

# The Woman of Samaria!

## Overview

Well, I'm back in Samaria again this morning and I just want to pass on something to you. You hear about so-called incursions by the Jews. It's considered to be illegal for the Jews to be in the West Bank. You've heard that.

And there's a lot of turmoil in the West Bank right now because it's a hornet's nest of pathetic people. Not all the people that are there are terrible. But that is where Hezbollah or Hamas I don't know they may have some new groups by now. But yeah, they're terrorists and so there's operations in there right now. It's not the West Bank. That is a wording given to are you ready? Judea and Samaria. That's the West Bank. And why are we not calling it Judea and Samaria? Because somebody's feelings are going to be hurt. I'm sick of that. So this story this morning again happens not in the West Bank, but it happens in Samaria. So I choose now to read out of God's Word.

"He came to a city." This is John's Gospel chapter 4. "Jesus came to a city of Samaria. The city at that time was called Saikar. Near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now, Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied from his journey sat by the well. It was about the sixth hour." The sixth hour is 12 noon. Hottest moment of the day. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. I've mentioned this before. She came at noon at the hottest time of the day, probably because she knew nobody else would be there.

She did not want to be confronted by the other women. The men would not have chided her, but the women would have. She's been married several times and we don't know about her fidelity other than that. And Jesus talks to her about her fidelity. So this woman comes at the hour of noon and we know that Jesus made an appointment in his own mind. He predetermined that he would meet this woman knowing that she would come to draw water. He requests of her, please give me a drink. His disciples, by the way, had gone into another city to get some food. I want to mention this to you. So I'm going to be reading and giving commentary as I go. This was a setup. Jesus did not want his disciples to be present. He wanted to be alone with this lady.

And there's a reason for that. I've already gone to great lengths to talk about the fact that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. That is biblically, scripturally correct. Each of these groups had no use for the other and have gone to great lengths to discuss with you, toward you, the reasons for that. And again, I remind you that when Israel was invaded by an army, and overcome, many of the Jewish people were taken captive into exile.

And other people from the invading company were ushered in. And this went on for hundreds of years, wherein the invaders then became a significant part. Now, the interesting thing is that Samaria, being a part at the time of the invasion, being of the northern kingdom, for reasons that I can't give to you, the Samaritans were not pushed to go with the exile. They got to remain. So while these people came from another country and lived among them, pagans, the Jewish people started intermarrying. The Samaritans started intermarrying. When normalcy came back into the land, you have Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. You know that scripture.

And so when the Jews came back and had the opportunity to resettle in the land of Israel, they had no use for the Samaritans. Because checking them out, it turns out that the Samaritans having intermarried were not in the minds of the Jewish people. You're not a true Jew. And so the Samaritans had set up their own religious organization because they believed the word. They were true Jews, except they had intermarried. So what they did is they blended a couple of religions. So what they were doing was they were following the scriptures given by Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They were living according to many of the Jewish laws, but they intermingled other religions with it too. And so that's called syncretism, where you take two theologies and try to mix them up and make one. So this is the reason why the Jews would have no dealings with them. The Samaritans were considered something very, very less in terms of spiritual value. So if Jesus had taken his disciples with him, he would have experienced something that happened. It's recorded for us in the Gospel of Luke, where it says that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem with his disciples, and they are determined to stop in Samaria.

But the Samaritans met them and said, we know who you are, we know your Jews, we know that your destination is Jerusalem, so you're not welcome here. So had Jesus wanted to speak to the woman at the well about her spiritual needs, if he'd had his disciples with him, there would have been a major resistance. She never would have opened up to him. She never would have committed to dialogue with him. And so Jesus, loud for the day, he probably said, why don't you guys go and get some food and bring me a Snickers bar when you come back. So they went off to get food. He's tired, he sits by the well, and the lady comes along just like he had planned. He asks her for a drink. He asks her for a drink. This is the beginning of his dialogue with her. And she replies, the woman of Samaria says to him, why are you even talking to me? You're a Jew. Ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman.

