

Youth Sunday Sermons by our high school seniors 3.23.14
Scripture: John 3:1-42 The Samaritan Woman at the Well

Good morning, my name is **Caleb Ford** and I have been a member of this church every since I moved up here when I was six years old. I have had great memories here from middle school conferences, Montreat conferences, an international mission trip and now my final youth Sunday. I want to thank this church for guiding me in my spiritual faith over these twelve years.

In scripture, Jesus states “everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.” What type of water continues to make us thirsty? What does Jesus means when he says this? Today the world is full of distractions and temptations that can lead us away from God. I know as a young adult I have so many things going on in my life from soccer, to finishing high school, to preparing for college that often I find myself consumed in these activities I forget to talk to God. Along with distractions there are many temptations surrounding me. Kids my age are bombarded with these temptations every day like choosing to focus on the wrong things, forgetting to talk to God, and making choices that lead us away from God. Teenagers are not the only ones faced with temptations. While they might differ, everyone have their own temptations. These are the waters I believe Jesus is talking about that will not quench our thirst.

God’s water is the water Jesus is talking about that will quench our thirst. So what exactly is God’s water? Honestly I do not know exactly what it is because it can be different for every person. For me it is when I am surrounded and filled with the holy spirit. Whenever this feeling happens I have a sense of fulfillment. I feel that wherever I am that’s where I am meant to be. I have no desire to be anywhere else or want something else. I know that in that moment, I am with God. God offers his water to everyone no matter your back ground. While you might not know when and where and what struggles you might face know this; God’s water are always ready for drinking.

In my life I have had many instances with God where I have been perfectly content. One instance was when I went on a mission trip to Guatemala last summer, particularly when we were in San Antonio with our sister church. This trip was an intergenerational trip containing four youth and four adults. The point

of our visit was to connect with our sister church in Guatemala, Ebenezer Presbyterian Church.

During our stay there I could feel the Holy Spirit not just within me but surrounding me. I could feel it when we played UNO, building water filtration systems, and when we were worshipping with our Guatemalan brothers and sisters. During worship I looked around at the seven other members of our group. All seven of them were worshipping God even if Ellen Farrier was the only one who could understand the sermon, which obviously was in Spanish. Along with that I was down there with three of my best friends Kevin, Sydney, and Levi Bannerman and was also surrounded by new friends. At this instance I was perfectly content for I had listened to God and drank of his water.

As I start a new chapter in my life at Berry College in Georgia, I plan to continue in strengthening my faith with God. I plan on keeping in touch with God and listening to his word. I am not sure what God has planned for me but wherever he leads me I will be willing to wade into his welcoming waters.

Amen

Good morning! My name is **Sydney Adams**. I have been a part of this church for almost three years now and have been on several youth trips as well as a mission trip to Guatemala. Before becoming a member here at BMPC, I grew up at a Baptist church. I was weary to join a new church where most of the people had known each other for several years, but also because the church was a different denomination. While I had friends in the youth group, I was sometimes timid to voice my thoughts for fear that I may be prematurely judged based on my denominational background. I was hesitant in really immersing myself the church. I wanted people to see and focus more on my faithfulness to God, instead of paying closer attention to the label of a denominational background. I wanted people to see what makes me a Christian person, rather than what “defines” me as a Christian.

The Samaritan woman in the scripture was hesitant to speak to a man who was a Jew. She was momentarily confused and felt as if she didn't know what to do, just as I felt. But as the story goes on, we see that the woman's background did not matter to Jesus and that he was not afraid to take the first step in talking to her.

Slowly, the woman gained confidence to take her own action as she ran to the city to tell the people of the man she met.

She was not waiting for someone else to take the first step of faith. As the scripture says in versus 35-36 “Do you not say, Four months more, then comes the harvest? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together.”

This church has helped me to grow in my faith and understand that faith is so much more than a specific denomination, or seeing faith as a fear of definition.

Through this church I was also able to participate in a mission trip this past summer to our sister church in Guatemala. As we arrived at Eben-Ezer church in Guatemala, I was amazed at how much I immediately felt welcomed by all the church members waiting at the door for us. They had no second thoughts in welcoming us and making sure that we were warmly received. They had no fear of the fact that we were from a different country or that many of us had never even spoken to each other before. Those barriers didn’t stand a chance at dampening the love and welcome that our new friends had for us, and we for them. We were grounded in the solid truth that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. As sowers and reapers who work together to someday rejoice in the eternal harvest.

I took a leap of faith and a first step in joining BMPC and the congregation has been there to support me, so that we may all sow and reap together and that we may rejoice with Jesus Christ, who was the first to invite us unto eternal life. We cannot wait for the future to come or wait for someone else to talk to a person who is struggling at the well. As the woman ran to the city to tell the people of Jesus, we too, have to be on our feet to do God’s will for us. Amen

This is only the draft version of Ellen’s sermon.

Goodmorning, my name is **Ellen Coward**, and I have been a member of BMPC about a year.

In the passage about Jesus and the Woman at the Well, I found I most easily connected to the Samaritan women Jesus encountered when he stopped to rest by the well. My spiritual history is very different from the other youth at this church. I was baptized as an infant in a Catholic Church that was excommunicated for ordaining a female priest. Then, I grew up attending Quaker services as well as services of eastern Asian practices.

When I moved to Black Mountain and began attending BMPC in the 10th grade I felt like an outsider. The youth that were here had been part of this community since they were very young. They had grown up together and in the church. I felt very unfamiliar with the practices of a Presbyterian Church, and while never unwelcomed, didn't feel like I belonged. It was not until this year that I began to participate with the youth and as I have developed relationships with the youth and adults at this church I have felt more comfortable.

