

# ***Reflections from a United Methodist Pastor***

*August 9, 2020*

*Lesson 9*

## **Come and See**

*John 4:7-30, 39-42*

By Belton Joyner

There are so many handles for picking up this story! What about Jesus' witness to gender equality (John 4:27)? What about the many times this woman had been dumped by men (verse 18)? What about the urgency with which this woman ran to tell the good news (verses 28-29)? What about the way many were led to belief by the witness of just one (verse 39)? What about the change in those who believed (verse 42)? All of this and we do not even know the woman's name!

On my desk is a trivia calendar. Today's question was "What is the driest place on Earth?" My mind rumbled around various deserts: Sahara. Mojave. Gobi. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. The driest place is the McMurdo Dry Valleys in (Are you ready for this?) Antarctica.

That sort of surprise happens every so often in our spiritual journey: our Lord shows up when we do not expect it or when we do not recognize him or when we thought he would look like something else. Who expected a desert in Antarctica? Who expected Jesus to be witnessed to by a Samaritan woman? After all, the text says, "(Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other)" (verse 9).

I ask myself: How do I relate to persons who are different from me (verse 9)? I ask myself: How often do I confess the broken places in life (verses 17-18)? How often do I speak to another about the Jesus in my life (verse 39)? How often have I asked Jesus to be even more present in my life (verse 40)?

And here is another thought that emerges from this account: Am I willing to listen to and honor what is said by someone on whom society (and perhaps me) looks down? Review John 4:39. This was not a culture that paid much attention to what women had to say. Yet these Samaritans—no doubt both men and women—learned and grew in faith because they were willing to respect what was said by this five-time divorcee who was living with yet another man (verse 18). What message from God might I be missing because I do not expect any wisdom or insight or revelation to come from a particular person or a shackled group?

Like I say, there are many handles for picking up this story.

**Prayer:** As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “Who, me, Lord?”

*Belton Joyner is a retired elder in the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. He has served in a variety of local church and connectional responsibilities. His publications range from church school curriculum to theology popularization to mystery novels. He has written these weekly thoughts on the lessons in Adult Bible Studies for his conference newsletter since December 2001. They are printed here with permission.*