



Series: The Gospel of John: For God so Loved...

Date: October 30, 2022

Speaker: Brett Bouldin, Mercy Students Director

Text: John 4:27-42

Title: Your Story is Powerful

Good morning, Mercy Church! It is an honor to be preaching the Word of God to you this morning. If you have your Bibles, we are going to be in John chapter 4, so you can flip there.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Brett Bouldin, and I am our Student Pastor here at Mercy (whoop!). I have a beautiful wife named Marlee and we just had our first baby girl on September 9 and her name is Lila (show picture of Lila). I am officially a girl dad now, so I cry when I hear Disney Princess songs. It's confusing.

The title of my sermon today is this, **YOUR STORY IS POWERFUL** – As I'm talking about my family, I'm reminded of my wedding day. The date was October 5, 2019. The setting was Elkin, North Carolina. The venue was beautiful. The weather was sublime. The food was delicious. And the ceremony was as sweet as they come. It was truly an amazing wedding.

But like most weddings, it really was just another wedding for everyone who was in attendance. Don't get me wrong, for me and for Marlee it was a moment that we'll cherish for the rest of our lives, and I personally remember nearly every detail of that entire weekend.

But for the average attender, I would imagine that if you asked them about the specifics about our wedding, they wouldn't be able to remember the intricate little details— they wouldn't be able to tell you that one of my groomsmen had on a striped tie when I specifically told all of my groomsmen to wear only solid ties. And he had a tie clip on! They wouldn't remember when one of the bridesmaids had to discreetly step away because she was about to pass out during the ceremony. They wouldn't remember that our DJ didn't have the rights to the songs that he was playing so we were listening to knock off versions of songs for the entire reception. If you're



planning a wedding, you might want to look into that with your DJ.

If you asked them, the details of the wedding would likely blend together with all of the other weddings that they've been to.

However, I'd be willing to bet my lifesavings that if you asked the people who came to our wedding if they remembered my Father-In-Laws speech, 100 percent of them would say yes.

My father-in-law is named Myles. And for Marlee's entire life, Myles had been prepping his speech for the day that Marlee would get married. And so, throughout her life, when something memorable would happen, he would take note of it and save it – things like the time when he wore an embarrassing tank top at their family beach trip and made Marlee cry.

And so, when our wedding day came, Myles stood in front of everyone who had come, with a piece of paper and some scribbles in his hand and delivered one of the most memorable 30-minute stories that you've ever heard. He told stories of when she was a little girl and she came home crying because she got her bluebird point taken away at school, he told stories of her work ethic and how

proud he was to be her dad. And yes, when he got to the story about the tank top, he took his shirt off and had that tank top on.

And as he stood there with that tank top on, he closed with these words: "Once upon a time, there was this princess. She grew up and traveled the world, and then she met the man of her dreams. They fell in love, and they got married, and the father could not be more proud of what he sees before him. The E– No. It's not the end. It's the beginning. It's the beginning of your story. And so tonight, here's to the beginning of the story of Brett and Marlee."

It was one of the most amazing stories I've ever heard. People were laughing, people were crying, it was awesome. Myle's story was powerful.

What we are going to see in our text today is the woman at the well from last week – and she is telling her story to people. And her story is also powerful.

My aim for us during this time is for you to see that your story – just like Myles', just like the Samaritan woman's – is also powerful. And it's likely more powerful than you know.



Let me pray for us before we dive in. [Pray]

Our text for today is John 4:27-42. Beginning in John 4:27, it says:

27 Just then his disciples arrived, and they were amazed that he was talking with a woman. Yet no one said, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

For those of you who weren't here for last week's sermon, we are jumping right into the middle of an amazing passage of scripture. In this passage, Jesus has an encounter with a Samaritan woman at a well where he asks her for a drink of water.

Now, this encounter was crazy for a couple of reasons:

First, this person was a Samaritan and Jesus was a Jew (meaning he was a descendant of Israel). What we heard in last week's sermon was that Samaritans had no dealings whatsoever with Jews and Jews had no dealings with Samaritans whatsoever. They hated each other and Jews would do everything they could to avoid ever having

to go into the city of Samaria, much less have a conversation with a Samaritan.

Yet here Jesus was in Samaria talking to a Samaritan.

Second, this person was a woman and Jesus was a man. On top of that, he was a teacher. During this time, not only did Jews hate Samaritans, but it was also culture and tradition that men, especially teachers, would not converse with women, as they thought it was a waste of time and a diversion from studying the law.¹ Women were completely marginalized and overlooked during this time.