In other words, anything that I as a Samaritan touch, you would be suspicious because you see, I know you consider me to be unclean. Everything that I touch, everything about me is unclean. And yet you are saying you're willing to drink water from me. That I would drop water and I would hand you a cup, some kind of a vessel to drink out of. I know you better than that. You are a Jew. And you know that it would sully you and you would become ceremonially unclean. You would not be worthy to worship the Lord. If anybody knew what you did with me, you would touch the same cup and put your lips to the same cup. You would be chastised in Jerusalem if they knew what you were up to. But you know better in your own spirit. It shouldn't just be what others think about you. It's what you know about you.

You are unworthy of God. You are an unreligious person. You are spiritually in darkness if you touch anything that I give you. So what's this all about? In other words, she thinks it's a trap. She can't figure it out. This guy is a freak. This guy is weird. Why would he take the chance of becoming ceremonially unclean? So that's why she gives him such a rough time. The woman said to her, Jesus answered then. If you knew the gift of God, so she's saying, you're going to lose out with God. Okay.

And he replies, if you knew my relationship with God, if you knew the gift of God and who is talking to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him. And he would have given you living water. I've mentioned this before some time ago. The sun today in this guy will send forth its pure life giving rays. The sun today, not talking about the sun of God, we're talking about the sun, the solar. The sun's rays today will touch the garbage heaps of Ontario, the filth, the degradation, putrid. And you know what? The sun will not become soiled. But the garbage dumps will actually experience some form of light and life. Jesus is saying, I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid for you and I have to have con. I'm not afraid to drink from the cup because you cannot make me unworthy of the Father. If you only knew, if you only knew, now watch this, had he been offering her a drink, she would have said, what kind of a trick is this?

Why would you seeing yourself so holy and so perfect? Why would you even dare to come near me and offer me to drink out of your cup? It's not like he had a Tim Hortons travel mug with him. Well, I'll drink out of my own mug. She would have drank from his cup and handing it back to him. You know, there it's soiled. It's dirty. And so here's Jesus saying to her, if you only knew, if you only had an idea, but that's why I'm here. That's why I'm here because I want you to know. And yet this is the woman of the lowest reputation of the town of Saikar. She is the worst woman in town. The women of that town would say to their husbands, you stay away from that woman. She's a homewrecker.

She had a terrible reputation. And here's Jesus saying to her, regardless of your reputation, I'm going to throw a little verse in here. He whom the son sets free is free indeed. I'm about to offer you a drink. I only asked you for a drink so that we would get involved in this dialogue. Paul was a canny, tremendous, gifted, ever so skilled communicator. You'd know that from reading his epistles. You also know that from the book of Acts. And we come to understand about Paul. What a wonderful communicator he was. But there was no communicator like Jesus. And Jesus had an unlimited means whereby he would communicate with people and try to draw them to himself. In this case, he uses his thirst as a means to reach out to a woman.

Now I won't read the rest of the chapter. You know whatever so well. He says, I could give you a drink. And if I give you this drink, you'll never thirst again. Well, give it to me now. Give it to me now. He says, well, why would you want to drink that alone? Why don't you go and get your husband so that both of you can enjoy the drink? I have no husband. Oh, he says, don't play tricks with me. You've already been married five times. And right now you're living common law. But I still dare to offer you water.

Here's Jesus, the judge of the universe, saying, I know all about you. And in spite of what I know, I have come that you might have life and that you, the woman of horrendous reputation, I've come that you might have life. I'm glad that he met you at a well. Can you think about how he met you at the well? Who did he put in your path? What did he do to put some honey taste in your mouth? What did he do to cause you to realize you're living in darkness, but there's a light, Johnny. What did he do? How did he reach out to you? Everybody has their story. Everybody has their story. How did Jesus reach out to people? I want to just conclude with this little Sumerian story.

He says, I know all about you. And then she perceives, well, you must be a prophet. Wow, how did you know all of that? And now the disciples come. And this is so intriguing. I was at a meal table yesterday and somebody's in this room, and you were at that table with me. It was a men's meeting. And there was one fellow at the table that we were longing for. He knows the way he's just been resistant until now. And I'm very careful for him. I love this man. To me, he's a brother in waiting. God's going to do something in his life.