In this passage, Jesus, tired from traveling, rested by a well where a Samaritan woman was collecting water while his disciples ventured into a nearby city for food. At the time, Jews (like Jesus) and Samaritans did not interact. They were of different beliefs and had others witnessed the interaction between Jesus and the women, both would likely have been criticized. However, unlike "most people" Jesus didn't see the woman as someone with who he could not be seen around or speak to. He said to the woman, "Give me a drink." This took the woman aback, but then she realized that even though she had previously felt like an outcast to Jesus, she was being accepted and had nothing to fear. After a short time, Jesus' disciples returned from the city and saw Jesus sitting by the well with the Samaritan. While astonished that he was speaking with her, none of them questioned the situation.

The fact that neither Jesus nor his disciples had had an adverse reaction to her must have confirmed for the woman that this was a group who would accept all people of all backgrounds and beliefs. She left and hurried to the city to tell the people there of her experience and tell them that she had met a great prophet. This congregation has treated me much like Jesus and his disciples treated the Samaritan. Despite the fact that I was not previously part of their church, that I came from other religious backgrounds, and was unfamiliar with how things worked at BMPC, I was welcomed and accepted by everyone.

There is a line in the passage that refers to "Our ancestor Jacob." The Jews and Samaritans religions shared a common ancestor. We are all connected in some way whether we recognize it or not. Acceptance is not always an easy gift to give, but it a critical aspect of Christianity. Amen.

My name is **Kevin McDaniel** and I have been a member of our church practically my entire life.

So let's try and break a section of this passage down. Jesus has an interaction with a woman. Not just any woman, but a Samaritan. Jews did not normally associate themselves with. Being both a Samaritan and a woman at the well in the middle of the day, it made it even more strange for Jesus to be talking to her. Why would the son of the all powerful, all knowing God use up his time to talk to someone like this?

Although they didn't dare say anything, the disciples were very confused by this. Jesus knew, loved, and cared for the woman before she even spoke. Passages like these are my favorite parts of the new testament. Whether it be healing lepers, helping the homeless, or giving the blind sight, Jesus know boundaries.

No matter what you believe, no matter what your gender, no matter what your background, Jesus will help anyone he encounters. More people need to show this kind of compassion nowadays. It's not often, even in today's society, that someone will go out of their way to talk to someone completely different from themselves.

I recently watched a clip from the ABC show *What Would You Do?* that demonstrates this. This is a hidden camera show that puts people in situations to see how they they react. In this clip, it shows an average white guy in his 20s, who is an actor, struggling to change a tire in the middle of a town. For him, it doesn't take long at all for people to help out this young man without question. Plenty of people come to his rescue with an average waiting time of a couple minutes.

After this experiment, they changed up the actor. This time another young man around same age is put into the scenario. Only this time he is wearing a traditional head covering called a kufi which is usually associated with the Muslim faith. This time things are very different. Only two people stop the entire they were filming. This sickens me.

So after reading the passage, I was interested in learning the actual differences between the two people in today's scripture. I started by looking up a few of the major similarities between Jew and Samaritans.

1. Both are Abrahamic religions - meaning they both claim to be descendants of father Abraham
2. Both religions have the Torah as their primary religious text.
3. Both religions have very similar religious practice

Of course there are a number of differences between these two faiths but they seem awfully close to me.

It isn't uncommon that Christians will stick only with their own denominations when discussing faith. I am guilty of this for sure but I've gotten better with it in recent years. I had unexpected experience last summer at Triennium that I didn't think I would have during the middle of a Presbyterian conference.

I was stopped on a sidewalk by a couple of college girls that were walking around campus wanting to talk others about their faith. I listened and talked with them an open ear and an open mind without any judgement. We talked about the similarities and differences between our faiths and I could tell we had mutual respect for each other. These two girls, I soon learned, were Mormon. Growing up in Black Mountain it probably isn't that surprising that these were the first Mormons I had ever come across. They were some of the nicest people I met over the course of that week.

Being a member of this church has taught me the importance of not only tolerance but acceptance of everyone no matter their race, their gender, their income, their political views, their sexual orientation, or their religion. **We are all children of God, so who are we to judge?**

I have made amazing friends at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church that I will do everything in my power to keep in touch with for the rest of my life. I have been on unforgettable mission trips that have given me a glimpse of how those less fortunate live every day.

I cannot imagine what I would be like today had i not grown up in this church. I cannot emphasize how important this community is to me and how grateful I am to have been a part of it.

I am starting a new chapter this fall, but I will not forget my roots. On behalf of us seniors I would like to take everyone in the congregation. Anyone who has supported us at potato lunch, anyone who has helped out with youth group, anyone who has gone on mission trips with us, **thank you all** for you have truly shape us. Amen.

Original poem by Kali Fleagle for BMPC Youth Sunday 3.23.14

I have a confession
I have lied, cried and have been hurt inside
Been broken and pinned together again
I have sinned
Putting a mask on my face
With a plastered smile
Telling everyone I am fine
When I was so hurt inside and wanted to cry

I have a confession
That mask of always happy is gone
I have learned it's okay let people know what's going on
The past is the past
I have to trust in God that he has it from here
I'm going in the right direction
And I can finally say I am happy

I have a confession
I love taking pictures
And sleeping in late
My dream is to be on a stage or
Famous one day
Winter is too cold for me
Summertime is just right

We all have confessions
Like watching too much tv
Or telling a lie
Done something so mean, it made someone cry
Stolen something and committed a crime
Or not forgiving someone
We all have confessions
Let God know the truth
You will be forgiven, so let your confessions be heard