Yet here Jesus was in Samaria talking with a woman.

As the story unfolds, the conversation gets even crazier because *Jesus offers this woman a gift!* And He offers her a gift that is more valuable than the greatest human gift that any of us has ever received— he offers her “living water” ...And anyone who drinks this living water would never thirst again.

And as we learned last week, what Jesus was offering was far more than water that would quench her physical

¹ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.), 227.



thirst – rather, he was talking about giving this Samaritan woman the gift of the Holy Spirit – God’s presence coming to dwell within her, making her a new creation, and saving her for eternal salvation.

Absolutely amazing.

And he tells her something that only God would tell her to do – He says, “go and call your husband...”

The first point I want to make today is this: GOD KNOWS YOUR STORY

When Jesus tells this woman to go and call her husband, he is revealing something deep within this woman’s soul. Astonished at his request, she responds to Jesus, “I don’t have a husband”. Jesus replies, “You have correctly said, ‘I don’t have a husband... For you’ve had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

This Samaritan woman had baggage, y’all. She had been married to five different men, and now she was with another man who she wasn’t married to. This information about her made her an outcast among her people. It was the reason she was going to get water during the heat of the day. It was the reason she was alone at the well.

Although this was such a huge part of her story, this was probably something that she’d avoid talking about at all costs – not only those closest to her, but also to God. She was ashamed, and the people around her were ashamed.

I’d imagine that there are individuals in this room today who have stories like this. Maybe it isn’t divorce, maybe it is. But it’s something that makes you feel like you’re alone and like you’re an outcast...or at least you would be if someone knew this thing about you.

Over the past month, I’ve heard stories of people who have family members in jail and they themselves feel imprisoned because of the shame it has brought to their family. I’ve spoken with people who struggle with same sex attraction and love Jesus, but they feel like aliens within the church because they don’t know who they can relate to, and they simply don’t feel understood. I’ve spoken with individuals who have crippling anxiety and oh how they feel alone and ashamed. I’ve spoken with people who have had infidelity in their marriage, and though their heart is repentant, though they’re working through it, they don’t know how to recover.

These things in our lives carry with them the power of shame – and if anyone in this room has ever experienced



shame, it's one of the most powerful forces that the enemy can ever use against us. It deflates us, embarrasses us, and makes us question the things we once held to be true.

One writer named Daniel Dewitt draws a distinction between guilt and shame, and I think it helps illuminate the definition of shame for us. He writes, **“Though Guilt and Shame are twins... they aren’t identical. Guilt is usually tied to an event: I *did* something bad. Shame is tied to a person: I *am* bad. Guilt is the wound. Shame is the scar. Guilt is isolated to the individual. Shame is contagious.”² - Daniel Dewitt**

Shame had infected this woman’s life up to this point. Just like our definition says, she was scarred from her story.

Yet, here was Jesus, speaking openly about the very thing that had brought about this shame in this woman’s life.

God knew her story.

And God knows your story. Even the parts you’ve never told anyone.

² <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/difference-between-guilt-shame/>

But brothers and sisters, what we see from this interaction is that there is something different that happens when we realize that God knows our story versus the world knowing our story.

The world knowing the woman’s story led to her becoming an outcast in her society.

Maybe this is the same thing that you have felt. Someone has used that mistake that you’ve made as ammunition against you. Maybe you’ve lost a loved one because of a decision, maybe you’ve lost a friend. Maybe you literally have been ostracized by your family. The world knowing your story has led to you being an outcast.

But God knowing our story is completely different.

You see, God knew this woman’s story. Later on, she’s going to say, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.” Jesus didn’t just know pieces of her story, he knew her story to the full, and yet the offer for living water remained.



You see the difference? Rather than being met with the shame that she had received for her entire life, she was met with grace and mercy.

Friends, believe me when I say that that grace and mercy is available for you today, despite your story. Jesus knows your story to the full, and he is extending to you the same offer that he was extending to this Samaritan woman.

And you don't have to get cleaned up to come to Jesus.

Remember — it wasn't the woman who drew near to Jesus. Jesus drew near to her in her mess, and he wants to draw near to you in your mess.

And what's incredible is that Jesus doesn't want to just draw near to you in your mess, but he actually wants to use the things that you are going through to draw people near to Him.