But there's another fellow there who loves to chatter away, and all of a sudden he started saying something that would bring the church into disrepute. He was just about to tell a little bit of gossip. And I froze. I thought, no, no, no, no, don't do that. Don't do that. Don't go there. We need to be careful of people, what we say and how we say it. Now the fellow I was concerned about, he said, just a moment, I got to go to the lady's powder room or something like he left the room. And the fellow who was about to tell that story went on a little bit more, and then all of a sudden he realized it wasn't being appreciated by the rest of this at the table. And he said, you know, I shouldn't go on about that. And then I forget how it came about, but it did come about. Yeah, you shouldn't be talking about that when here's a fellow we want him to come to church, and you're going to give him all the reasons not to go to church. Sometimes, sometimes for the worst enemy.

Now watch this. This woman is being engaged with Jesus. She's quite enamored what he's saying. She's quite taken up with how she perceives this is a man of God, and then those Jews show up the disciples. And what do they do? I don't think they talk softly. You know, they had, they had pathetic regard for this woman. And it tells us that at the moment they arrive, they see Jesus talking to this Samaritan. And they don't mumble quietly. I think they actually said it within her hearing. Jesus, we can't believe you're talking to this woman out here. Like, what are you even thinking? You shouldn't even be seen with her.

I'm embellishing this little bit of a scenario. Do you know what the next verse says? It says, and the woman put down her water pot and she left. How does my demeanor, how does my conversation, and how do I affect other people? Here's Jesus endeavoring to reach this tender little soul who's lowly regarded in her village. She's the gossip piece of town. She came to the well at a time she hoped nobody would say, it was the hottest moment of the day. No women were going to be there. Jesus engages her. The disciples show up and say, so what kind of a woman have we got here? And it says she left. She left her water pot. She ran into town. If I'd been there, I would have been horrified. It would have thought, well, there's a great opportunity lost, but it wasn't lost.

She was so enthralled with the words that had come out of His mouth. Jesus' mouth. She went into the town, now wait a minute. This is part of, you know, when I quoted for you out of the book of Luke, where Jesus was about to go into a village or a town of Samaria, and the people came and said, you're not welcome here. So we know what the Samaritans felt about the Jewish people. And we know, therefore, that if Jesus had gone directly into town with His disciples, they would have got pushed back.

If Jesus had even gone in alone, I have to summarize. I have to assume He would have got pushed back. What's the Jew doing here? What's he doing here? This is weird. This is weird. So He doesn't go into town. What does He do? He asked a little gal who came to draw water, would you care for me to give me a drink? The conversation rolls along to the point where she runs into town where Jesus would have been rejected, and she says, come and meet the man. He's a Jew, but I've never heard a man talk like this man. This man could very well be the Messiah.

This is not a moment for us to miss an opportunity. So look at this. Jesus wanted to touch a whole town called Sychar, but He knew if He took the disciples in, they'd mess up. What are we going to town here for? Hey, look in the book of Luke where I said to you that the Samaritan said, we don't want you even here. The disciples turned to Jesus and said, you've given us a lot of power. Why don't we treat this town like God treated Sodom and Gomorrah? They actually asked permission from Jesus. Let's rain fire down and teach them a lesson. Well, okay, why not?

Why not just turn them into an overcooked Colonel Sanders dinner? This is crazy. So we know that if Jesus had taken the disciples with Him and the people had been raw, like they were in the gospel of Luke, a different town. There's towns all over Judea and Samaria. So the one town that Jesus touches now and a revival breaks out is a different town than all the rest of them. So this woman runs in, gets all these people excited. Jesus knows how to touch people. He knows how to reach the unreachable. In our prayer time this morning, in this living room I call it, one of the people prayed for our prodigals. One of them prayed for our prodigals. And what I want to assume with all the rest of you is that Jesus has spies.

He has operatives in places that ye know not of. God has ways of touching people. I've told you this story. I'll give it ever so briefly. About how I went into town, I was there to be a special guest at a meeting. I had neglected to ask the location of the church. I arrive in town and I'm thinking, I'm going to be late because I don't even know where I'm going. So I went into a Tim Hortons and I asked one after, I asked everybody in the whole, it was full. I asked everybody in the town, where's the local Pentecostal? Nobody heard of it. That's kind of like our church, you know.

