



BE. UNLIKELY.

To someone who is unlikely.

Open Bible to John 4 (Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well)

Big Idea:

Jesus showed His disciples that they were to be His messengers to all people and not just to those that they considered to be likely.

Story:

1. Spending time with His disciples in Judea but gaining some notoriety with the Pharisees.
2. **And he had to pass through Samaria. (John 4:4, ESV)**
 - a. HAD to sounds like He was FORCED
 - b. The shortest route between Judea and Galilee was through Samaria (**map**)
 - c. **OKC** is the crossroads of the US, and Samaria was a kind of crossroads of Israel
 - d. Another route up the **Jordan river** (approx. 70 through Samaria and over 90 up Jordan)
 - e. Consider: another option and Jesus STOPPED in a Samaritan town!
 - f. Jesus was not FORCED. He was COMPELLED.
 - g. **But He needed to go through Samaria. (John 4:4, NKJV)**
3. **What was the deal between Jews and Samaritans? (slide)**
 - a. Jesus and His disciples were brown-skinned Jewish men. With their Jewish identities came all the social expectations and pressures of Jewish men. Certain "rules of engagement" were at the top of the list. Near the very top was...
 - i. **Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4:9b)**
 - b. **The racial division between Jews and Samaritans was, to put it mildly, extreme.**
 - c. **AMERICAN TODAY**
 - i. **Racism is prejudice against an individual or a group of people based on race/ethnicity.**
 - ii. **The problem of racism is still evident in our country today.**
 - iii. **OVERT Racism VS. SUBTLE Racism - TELL MY STORIES**
 - d. **To understand this story, we must understand this point:**
 - i. **The racial division in America today is nowhere as extreme as the racial division that existed in Jesus's day between Jews and Samaritans.**
 - ii. **We would have to go back to at least the Pre-civil rights movement in America to even come close to the kind of disparity in race that existed between Jews and Samaritans.**
 1. **Sundown towns**
 2. **Towns that prided themselves in having no black residents**
 3. **Segregation in schools and on buses**

4. Segregation at drinking fountains, restrooms, restaurants, etc.

5. Redlining neighborhoods so that black people were not able to secure mortgages impacting work, education, and wealth building

6. Interracial marriages were illegal in the United States

- iii. The point? To understand this story we must understand that the racial divisions between Jesus and this woman were far more extreme than what we face today
- iv. Why were the racial divisions between Jews and Samaritans far greater than the racial divisions we face in our country today?

1. As a general rule, Jews hated Samaritans and Samaritans hated Jews.

- a. While there are racists of every color in America, hatred based on race is not the general rule in the US.

2. Jews and Samaritans never socialized together.

- a. In America, people of different races and ethnicities socialize together all the time.

3. Jews made travel plans that cost time and money to avoid traveling near Samaritans.

- a. I have never personally known anyone who made travel arrangements around their racist biases.

4. It was detestable for Jews and Samaritans to intermarry.

- a. While it was illegal and socially unacceptable for interracial couples to marry in America at one point, this is not the case for the vast majority of Americans today.

- v. It is clear that the racial divisions Jesus faced between Jews and Samaritans were more severe than racial divisions we face in America today.
- vi. This is IMPORTANT because Jesus shows us in this story how we should relate to unlikely people in a gospel-centered way! Jesus was unlikely to reach this woman, and this woman was unlikely to be reached by Him.

vii. Jewish and Samaritan HISTORY (slide)

- 1. Divided kingdoms
- 2. 722 B.C. – Samaria fell to the Assyrians
- 3. 586 B.C. – Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians
- 4. TRACE THE HISTORY BACK FAR ENOUGH and a lineage was shared – distorted

4. WHAT A RISK! Jesus's decision to engage a Samaritan Woman was highly unusual. Jesus's disciples were going to need to get used to the unusual (**John 4 slide**)

- a. 6th hour (noon)
- b. Asks for drink
- c. How can you, a Jew, as me, a Samaritan, for a drink?
- d. If you knew the gift of God and who asked, you would have asked for living water

5. LIVING WATER (slide)

- a. Jesus loved to speak using words that had a double meaning (metaphor)
- b. We hear something spiritual - she really understood Him to mean LIVING WATER!
- c. Looked Jesus over and was confused – where will you get it? Are you greater than OUR FATHER Jacob?

