

If you had 60 seconds to share your story of how Jesus changed your life, what would you say and why do you think that particular aspect of your story matters most?

The Samaritan woman came to the well alone in the heat of the day, suggesting she was an outcast. Who are the modern-day outcasts in our community that Jesus might be calling us to engage with?

Jesus asked the woman for a drink, which was essentially asking to be her friend across racial and social barriers. What barriers prevent you from extending friendship to those who are different from you?

The woman tried to shift the conversation to religion when Jesus touched on her brokenness. In what ways do we use religious talk or theological debates to avoid being vulnerable about our real struggles?

Jesus told the woman he could give her living water that would permanently quench her thirst. What are the temporary wells you find yourself returning to that never fully satisfy your soul?

The woman had been through five marriages and was now with someone who would not commit to her. How does Jesus meet us in our patterns of disappointment and broken relationships differently than religion does?

Jesus said he came not to condemn the world but to save it, yet he was honest about the woman's sin. How can we balance speaking truth about brokenness while avoiding condemnation in our relationships with others?

The woman left her water jar at the well after encountering Jesus. What might you need to leave behind in order to fully embrace the new life Jesus offers you?

Many Samaritans believed because of the woman's testimony, then came to believe for themselves after meeting Jesus. How does your story serve as a bridge to help others encounter Jesus personally rather than just hearing about him secondhand?

The sermon challenges us to share our story using the framework of before Jesus, meeting Jesus, and after Jesus. What specific person in your life needs to hear your story, and what is holding you back from sharing it with them?

Small Group Guide: This Is My Story

Based on John 4:1-42 - The Woman at the Well

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to help each person reflect honestly on their story and give courage to share it with others.

Icebreaker Question

If you had 60 seconds to tell someone about the most significant change in your life, what would you say?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Your story is worth telling** - If Jesus has changed your life, you have a story that matters, regardless of how "dramatic" it seems.
 2. **Your story is your greatest tool** - Not your Bible knowledge, debate skills, or platform, but your personal testimony of transformation.
 3. **Jesus meets people in their brokenness** - He doesn't condemn; He comes to save and transform.
 4. **A simple story can change lives** - The Samaritan woman's honest testimony brought an entire village to Jesus.
 5. **The three-part story framework:**
 - There was a time in my life when... (before Jesus)
 - Then I met Jesus... (your encounter)
 - And now... (what's changed)
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. Why do you think Jesus "had to go through Samaria" when most Jews avoided it? What does this reveal about His mission?

2. The woman came to the well alone at noon, unlike other women who came in groups during cooler hours. What does this detail tell us about her life situation?
3. How did Jesus gradually move the conversation from casual (water) to deeply personal (her relationships)? What can we learn from His approach?

Personal Reflection

4. The woman initially tried to change the subject when Jesus mentioned her brokenness (shifting to religious debate). When have you done something similar—avoiding vulnerability by keeping conversations "safely" theological or abstract?
5. The sermon mentioned that the woman "left her jar" at the well. What do you think this symbolizes? What might you need to "leave behind" to fully embrace what Jesus offers?
6. Before this encounter, the woman was hiding in shame. After meeting Jesus, she immediately went to tell others. What caused such a dramatic shift? Have you experienced a similar transformation?

Application and Growth

7. Take 5-10 minutes individually to write out your story using the three-part framework:
 - There was a time in my life when...
 - Then I met Jesus...
 - And now...
8. Share your stories with one another (if comfortable). Practice keeping it to 2-3 minutes and ending with: "Do you have a story like that?"
9. Who is one person in your life who doesn't know Jesus that you'd like to see sitting next to you on Easter Sunday? What would need to happen between now and then?
10. What fears or obstacles keep you from sharing your story? How does the woman at the well's example address those fears?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Share Your Story on Social Media

Option 1: Video

- Record a 2-minute video telling your story using the three-part framework
- Don't worry about production quality—just be authentic
- End with the question: "Do you have a story like that?"
- Post with #ThisIsMyStory

Option 2: Written Post

- Write out your story in a social media post

- Use the same three-part framework
- End with the invitation question
- Tag with #ThisIsMyStory

Follow-up:

- Respond to comments and engage with people who interact
- Pray for opportunities to go deeper with those who respond
- Check out other stories using the hashtag and encourage one another

Additional Applications

1. **Practice telling your story** - Share it with a trusted friend or family member this week to gain confidence.
 2. **Pray for divine appointments** - Ask God to bring someone across your path who needs to hear your story.
 3. **Study other transformation stories in Scripture** - Read about Zacchaeus (Luke 19), the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5), or Paul (Acts 9) to see how Jesus transforms lives.
 4. **Journal your story** - Write out the longer version of your testimony, including specific details and emotions.
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Memory Verse

John 4:39 - "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony."