That leads me to my second point, which is this: GOD INTENDS TO USE YOUR STORY TO DRAW PEOPLE NEAR TO JESUS

Verse 28 says, **28** Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people, **29** "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the

Messiah?" **30** They left the town and made their way to him.

I love this moment in the story.

Without hesitation, without reservation, this woman takes off! In utter amazement and excitement, she goes back into her hometown and begins to tell people about this man who she had met at the well. And I don't know if you caught this, but she left her jar! She went to the well with a mission to get some water, and she left the well with a totally different mission: to tell people about Jesus.

"Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did!" was her testimony.

Think of how compelling this moment must have been for the people in her town. Here was this woman, the one who had husband after husband, the one who was despicable in the eyes of literally everyone in the town, and she's been flying under the radar trying to avoid conversations with anyone and everyone — and here she is huffing and puffing for breath because she just ran from the well... and she's crying out this testimony.



“Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did!”
– I can only imagine that this probably wasn’t all that she said.

I don’t want to read too much into the text, but I’d imagine that she probably elaborated on this interaction that she had just had with Jesus, and that she began to actually share her story with the people. “Come and see a man who told me all that I ever did! He knew that I have had 5 husbands. He knew that the man I’m living with now isn’t my husband! And guess what? He was asking me for a drink, and He even told me He wanted to give me living water and that He was the Messiah!”

And y’all, look at what happens – verse 30 says, “**30 They left the town and made their way to him.**”

The embarrassing details of the woman’s story that she was ashamed of became the very details that God used to convince others that they needed to come to Jesus.
(Come on somebody!)

God intended to use this woman’s story to draw people near to Jesus.

Have you ever met someone like this woman? Someone who’s story is just absolutely amazing to you?

I have a friend named Howard and he’s that person for me – Howard was someone who had their life completely transformed by Jesus. In high school, he struggled with drug addiction. He had a really tough home life, his parents were split up, and drugs were an escape for him.

One night, Howard took it too far and he overdosed – and he nearly died. And the way he tells the story is that he woke up to his brother shaking him and turning him on his side.

God used his brother to save his life that night.

From that day on, things began to change in Howard’s life. By God’s grace, he stopped using and started going to the gym and getting in shape. He wanted to turn his life around because he didn’t ever want to go back to that moment.

Not long after the overdose, Howard met a woman at his gym named Faith. Faith would later become his wife – she was a follower of Jesus and God used her as someone to help him connect the dots that God had been pursuing him.



Faith challenged Howard to read his Bible, and so one day, in an effort to win her affections, he begrudgingly opened his Bible to the Gospel of John on his front porch. And he began to read. And he began to weep. That day, Howard met Jesus just like this woman at the well. And he received that offer of living water from Jesus.

And y'all, I can't even begin to describe how many people I have seen impacted by his story and have given their lives to Jesus because of it.

The reason is because God intended to use his story to bring people to Jesus.

My story is different from Howards. Mine doesn't include an overdose. But I can tell you that all throughout middle school, high school, and early into my college career – I was running hard from God and was living for myself. I learned really quickly that living for yourself is not actually satisfying.

When I was 19, I found myself in a spot where I was just broken and empty – and I remember going to my grandfather's house one summer afternoon and sitting down in his office and just unloading everything to him. I told him all the ugly details of my story and the things that

I was ashamed of. All the things you'd never tell your grandpa.

Papa sat there and patiently listened – and then he brought me to Jesus. He told me the good news of the Gospel. And I received that offer of living water from Jesus.

I wonder if sharing these stories resonates with anyone here. If it does, it's because God intends to use our stories to bring people to Jesus.

I believe that God intends to use your story. The things that you've gone through, the things that you may feel ashamed of right now, the things that you may be scared to share with anyone.

That divorce, that addiction, that death in your family, that brokenness in your family, that illness, that depression, that same-sex attraction, that failure – have you considered that there may be someone in your sphere of influence who is going through the same thing right now and needs to hear that Jesus can redeem *even that*? That Jesus' has born their shame for them on the cross so that they don't have to live in shame?

I believe there's is someone you know waiting to hear that



God can bring healing from addiction. There is someone you know waiting to hear that God can truly mend a broken heart. There is someone you know waiting to hear that their mistake actually hasn't disqualified them from God, but that Christ has died on the cross for their sins and wants to be in a relationship with them. There's someone you know waiting to hear that God still loves them!

And I believe that God intends for you to be the bringer of this message. For you to be like this Samaritan woman, boldly sharing your story and boldly inviting people to come see the man who has given you living water, despite your brokenness.

