesus testified himself.

I want you to think for a few minutes, as we wrap up here, about your wounds. What are your wounds? I know this a complex question. For some of us, it's one thing. For some of us, it's one thing that impacts every part of our lives. Maybe it's something nobody knows about in this room. Maybe you've never told a soul.

Maybe it's something everybody knows about, like the Samaritan woman. Maybe you've hidden and deflected. Maybe your shame is just too great. Maybe it was a sin you've committed. Maybe it was a sin that somebody committed against you. When you think about it, it's just so hard to go to that place.

I just want to do something simple as we wrap up. I want you to do what the Samaritans did and just say, "Jesus, will you stay with me there? Will you come into the place I don't want anybody to come? Will you abide with me in the midst of my wound? Will you be my wounded healer?" I want

you to ask Jesus to come into that wound, to invade your vulnerability and your shame and your guilt, and to bring truth and grace. Here's what you need to know. Our sins and our wounds are innumerable, but his grace is more. Our sins and our wounds are innumerable, but his grace overcomes. First Peter says,

**"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness."**

Do not miss this line. **"By his wounds you have been healed."** Jesus is God's wounded healer who brings grace and mercy and peace as a great High Priest. What does the Samaritan woman do when she goes back to her town? She leads with her wounds. How is Jesus right now leading you? **"By his wounds you have been healed."**

He is right now sitting at the right hand of the Father pleading his wounds, his blood, on your behalf, saying, "That one is mine. No more guilt. No more shame. No more pain, son and daughter." It's our deepest wounds where God's grace is most evident because it's in Christ's wounds where grace is most present. Let's pray.

To you, Father, and to the Son, and to the Spirit, we commit ourselves to you. You are our God. To you, Son, we offer all honor and glory and praise because you are our wounded healer. You are the God who took upon weakness, who took upon wounds, who took upon shame, who took upon sin for us and for our salvation.

We pray we would in the same way imitate this way of the Samaritan woman of being wounded healers exposing our wounds to you so that you might bring life and cleanliness and healing. We pray you would make us into a people and a community who lead with our wounds. We're not experiencing only victory but through pain, through regret, and through shame, you are demonstrating yourself to be victorious. We ask these things in Christ's name, amen.