



ALL SAINTS

## Sermon Discussion Guide

Practices of a Missionary People for a Secular Age: Spiritual Direction

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

### **INTRO Questions:**

Do you ask for help? In your relationship with God? Are you honest about your doubts? Your ambivalence? Your disillusionment with God and/or the church?

**Background:** Josh diagnosed our culture, both inside and outside the church, as one infected with the diseases of isolation and individualism. That's why you constantly hear the word "community," both in the church and in the broader culture—people are starving for it. Josh reminded us that to be fully human we *must* live in community; it's how God made us. After proclaiming all his creation "good," the first thing God says is "not good," (Gen 2:18) is aloneness...before the fall, before sin. Josh also talked about fear of vulnerability driving us to "individual defeatism," to a conclusion that authenticity in relationships isn't worth it...maybe even that relationships aren't worth it. Because the risk of pain and disappointment is too high. Finally, Josh talked about being punched in the mouth, and the many ways life does this to us by knocking the teeth out of our best laid plans, our intricate strategies of self-protection. Or maybe life KO's us, with pain. What then? Do we still pretend we don't need help?

**READ** the text aloud

**DISCUSS:** Four graces of Spiritual Direction from John 4

1) vv. 7-15: In the first part of this story the woman is at a well doing a most ordinary thing—getting water to drink. Jesus connects her basic need for water to her intrinsic need for eternal life, revealing that he himself is the connection; he is what she really needs. Do you struggle to connect the mundane, everyday activities of your life to Jesus? To how God reveals himself through everyday things? To how God uses the mundane to reveal things to you about yourself? Your idols? Your doubts? How could a spiritual director help you make these connections? (*hint—diff. perspective*)

2) vv. 16-20: Jesus meets this woman where she is, at this well, and he confronts her sin. She deflects, asking a theological question (vv. 19-20). When you do talk to a pastor or mature Christian friend do you hide your sin? Do you hide behind theological questions, pretending your need is more knowledge when you really need to confess sin, accept forgiveness and grace, and renew your faith? Do you try to hide from God by hiding sin from trusted friends and leaders? Stop! Take a step of faith.

3) vv. 21-26: Jesus reveals here that God wants worshippers. He came to nourish, preserve and protect the church as his bride. This means in the church we must both seek and offer help. What keeps you from seeking help? From offering it?

4) vv. 28-30: The woman's response to finding life in Christ is to tell others about it. She gets caught up in the gospel of Christ and immediately shares it with others. What are some ways you can do that this week, in your workplace, neighborhood, etc?

**Conclusion/Application:** You need others in the church, and they need you. God made us this way. When we deny this basic need for community, for each other, we deny a part of who we are as humans and as Christians. We might survive in isolation, but that's not life. That's not the life Christ offers in John 4. Ask for help; offer help.

**John 4:7-26**

**English Standard Version (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"

<sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet." <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

<sup>28</sup> So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" <sup>30</sup> They went out of the town and were coming to him."