And y'all I know this can hit heavy because some of you are walking through some really difficult things right now. And if that's you, I just want to say I'm so sorry. But I promise you – what we see from this text is that your story, though it may be so painful right now, is not just something that God is removed from but something that he wants to use for his glory in our world.

God intends to use your story to bring people to Jesus. And he intends to use even what you are going through right now.

And for the person who thinks that their story is just boring so it's not really worth sharing – Listen to what 1 Peter 2:9-10 says:

“9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Friends, if you are a follower of Jesus, your story is far from boring! God's word says that you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation... a people for GOD'S POSSESSION. You were in darkness at one point, and now God has given you mercy and has brought you into his marvelous light!

There is nothing more that you need to add to this to make it amazing. God has sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for your sins and to make you a new creation in Christ and to give you eternal life! He's saved you from eternity in Hell. That is not boring!

Let's continue in our text.

31 In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.”



If you recall from last week's sermon, Jesus' disciples had gone into town to get Jesus food because he was worn out from journeying, and when they were gone, that's when he met the woman at the well.

32 But he said, "I have food to eat that you don't know about."

33 The disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?"

34 "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work," Jesus told them. **35** "Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest'? Listen to what I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest. **36** The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. **37** For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' **38** I sent you to reap what you didn't labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor."

I could really preach another sermon based on these verses alone, but the next point I want to make is this: IT IS GOOD FOR US TO SHARE OUR STORY AND GOD HAS PREPARED PEOPLE TO HEAR IT

We see this clearly from the text.

Look at Jesus here – he is hungry and tired. He's been journeying and ministering to people, and he's just beat. If this were me, right about this time I'd be craving a Five Guys cheeseburger and a Dr. Pepper. I'd be snatching that food out of the disciples' hands!

But Jesus says to his disciples, "I have food to eat that you don't know about...My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

What was of the *utmost importance* to Jesus wasn't feeding his belly, but to obey the Father and to finish the work that He had assigned for him. That was the food that Jesus wanted to feast on.

In the same way – it is good for us when we share our story. It's food for our souls to tell others about all that God has done for us. Have you ever experienced that?

I think about times where I've been on a mission trip, and I'm tired and worn out because I've been going all day. My stomach is doing flip-flops from that sketchy fish I ate – but my soul has a contentment in it because of the conversation I had earlier in the day where I was able to tell someone about Jesus.

I think about the hope I saw in their eyes and the joy of that moment. They were so happy that someone just



wanted to talk with them! And all of a sudden... I don't feel so worn out. I feel happy and joyful.

And **THEN** I get some food and I'm like praise Jesus!

God created us to be that way – to be encouragers, to be bringers of hope. And when we are obedient to God in that way, it's actually good for us and its food for our souls.

I dare you to test me on that this week.

I believe that's what Jesus is saying here.

Sidebar: If you've never been on a mission trip, talk to someone on our mobilization team – we would love to send you!

And Jesus continues with his disciples and says in verse 35:

Listen to what I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest. **36** The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. **37** For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' **38** I sent you to reap what you didn't labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor.

Jesus says to them, "Open your eyes! Look and see! There are others who have been tilling the soil for you, and what I am sending you to do is to go reap a harvest among them. Go do what this Samaritan woman has gone and done."

I think of Luke 10:2 when Jesus says to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

Y'all, there is a harvest right outside these walls. In your workplace, in your schools, in your gym, at your grocery store – There are people all over the place who don't have the hope of Jesus that you have. And God has prepared them for you to go and share with them so that they will be drawn to Jesus.

Regardless if you feel like your story is amazing or boring, Jesus has called you to go and share.

It's good for you to do it. And God has prepared people to hear it.

And that brings me to my last point, which is this:

JESUS' STORY HAS SUPREME POWER

Let's look back at our text.



39 Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of what the woman said when she testified, “He told me everything I ever did.”

This is an amazing verse.

The Samaritans have come back based on the testimony of the Samaritan woman. They listened to her and they came to Jesus.

And the text says that many Samaritans *believed in Jesus because of her story.*

Friends, the main point of the sermon today is that **Your Story Has Power** and that’s exactly what we see when the Samaritan woman shares her story. The Lord used her story to lead people to saving faith in Jesus! And he can use your story to do the same, because your story is powerful. That’s amazing.

