

Intro:

Garrison. Elder Candidate. Week 2 of our mini series.

Coming out of Easter we wanted to look at 2 reasons that people tend to reject the Gospel, whether it be wholesale all together, don't want to follow Jesus OR even those of us who claim to be Christians struggle to live in light of the gospel in our everyday lives.

Last week we looked at Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, and that ultimately the first reason people tend to reject the Gospel is that they think they're too good for it. That instead of leaning on the grace of God for salvation, we instead choose works righteousness. We want to work our way to our own salvation. But it doesn't work, because we could never do enough to cover for our sin.

Tonight we're shifting to the opposite side of the spectrum. The belief that we're too bad for the Gospel.

Just like last week, we'll see that Jesus interacted with someone in this category. Goal for tonight:

Gospel for the 'Too Bad'.

If you got a bible open up to John 4. **Pray.** Hop in:

John 4:1-42 *Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.*

Jesus catches wind that the Pharisees are noticing him and it's not a good sort of noticing. Jesus knows that because of his rising popularity that a confrontation is inevitable, but also knows that it's not yet time for that, so he leaves Judea for Galilee, passing through Samaria, the shortest route.

Here's what would be helpful for you to know. The Jews and Samaritans hated each other. And not like 'oh you're sort of annoying'. This was a hatred and conflict that went back almost 1000 years. In fact it's so bad, that even though the route through Samaria is the shortest way to go from Judea to Galilee they would often avoid it, adding days to their journey.

Essentially, Israel split into two in 900 BC. The Northern Kingdom, which is where Samaria was, was very unfaithful to God. If you follow the biblical story, what we see is that God allows Assyria to conquer them. In those days, when you conquered a people, you didn't want them to repopulate and rise up against you'd do 2 things:

- 1.) They'd exiled the majority people as slaves and concubines back to their country.
- 2.) And they would send a bunch of their people into the conquered land to mix with the remnant left there to fully integrate the cultures.

This effectively erased the culture of the conquered people. But when the Assyrians came, the Samaritans didn't even resist. They gladly embraced and integrated Assyrian culture and religion. **So Jews from the Southern kingdom saw themselves as the only real Israel left.**

They hated the Samaritans as idol worshiping, culturally compromised, racial half-breeds. And Jesus says, alright, let's go through Samaria. Keep going:

6 *Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 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.)*

Jesus is resting from his journey and as here comes this woman. Jesus asks her for water and she seems to be really surprised. 'You a Jew, ask me, a woman of Samaria.' She responds, Wait, you do realize I'm Samaritan right? Why are *you* talking to *me*?' You're supposed to hate me. **Being around me is defiling for you.**

One she's surprised because of the hostility between Jews and Samaritans.

But she's also surprised because she's a woman. In this cultural context there was a huge gap in rights, status and privilege for men and women. As we just read, the disciples actually marvel at this when they return to Jesus.

That to say, what's going on here is out of the ordinary.

It's out of the ordinary 1. Bc she's a Samaritan. 2. Bc she's a woman. And 3. Bc of who she is.

You may not realize it... but we actually learn a lot about her just from a few seemingly insignificant details about her. The main one being the time of day.

6th hour of the day = about noon. 6th hour of daylight. This isn't the right time to get water. Going to get buckets and buckets of water. It's too hot. The climate would be like the summer here. But hotter. And sandier. You don't do manual labor at noon. You don't do manual labor at the hottest time of the day. You go in the early morning or late evening when it's cool.

The daily retrieval of water for drinking and bathing was both a chore but also a social outing. It wouldn't just be one or two people trickling in to get water but the whole community.

But for her, going in the morning seems like a non option, which should immediately make us think one thing: she's trying to avoid people.

There's some social isolation here.. She doesn't want to be seen. We'll see why but

See how He responds.

10 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." **11** 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? **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." **13** Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, **14** 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." **15** 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."

This interaction is actually fairly similar to last week. Taking him literally. Jesus is using something that seems surface level to go deeper:

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." **17** The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; **18** for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." OKAY JESUS

Now we see why she's hiding right? She's living in sin. She's been married 5 times and is now living with another man. Culturally that's a no no. She would've been ostracized.

There's a couple of different ways theologians read this part of the story. Many focus on her sexual sin and Jesus exposing her. See it in terms of her sinful decisions and consequences.

Others see it differently. They read these verses and see sexism, abuse and victimization. This woman has been taken advantage of her entire life. She's been treated like property by sinful men. Passed from one jerk to the next and likely now she's sleeping with the man she's living with just to pay the rent. It's a sinful, misogynistic, broken system."

Regardless of the option, and I'd argue it's both rolled into one, the end result is the same. The woman is living in sexual brokenness and hiding. And it seems to be a little odd that Jesus even brings it up. Like hi, can I have some water please? By the way, what's up with those 5 husbands? Is He just bad at small talk? Lets see why:

19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. **20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." **21** Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. **22** You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** 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. **24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." **25** 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." **26** Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

Just like he does for Nicodemus, Jesus spells out the path towards eternal life. Except this time he doesn't use the imagery of new birth, he uses the imagery of living water. What He means by living water is life, life to the full. He says to the woman - 'you will never thirst again. Drink from me.'