Closing Prayer Points

- Thank God for the specific ways He has changed each person's life
 - Ask for courage to share stories authentically and without shame
 - Pray for the people each person identified who need to know Jesus
 - Ask God to use your collective stories to reach Spencer County and beyond
 - Pray for Easter Sunday and those who might attend
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Looking Ahead

Next week, continue reflecting on how God is using your story. Come prepared to share any responses you received from posting your story and how God opened doors for further conversation.

Leader Notes

- Create a safe, non-judgmental environment where people feel comfortable sharing
- Be prepared to share your own story first to model vulnerability
- Don't force anyone to share if they're not ready
- Celebrate every story—no story is too "ordinary" or "dramatic"
- Have tissues available; these conversations can be emotional
- Consider recording willing participants sharing their stories to encourage the group

This Is My Story: A 5-Day Devotional Journey

Day 1: When Jesus Breaks Through Barriers

Reading: John 4:1-9

Devotional: Jesus deliberately chose the road less traveled—through Samaria—because someone needed him there. The barriers were significant: racial division, religious hostility, and cultural taboos. Yet Jesus crossed every boundary to reach one broken woman at a well.

What barriers exist in your life that keep you from encountering Jesus or sharing him with others? Pride? Past failures? Fear of rejection? Jesus specializes in breaking through the walls we build. He sees beyond your defenses to the thirsty soul within. Today, consider what barriers you've constructed around your heart. Jesus is willing to cross every one of them to offer you living water. The question is: will you let him? His love refuses to be limited by human boundaries.

Day 2: Honest Before Healing

Reading: John 4:10-18

Devotional: The Samaritan woman tried to keep the conversation theoretical—discussing theology, debating worship locations, anything to avoid the personal. But Jesus gently brought her back to truth: "Go, call your husband." Four words in response: "I have no husband." Honesty unlocked everything.

Before transformation comes confession. Before healing comes honesty. We cannot receive living water while pretending we're not thirsty. Jesus already knows your story—the failures, the shame, the broken relationships, the secret struggles. He's not asking for information; he's inviting intimacy. What part of your story are you hiding from God? He doesn't condemn; he redeems. Stop performing and start being honest. Your vulnerability isn't weakness—it's the doorway to freedom.

Day 3: Living Water for Thirsty Souls

Reading: John 4:13-26; John 7:37-39

Devotional: Jesus promised water that permanently satisfies, a fountain welling up to eternal life. The woman had tried relationship after relationship, searching for fulfillment in human love. Each one left her emptier than before.

What wells are you drawing from? Career success? Romance? Achievement? Social media validation? These are Jacob's well—they require constant return trips and never truly satisfy. Jesus offers something radically different: living water that transforms from within. This isn't about religious activity or moral improvement; it's about the Holy Spirit dwelling inside you, creating an inexhaustible spring of life, joy, and purpose. Stop exhausting yourself drawing from broken cisterns. Come to Jesus. Drink deeply. Let his Spirit satisfy the thirst nothing else can touch.

Day 4: Your Story Is Your Mission

Reading: John 4:28-30, 39-42

Devotional: She left her water jar and ran to town. The woman who once hid in shame now boldly proclaimed, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did!" She didn't have theological training or Bible knowledge. She simply shared what Jesus had done for her.

Your story is your greatest evangelistic tool. Not your arguments, not your platform, not your perfection—your honest testimony of transformation. There was a time when... then I met Jesus... and now everything is different. That's it. That's the formula. Many believed because of her testimony, then encountered Jesus themselves. Who needs to hear your story this week? The coworker struggling with addiction? The neighbor going through divorce? The family member who thinks church people are hypocrites? Tell them what Jesus has done for you.

Day 5: From Outcast to Evangelist

Reading: John 4:39-42; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Devotional: In one conversation, Jesus transformed an isolated, ashamed woman into the first missionary to Samaria. She arrived at the well as an outcast; she left as an evangelist. Her past didn't disqualify her—it became her platform.

God specializes in using broken people with messy stories. Your greatest pain can become your most powerful ministry. The shame you've carried, the failures you've hidden, the brokenness you've endured—Jesus wants to redeem it all and use it to reach others. You are a new creation. The old has gone; the new has come. And God has given you the ministry of reconciliation. You don't need a perfect past to share Jesus; you need an honest story of his grace. This week, tell someone your story. Post it. Share it. Let God use your testimony to draw others to the living water only Jesus provides.