I've had more people tell me, well what church? I say, that's the youth hostel, isn't it? That's a theater. They don't even know we're here. What an opportunity. The whole town is waiting to hear about us. They're just waiting with baited breath. So, no. And here was this big church and quite an active one. But the people in the Tim Hortons, they didn't know who I was. So they weren't pushing me aside. They just never heard of it. The girl at the till said, we don't have one of the churches in this town. We don't have one of them. Another guy called and said, you should ask the police. Long story made short. I spoke to a young guy in the gas pump and this gas pump was literally part of the same real estate.

And I stepped in and the first thing he said was he looked through the windows on both sides of the kiosk. He saw an alcari. He said, is this a stick up? Like, why am I in there? I said, no, no, I just want to know where the Pentecostal church is. He said, never heard of it. That's great. Okay, now I have to abbreviate the story. There's a reason for the timing.

It's one o'clock in the morning. I've done my thing at the church. I've done some other things that I was asked to do by some other friends. It's one o'clock in the morning. As I'm driving through that town, I went by the Tim Hortons and God spoke to me in my heart. I don't hear his voice. I'll get these urges. I turned my car around and parked it, and walked into the kiosk. And the kids sitting there listening to his radio. He looks up and he says, you again. You still didn't find that church? I said, I found it. Well, what do you want now?

I said, I got a message for you. What's that? Jesus is after you. I'm sure he felt the tears running down his leg. He was scared to death. He said, my mother sent you. Hello? My mother sent you. I said, I don't even know who you are. You do so. You're lying to me. I said, hey, hey, wait, wait, wait. I said, Jesus knows who you are.

Your mother didn't send me. Jesus did. This kid, I was scared to death. He said, what are we doing now? I said, I'm going home. It's 1. 30 in the morning. I'm tired. You've got to think about this. He said, well, why did you stop? I said, I stopped to tell you that God's got your address. And He's after you. It was at least six weeks later, I was in Windsor, Ontario, same scenario preaching at a church.

Same scenario too late at night. The pastor would invite me to go out and have some pizza at night. I don't know what it is with pastors and pizza. They kept me until one o'clock in the morning eating pizza, and I still got to go home. So I'm ripping down the 401, and I see the sign of that town that I'd been in. And God spoke to me again. And I pulled in, and I walked in, and I walked into the gas bar. Here's this kid. Happy day. He's on a different shift. He's there all night. And I walked. He says, they're God.

What are you doing here? I said, I'm here to tell you, not only is your mother praying for you, not only am I praying for you, but I said, I've got at least 500 people who are praying for you. You haven't got a chance. Give it up. Jesus has a way of touching people. And then I called that church. And I told that pastor, there's a young kid that's working in a gas pump. And I happen to know that you're having Heaven's gates, Hell's flames at your church coming up. And you need to send everyone of your high schoolers in and scare that kid. And let them know Jesus has an appointment with you. I don't know the rest of this story. But Jesus has a way. He does.

He has a way. He had a way with his own disciples. They were struggling with the whole thing. They had such great plans. Here's the Messiah. They were part of the national mentality. We know a Messiah has come. We're going to send the Italians back to Rome. We're going to be free of the Roman soldiers. And all of a sudden, here comes Jesus. Raises the dead, opens blind eyes, walks on the water, endless endless. They're all excited and don't need to die on the cross. And even when he rose again from the dead, they were totally, totally confused.

Just try and get inside their heads. Okay, he rose again from the dead. What weird thing is coming down next? And the thing you're picking up is it's important that I go away. Oh, that's just great. We're just over our morning period seeing you dying naked on a cross. You rise again from the dead. That makes us feel good. But where is this going? And one of them says, I'm going fishing. And one after another, other disciples, a couple of them, aren't even named. They said, we're going to go too. So these guys are actually, I feel, despondent.

