

**SERMON: “AND HE TALKS WITH ME ... ”**  
**TEXTS: NEW TESTAMENT JOHN 4:5-42**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*I come to the garden alone, While the dew is still on the roses;  
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses.*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own,  
And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.*

These familiar words from the hymn “In the Garden” have provided comfort to many people over many years. This hymn is an old favorite.

The imagery of just walking and talking with Jesus in a garden works well  
You can picture that. You’d like that. So too would many others

The hymn begins with the author of the hymn coming to the garden alone  
You get that sense of peace and quiet, tranquility. Maybe around dusk or dawn  
Alone time, one on one with Jesus ... that sounds really special.

This story from John’s gospel features Jesus’ longest conversation in the gospels with just one person. It is not Peter or James or John. Not someone mentioned several times throughout his ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem.

This conversation is with a woman mentioned only once - here.  
We don’t even get her name. All we get is that she is a Samaritan

**A Samaritan woman came to draw water and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone into the city to buy food). The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?”**

This Samaritan woman is the one who can say or sing ... “And he talks with me.”  
The conversation has plenty to say about who Jesus is and who she is  
But let’s not miss the forest for the trees. The fact that Jesus is making time for this unnamed woman, talking with this woman, is the headline

Taking time to think about the people Jesus interacts with, his contact list  
Shouldn’t that get us to thinking about our address book, our contact lists?  
The same can be said about his travel itinerary. Location, location, location.  
And this location. This happens in Samaria. Jesus was in Samaria.

***Show image – Map with Jacob’s well (Samaria)***

## WELCOME TO SAMARIA

I've been there – to Samaria, to that well, Jacob's well  
Let me show you where it is – big picture and up close. Let's find it on a map.  
The where of this conversation is important. It was then. It is now.

The ancient land known as Samaria has many names.  
Most of the world now call that land Palestine or the West Bank  
Many in the settler movement and in the Israeli government, including  
Prime Minister Netanyahu call it Samaria. Their language is intentional,  
It is the land of an ancient adversary / enemy that the settlers see as their own.

That is the where. Jesus ends up talking with a Samaritan woman because  
he is in Samaria. John tells us that Jesus "had to go through Samaria."  
You can see on the map how that would be the case. A more direct route  
Just so happens that route goes through their land

Now a reminder about who the Samaritans were ('are' in the settlers worldview)  
Ancient Israel, like this nation, split North and South.  
The northern kingdoms were called 'Israel,' the southern kingdoms – Judah  
The capital of the southern kingdoms – Jerusalem ... And the capital  
of the northern kingdom - Samaria (hence Samaritans)

I've used this imagery before. The Samaritans were the ex's  
Like instead of 'all my exes live in Texas' it's 'all my exes live in Samaria.'  
So where do we find Jesus of all places? In Samaria, at that well,  
talking to that woman ... to those people

That brings me back to the garden. Might we think of that garden  
as a well in Samaria of all places. Seems like a good place to talk with Jesus  
And it gets me to thinking about that garden where we meet Jesus  
It just might be on someone else's land ... And, here's the kicker,  
it might be rather crowded (Jesus seems to make time for lots of folks)

This woman is the one who asks the obvious question – what are you doing here?  
She asks, "How is that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"  
In other words ... what are you doing here, talking to me?  
Got to say, I really love this about Jesus – following him is an adventure  
He has a habit of going places we might not expect

The well Jesus went to that day was Jacob's well, where Jacob met his wife  
It is in modern-day Palestine, the West Bank. I've been there, tasted the water

***Show pictures – Sign on Church  
Well with attendant,  
well with pail***

## WHO'S HE TALKING TO?

One more picture to show you from the church that sits over the well  
It's not a pretty picture but I show it to you to focus again on the places  
Jesus seems to end up, the people he takes the time to talk to

This land, Samaria / West Bank / Palestine is a land that some Jews (settlers)  
feel belongs to them (no matter how long someone else has been there)  
And they are willing to use and have often used violence to take it for themselves.  
This picture memorializes the death of the former pastor at that church  
who was killed by a settler wielding an axe

### *Painting of man with axe*

Our passage from John offers us a polite explanation ...  
**(Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans).**  
That doesn't quite describe the animosity between the two peoples  
The animosity is really a family feud, a division of what was once one people.

The ongoing dispute between Samaritan and Jew was crystallized  
in a disagreement about where (and how) one should worship  
The Jews of Judah, the southern kingdom still had Jerusalem  
But those in the northern kingdom, Israel, did not have a place  
So they built their own in their new capital, Samaria

The woman gives voice to that centuries old argument in verse twenty,  
**"Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say  
that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."**

Jesus skips over that debate like he does the notion that he has no business  
talking with this woman, this Samaritan woman, and goes on to talk about  
true worship as a natural follow up to the earlier talk of living water

**the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers  
will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks  
such as these to worship him.**

**"The Father seeks such as these to worship him"**

Isn't that what Jesus was doing there ... a Jew in Samaria of all places  
striking up a conversation with a woman, this woman, of all people?

Many a sermon has focused on this woman, her five marriages  
Questions have been raised about her character. Some sermons have done  
some speculating. But is her past really the point here? Isn't it really much more  
about her present (in the garden with Jesus if you will) and her future?  
the future where she goes and tells people about Jesus, spreads the word

**"Come and see a man who told me everything that I have  
ever done. He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"**

## SUMMARY

That sounds to me like her singing about Jesus

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own,  
And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.*

A well known, even beloved, refrain. But given the where and the who of Jesus and the story of the Samaritan woman. Maybe that refrain might sound a little different at the end?

Instead of 'none other has ever known,' couldn't it?  
Shouldn't It say 'plenty of others have indeed known?'