He can use the street preacher on the corner to bring about salvation. He can use a quick conversation that you have with someone at the grocery store. He can use an Instagram DM. He can use a phone call.

Maybe you’re in this room today because of a conversation like that.

But look at what happens when these people end up meeting Jesus.

40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. **41** Many more believed because of what he said. **42** And they told the woman, “We no longer believe because of what you said, since we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world.”

These Samaritans, the ones who hated Jews, heard from Jesus and everything changed. Notice that they asked him to stay with them! Y’all that would have been unheard of for Samaritan’s to ask a Jew to stay with them.

On top of that, it says that many more believed because of what *HE* said. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe because of what you said...we’ve seen and heard for ourselves...this *really is* the **Savior of the world.**”

Savior of the world, y’all. That kind of title can only be given to someone who has a story with supreme power.

And Jesus’ story does have supreme power.

The story of Jesus is the Gospel. That though every single human being has sinned against God since Adam



and Eve. That though every single human being deserves eternal death apart from God – God has made a way for us to be reconciled to Himself. And He has done that by coming to earth in the form of a man – a man named Jesus.

Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life, he performed miracles on earth, he broke down racial and societal boundaries, he talked with women, he loved people fiercely and stood in opposition to the religious leaders of the day – rather than preaching a message of strict adherence to the law, he preached a new Gospel. A Gospel of the Kingdom. And that Kingdom is filled with sinners like this Samaritan woman, like you and me – people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who have done nothing to deserve God’s grace, yet He has freely given it.

And this was accomplished by Jesus going to the cross and dying in the place of sinners. And Jesus was raised back to life three days later proving that He indeed is the Savior of the world, and He now gives living water – His very Spirit – to **anyone** who would place their faith in Him. Regardless of race. Regardless of gender. Regardless of your past. Jesus gives **eternal life** to anyone who would turn from their sin and place their faith in Him.

This story. The Gospel. The story of Jesus. This story has supreme power.

And when these Samaritan people heard the story of Jesus, they were in awe and they said, “this is the Savior of the world!”

Our second point today was God intends to use your story to bring people to Jesus. This is why – so that people can hear Jesus’ story and believe that he really is the Savior of the world.

That’s John’s purpose of writing his Gospel! He writes in John 20:31, “But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Life is found in Jesus’ story.

And we, as the church, have the privilege of telling our story to others in order to bring people to Jesus, so that they can hear his story and receive living water.

Your story has power. God knows your story. God intends to use your story to bring people to Jesus. It is good for you to share your story and God has prepared people to hear it. Jesus’ story has supreme power.



What would it look like for you to really live this out today? What would it look like for you to be someone who faithfully shares your story and the things that you have gone through in order to bring people to the feet of Jesus so that they can hear his story?

I want to give you a tool to help you do that today:

Here it is, it's called the **15-Second Testimony**. It's super simple and I think it would be an amazing starting place for you if you have never shared your story with anyone.

Here's the first part.

What are 2 words that described your life before knowing Jesus? Write those down.

For me, two words that described me were that I was empty and broken. Maybe before knowing Jesus, you felt purposeless. Maybe you felt anxious. Maybe you felt ashamed.

Take a second to think about it, and then write down two words.

Next, **what are two words that describe your life now that you have received the forgiveness of Jesus? Write those down.**

For me, those two words are filled and healed. Maybe for you the words are free and forgiven. Maybe they are purpose and joy. Maybe they are fulfilled and loved.

Take a second to think about it, and then write down those two words.

Ok, now you have the bones for this 15 second testimony! And the next step is to bring it all together and to share it! Here's how you can share it:

There was a time in my life when I was ____ and _____. But then I met Jesus, and I received his forgiveness for me, and now I am ____ and _____. Do you have a story like that?

So, my story is that there was a time in my life when I was empty and broken. But then I met Jesus, and I received his forgiveness for me, and now I am filled with His Spirit and healed of my brokenness. Do you have a story like that?

Super easy right?

My challenge is for you to share this with someone this week. Y'all your story has power, and you have no idea who God has prepared to hear it. But I can assure you that he's prepared someone.



The Samaritan woman didn't have all the answers, she was just amazed by Jesus and went and shared about what he had done for her. And God used it mightily.

He wants to use you in that way, too.

And y'all, this is the last thing I'll say – if we really want to see a Gospel awakening happen in the city of Charlotte that's carried to the ends of the earth – it begins here. With you going and making Jesus known in our city.

So, will you accept the call? Let's pray.