And Jesus cares about people who are going through dark times. And what happened on that occasion? He showed up and he did a miracle again of fish. He knew how to reach them. He knew that there was a fellow among the disciples shortly after his resurrection. He knew there was at least one among them who was always negative. You've known these people in your life. There are certain people on a Monday. You just tell your wafer. You've already had a rough enough sleep tonight, last night from Sunday night, whatever. And the last thing you need to do is run into George or whatever his name is. And when you say, how are you doing? Well, I have felt better than I do today.

The glass is always half empty, right? And you don't like those people. And so Jesus knew all his disciples and he knew the mentality of Thomas. And how did Jesus reach out to him? Jesus lifted his shirt and said, go ahead. Touch me where the spear left its mark. He touched Thomas. A doubtor. Do you doubt? Don't feel you're a cast away. You're not trash. We all go through times of doubt. But show up.

Show up in the prayer room. Show up in your reading room. Show up in the Word. And Jesus will say, I want to touch you. But now I'm going to reverse it. I invite you. Go ahead. Touch me. Come give me a hug. Let me make a difference in your life. Mary Magdalene. Stagger away from an empty tomb. The body of Jesus.

It wasn't enough that they brutalized him. It wasn't enough that we saw the master hanging stark naked on the cross. People speeding on him. Bleeding to death. My hero might save her. My redeemer. And it wasn't enough. They had to steal his body. Now, dear God, what else are they going to come up with? And then she sees somebody walking in the morning shadows of that garden. And biblically it says, and she supposes him to be the gardener. How come she didn't look and recognize him? She is so low.

She is so at the bottom. Seeing him at this crazy hour of the day. You know how early it is. It's got to be the gardener. So she doesn't have to look. She just speaks to him and she says, Could you please tell me, do you have any idea what they've done with his body? And Jesus replies, Mary. That's all he said. Mary. And her life was transformed when he called out her name. I've never heard God call me David. Not here.

But here I've heard him call me David. I don't know when Erica, but he called your name. You didn't identify it in that way. When you look back, he wasn't talking to all the other little gals at that time. He was talking to Erica. He calls us by name. When Jesus called her by name, he had her. He had her. He had her. It was 1968, 67, 66. It was probably the fall of 65. I'm in college. I need money.

My parents couldn't help me with my tuition. So I got a job driving a bus. I've got this many stories about buses. I could have you walking out in anger today. If I were to tell you, I drove down the 401 with a friend. We were having a bus race on the 401 at Oshawa. I did so. That's only part of the story. If I told you the rest, you'd say, I don't believe it. Most of the people when I tell them that I left the wheel doing somewhere close to 100 miles an hour and ran to the back aisle and made a motion to the other driver. He's driving a bus.

He's looking through the windshield. All of a sudden he goes, because he sees forest. Who's driving the bus? Yeah, I was that crazy. So here I am. I'm doing a school run. I didn't do those kinds of things when I had a busload of kids. I do the school run. And so I picked up these high schoolers and I get to the end of the route. And it's not fall. It's winter time because it's dark down. I've got to turn on the lights, you know, the house lights of the bus.

And as I'm looking in the rear view mirror, there's a girl sitting back there. I don't know who she is. I said, you better come up here. What are you doing on my bus? Well, I didn't see my house. I'm lost. Well, where do you live? She told me. I said, oh my goodness, you're on the wrong bus. How come you got on the wrong bus? Well, this is my first day of school. So she didn't know which bus.

She got confused. And the bus was so jammed that I never even spotted her. I didn't know which one she was. So she told me her address. I said, you sit right there. I said, I'm going to talk. And so as you're driving along, I felt it important to put this girl at ease. So I said, look, my name's David. And I don't want you to be afraid. You're safe. You're safe. I'm going to take you to your house. I can find it.

I'm going to have you home as quickly. But we're at the wrong end of the city. It's going to take a little bit. But I'm going to do this. Oh, thank you, sir. I'm the minister, you know. Well, I'm in training. I'd been in college all of three months. And now I'm the next Billy Graham, right? So I'm going to be a minister. That's all I had to say. It was like Jesus. Give me a drink.

I said, I'm going to be a minister. She says, can we talk? Yes. And before very long, she's crying. She says, please tell me that you can tell me more about him. Well, what do you know? I know nothing. My family, we don't go to church. I've never been in a church. But I believe in God. What God do you believe in? I don't know. I don't know His name.