But what does this have to do with her having 5 husbands? What's that got to do with eternal life?

This is it. Can you imagine how you would have felt if you were this woman? She's heard that the messiah is coming, that he will gather a people, teach all 'all' things. Am I worthy of that? It would seem like she doesn't think she's worthy enough to get water with the rest of her community, let alone be near the Messiah.

A woman living in sexual sin because of broken system. She's a Samaritan woman and is interacting with a Jewish man, which btw is only happening bc she was avoiding the community. She feels lesser than and that's probably what she's been told her whole life.

She's been seeking life in romance and the security of being married. It hasn't worked and she's paying for it.

By bringing up her husbands Jesus is exposing her problem. Not just, the sin, or that she's a woman, or a Samaritan.

The woman's problem is a belief that she's too bad.

She's ashamed. Which is different from feeling guilty. Guilt is the reality that I've done something bad. Shame is the internal feeling or belief that I am something bad. Very different.

And it is also incredibly relatable for us. We've all got something that that we've thought, felt, done or experienced that if others knew about, we'd be just like this woman, hiding. We've all got shame.

This can become a powerful internal conflict: **"If they really knew the real me... they'd never accept me.** There must be something wrong with me. Everyone else looks so happy but...."

But maybe even deeper, the message is: **"How could God ever love someone like me?"**

Before we go on too much I want to help us bring some of this to the light.

3 reasons we feel 'Too Bad':

1.) Because of who we are:

- **Race or Gender.** Like this woman, especially if you're an ethnic minority, or historically the female gender, there can be a tendency to feel less than because of unequal societal treatment. Racial prejudice and segregation has incredible power to create a sense of shame.
- **Family history.** Maybe you come from family with criminal backgrounds or divorce/family brokenness. *I come from a line of adulterers/divorce/addiction and I don't love it. I can sometimes get in my head that I'm destined to end up just like my parents. I see the stats on how likely kids of divorce are so much more likely to end up divorced. I think I'm destined to be stuck. I have to fight shame there. That I'm too bad. I have to rest in the hope of gospel redemption.*
- **Anything that causes you to feel less than, like an outsider.**
 - How you look. Don't fit the bill
 - Circumstances. Fired, Dropout, medical diagnosis, or pregnancy issues.

- How you feel. **Mental health.** Those who deal with **social anxiety** – It's an internalized fear of rejection. I'm making everything worse. I'm ruining everything. Sometimes we think, *everyone's sad I'm here.* No one wants me here.

2.) Because of what we've done:

- Because of mistakes and sins in our past we may feel **stained or marked.** There's just something wrong with me. I'm cursed. God can't forgive me. I can't forgive myself.
 - Porn/masturbation. Hook ups. Life before Jesus. Or feeling like we're going backwards following Jesus or struggles while following Jesus. This time this must be too much for His grace.
- These could be overtly sinful actions or just a costly mistake/error. Sometimes shame about our past will sound like "I'm so **stupid.** Why'd I do that? What's wrong with me?"
 - Feel like we're a bad parent, spouse, friend because we sinned against someone.

3.) Because of what's been done to us:

- **Any form of Rejection** can bring a sense of being too bad. Rejected by your parents. Peers. YOU were bullied in middle/high school. Rejected by a romantic interest. "No one would ever love me...date me... be my friend..."
 - **Abandonment. Parents. Children of divorced parents.**
- **Any abuse** creates a sense of feeling too bad.
 - The message abuse carries is: I don't deserve to be loved. I deserve to be hated, abused, mistreated.

We try to pretend like everything is okay(I'm fine) or avoiding it completely. We distract ourselves or even deny it. All the while keeping it in the dark. Or numb it with emotional crutches or sin.

The reality is...all of us have something that makes us believe we're 'too bad'. That's the bad news. But How does Jesus respond to us?

Look back. Remember the verse from earlier. "**And Jesus had to pass through Samaria.**" Wait why? Why'd he have to go through Samaria? It wasn't a logistical issue. He's not scared of the Pharisees. Jesus always made it clear He's not going to die until it's His time. Why'd he have to pass through?

To offer her living water.

Jesus had a divine appointment at a well in Samaria with a woman drowning in shame who had no living water to drink.

Just like this woman daily came to get water , drank it, but then woke up the next morning thirsty again, she has gone to the well of romance to satisfy the thirst of her soul. Over and over. And each time it would satisfy her temporarily, but ultimately left her thirsty.

So she got out of one marriage and into another. Each time thinking she'd found what she was looking for. Each time winding up even more thirsty. Until eventually she gives up on marriage altogether.

What she does everyday with the water pot for her physical thirst she is doing with sex and romance for her soul level thirst. **She's trying to solve her problem alone.**

But the Father sent His Son to be living water for such people. People like us who are trying to deal with our badness and shame in one way or another.

And this reality changes her life. Let me show you. It will change your life. Look how this story ends. Go to v. 28

Conclusion:

28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, **29** "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" **30** They went out of the town and were coming to him. (Skip down to v. 39) **...39** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."