- d. Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again. Whoever drinks of the water I give will never thirst again.
 - e. Sir! Give me this living water SO I WON'T BE THIRSTY AND HAVE TO RETURN TO THIS WELL! (still thinking about literal water).
- 6. Go, get your husband (John 4 slide)**
- a. I don't have one
 - b. You are right! You've had five and the one you are with is not your husband!
 - c. Sir, I perceive you are a prophet
7. REDIRECT!! Major racial division between Jews and Samaritans – proper place of worship
- a. What mountain?
 - b. Jesus clarifies – salvation is from the Jews.
 - i. Jesus redirects her from the HOT TOPIC and back to her own relationship and right standing with God
- 8. 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." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:25-26)**
- a. Just then, the disciples came back. IMAGINE THEIR SURPRISE!
 - b. They wondered, but no one dare asked.
9. The woman LEFT HER WATERING VESSEL and returned to her village!
- a. **"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" (John 4:29)**
10. Meanwhile, Jesus's disciples tried to offer Him something to eat.
- a. **"I have food to eat that you do not know about." (John 4:32)**
 - b. Did someone bring Him something?
 - c. **Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34)**
 - i. **In other words, Jesus was showing His disciples that while they were out looking for food, He was looking for souls!**
 - d. The harvest is ready! Go and work in the harvest!
 - i. **REAL-LIFE object lesson: God uses the UNLIKELY to reach the UNLIKELY.**
- 11. Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." (John 4:39)**
- a. They asked Jesus to stay, and He stayed for two days!!
 - b. **41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 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." (John 4:41-42)**
 - c. **43 After the two days he departed for Galilee. (John 4:43)**

Big Idea:

Jesus showed His disciples that they were to be His messengers to all people and not just to those that they considered to be likely.

APPLICATION: **BE. UNLIKELY.**

To someone who is unlikely.

- What Jesus did with the Samaritan woman was completely unlikely.
 - BE UNLIKELY
- What the Samaritan woman did with her village was unlikely.
 - BE UNLIKELY
- The disciples had a front row seat because they needed to learn that it was God's plan to advance His message to unlikely people through unlikely people.
 - BE UNLIKELY

A Challenge for Our Church at Western Hills:

God wants our church to believe that we are to be His messengers to all people and not just to those that we consider to be likely.

It is the will of God that we take His gospel outside our comfort zones to reach the unlikely.

Concentric Circles Analogy

- Immediate family
- Close friends, family, and church
- Acquaintances who are like me
- Acquaintances I do not consider to be like me
- Strangers like me
- Strangers I do not consider to be like me

The further you go out, the more uncomfortable it is to engage people in conversation and relationship.

- You cannot be unlikely to your immediate family. THAT IS LIKELY.
- You cannot be unlikely to close friends, family, or in your church. THAT IS LIKELY.
- God wants you to broaden your net and BE. UNLIKELY!

I have sat with many Christians in prayer meetings and small groups...

Always praying for the same family member, friend, or co-worker

Some rarely take action. Some never take action.

Just names on a magnet or empty prayers prayed in a circle.

TAKE A RISK! It is RISKY to be unlikely.

How can you BE. UNLIKELY.

- When is the last time you really made an effort to engage someone who is UNLIKELY to you?
 - Race? Ethnicity?
 - Lifestyle? Beliefs? Religion?
 - Politics? Voting for TRUMP or BIDEN! Gasp!
 - Social status or wealth? Poor. Homeless.

- When was the last time you shared a meal with someone who was UNLIKELY to you?
- When was the last time you made effort to love and serve someone consistently who was UNLIKELY to you?
- When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone who was UNLIKELY to you?
- When was the last time you invited an UNLIKELY person to small group or to church?

Many of us are far more likely to hit “share” on a social media post – a post that isn’t even gospel centered – than to engage someone who is UNLIKELY in one of these ways!

You have what it takes because the Spirit is in you! Trust God to...

- **Fill your heart with love for the UNLIKELY.**
- **Lead you to UNLIKELY people.**
- **Give you the right words to say.**
- **Show you how to make them feel loved by what you say and do.**
- **Help you connect them to the gospel and to Jesus’s Church.**

If we are going to look like Jesus, we have to learn the lesson Jesus taught His disciples:

Jesus showed His disciples that they were to be His messengers to all people and not just to those that they considered to be likely.

In other words...

BE UNLIKELY to someone who is UNLIKELY.

Will you do it? Let’s pray.

THINK OF A NAME, A PLACE, or A FACE.

Who does God want you to BE UNLIKELY to this week?

How does God want you to cast a broader net?

Where can you go to engage unlikely people and look for ways to minister to them?

It MUST be outside our walls! We are comfortable here. That’s not a bad thing. But we can’t BE UNLIKELY to someone who is unlikely inside our comfort zone! We must go out – go into the world – and make disciples.

Take a moment to pray right now and ask God to put a name, a place, or a face in your mind.

PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME...

Jesus, you were unlikely to unlikely people. I want to be like you. Please fill my heart with love for unlikely people. Lead me to unlikely people you want me to engage in conversation and relationship. Please give me the right words to say. Show me how to help them feel loved by what I say and do. Help me share your gospel with them and connect them to your church. I want to take the risk for the sake of Your Kingdom. Help me be unlikely to someone who is unlikely. In Your name I pray. Amen.

Jesus was an unlikely hero to the Samaritan woman. The Samaritan woman was an unlikely hero to her village. The disciples were UNLIKELY when Jesus called them and they became the first leaders of the church. You are UNLIKELY! Go BE UNLIKELY to someone who is UNLIKELY.