"He told me all that I ever did." This woman goes from dodging the whole town by getting her water at the heat of noon to preaching to the whole town, "Come see a man who told me all I ever did!"

She's been avoiding everyone right? What changed? Jesus offering her living water. In the midst of her shame and belief that she's too bad. He offers it to her.

He says, come and find satisfaction, peace and eternal life in me.

And I don't want us to miss this—>Think back to Jesus bringing up her husbands. He did that to expose her problem, for sure. But there was more to it. He brought up her husbands because He wanted her to know He's offering living water to the real her. Not the random unknown woman he just met. To the ashamed woman living in sin, ostracized from her community.

He's offering living water and satisfaction to her. And the crazy thing is: she meets the Christ and her story of brokenness and shame is transformed. 'he told me all I ever did.'" How different of a way of life is that?

Here's the deal. The thing about believing we're too bad, about our shame... is that it's true. It's true. Shame declares of you - "you're not good enough for God." And guess what...it's telling the truth! That belief is a fact. On your own. Sounds mean right?

There's a whole wave of people out there that'll tell you the goal is to love yourself enough and that's the way to not believe you're not too bad anymore, that aint gonna work. BC it's just another way to pretend. Loving yourself more won't give you living water. It's actually like the well that you'll have to go back to over and over again begging for it to satisfy. It's empty. It doesn't get you to where this woman is.

Only when you see that Jesus offers the real, needy, broken you living water, will you be able to look at all of your badness and shame and have hope. Because you can't clean yourself up. You'll fall short and when you do, hiding won't work either.

You need to see Jesus, seeking her out, seeking you out, offering you living water. Satisfaction and hope in Him.

That's the Gospel. Jesus came to live a perfect sinless shameless life and to die the most shameful death. Criminal death. Not just physically and culturally shameful. But SPIRITUALLY He took our badness onto Himself on the cross. So that sinful people like us could come to Him and bring our badness into the light.

Let me wrap up both weeks with this: What's underneath both the belief that 'I'm too bad' and "I'm too good" is a misunderstanding of grace. Both ultimately say, 'My rightstanding with God is based on my performance.' Both are works-based. But following Jesus is about grace.

Grace is both not getting what we deserve and getting what we don't deserve, in Christ. And when you get that, you'll have peace and freedom that looks just like what this woman has here.

I wonder what that would look like. Don't you? How aware are you of that reality? How much peace do you have in your life because of the freedom of the Gospel? That you don't have to perform or hide?

So I just want to end our time by giving you a picture of what that might look like in daily life. Hypothetically. We can take my life:

Wake up tomorrow morning:

Wake up happy as ever. This is the day the lord hath made. Skip to the kitchen and cook an amazing breakfast. Wanna serve. I pray for our family. I have the greatest quiet time ever quieted. Driving to work I see a person with a flat tire. I selflessly pull over and help. He's so grateful and you know, I really am too.

Great meeting with my coworkers. I give an update about how my work is going. And everyone's like wow you're so great at what you do. So proud. All the Lord.

Go to lunch with some guys from CG. Wanna be intentional. Server is a soul. Ultimately we're here to serve her. Have a convo, get to the deepest parts of her life and we encourage her. I pick up the tab. 100 dollar tip. Jesus has been so generous to me.

Server runs out. Who are you!! We look at each other knowingly...Just a couple of Christians.

Spend all afternoon working on Citizens stuff. Crushing it with ideas. Tim walks in my office. He's blown away, he humbly asks if I want to take over his job. Of course not Tim, please.

I go back to my desk to have a lil devo cause I'm so thankful for God's goodness. Sit down and I see a handwritten note from all the CG leaders, thanking me for my service. Honestly, thank you guys.

Leave work early. All green lights.

I cook, I clean, she's worth it.

Go to CG. Confess deeply. Little tear. Gospel up my guys. Got verses. Killing it.

Go home. Bedtime. We pray and cuddle until we drift off to sleep. My last thought of the day is, how good is God?

Next day wake up late. Overslept. Water heater's broken. No time w God. Slept terribly. Wife burns the bacon. I snap at her. I don't apologize. I drive to work with major road rage and get a ticket. Get to work late I miss the morning meeting is upset at me cause I'm late.

Go to lunch alone. Come back and have a bad work day. I'm so annoyed with everyone. Just super apathetic. Go home and have an argument. CG sucks. I shut down the whole time. Everytime I try to tell

someone anything helpful they like what are you talkin about? You're so unhelpful have you even read the Bible before?

Get home. Gotta do dishes. I'm just fuming still. Cole goes to bed and I stay up, end up looking at porn. Terrible night. Go to bed all upset.

My last thought: God where were you today? Do you even care?

Peace of the Gospel = God's love is the same between the two days.

God's love being based on Jesus' performance for us = peace. His love for you is already earned in Jesus. Thinking you can earn it based on what you do or how you're doing is terrible news.

Regardless of where you're at, if you believe you're too good or too bad, however this shows up in your life, know that you're offered living water, real satisfaction and life in Christ. It's not based on what you do, only on Him. And resting in the grace of Jesus, whether for the first time or the millionth time, will change your life.

Communion

Pray.