And I fear He doesn't like me. I've never heard His voice. I talk to Him every night before I go to sleep. I often cry myself to sleep, saying, please answer my prayer. I want to know who you are. I know you're there. But why are you silent? Can you help me? We ended up sitting in the front of our house. I said, before you get out of the bus. I want to introduce you to the one that you're looking for. I told her enough now. She said, please. And I led that 17-year-old teenage girl to a personal knowledge of Jesus. God has, God has ways. God has ways. He has ways of impressing people. So April and I are out in the middle of the Indian Ocean. No, we're not on a cruise liner. We're there for ministry. We're on a remote island called Seychelles.

And when I got there, I found out that they have no Bibles. Some of you have heard this. Some of you haven't. This is your moment. Get ready.

I love telling stories. This is not about me. I'm just there. I'm a witness. So I said to the missionary who had invited us to come. I said, you know, people are going to get saved. I'm counting on that. I said, what have you got for them? Literature, Bibles. He said, hey, we're in the middle of the Indian Ocean. He said, we don't have a Bible bookstore here. He gets kind of like, nah, nah, nah, nah. I said, well, you could have told me I could have packed something.

And so he and I are, I'm like, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. And so I'm in a kind of a bad mood. And I should be in a bad mood. Come on, God. I spent a fortune to get here. I brought all this equipment. I'm going to do all of them. I brought my wife. And you're not even ready. I was a wonderful Christian. So I'm in the church and I'm waiting upon the Lord. Tonight's going to be the first service. And the missionary walks out into the auditorium and he calls on and he says, hey, David. He said, they got some news.

He said, there's a military man coming to see us. The man walks in and he's off of a U. S. marine ship that's docked in the harbor. It's one of five ships, one of five. And those five were one of hundreds, hundreds of U. S. military ships that were all embarking on a mission to save the day at Mogadishu Somalia. But it was such a mess. You remember the story. This was the days of Clinton. The U.S. had to run with her tail between your legs. It was a total disaster. Poorly planned. No, they didn't have the CIA helping them to figure out what to do. Totally surprised. They had to run for their life. A board, one of those ships, one of the five, had a Christian military officer whose role was chaplain. And when he got the word on the West Coast, California, Camp Pendleton, when he gets his orders, you're being sent along with this big armatter. We're going to go. We're going to save the day.

And you're the chaplain. We need you along. So he had privilege and he ordered Bibles. And the story is he ordered a thousand. And on the cover, it says, operation Restore Hope. That was what the operation was. And the operation failed miserably. So his story is that he's on this ship. The Bibles are on board. He's not even allowed to disembowel. He never touched the soil. He was aboard that ship. He couldn't get off.

It was such a miserable mess. Next thing that happens is the Pentagon orders five ships. I don't know what happened to the other hundred. Five ships were to go to Singapore. So here's this Christian guy in his quarters on a ship. He's got a thousand Bibles with him and he's on his way to Singapore. But the Bibles are clearly marked that they belong to the US Marines and it says operation restore hope. The people of Singapore are very educated. They're not an emerging third world country. They are a successful country. And he knows in his head, you don't take these Bibles that are truly, truly US. The US doesn't always have the best reputation.

There were times when I saved my own bacon by announcing, no, I'm not American. I'm Canadian. Oh, well, come on in then. The US is not always welcome. Hello. They're kind of like wild Bill Hickok. Heavy on the wild. And so, and so, here, this guy stuck with a thousand Bibles. But the next thing that happens is the Pentagon comes to an agreement.

Those five ships need to turn around. So halfway between Somalia and Singapore, five ships, they're like apartment buildings. It takes like half a day to get things turned around.

They're sailing for it and they're told, go to the Seychelles. Then the word comes to them. Seychelles doesn't even want us there. We're unwelcome. They will allow one ship only to dock and you're not allowed to let your Marines off. Of all things, the ship that the Bibles were on is the ship that gets to go and dock. Of all things. The chaplain goes and asks for special permission. I know we're not allowed to disembark, but sir, I have a mission. I've got to go. So the captain says, okay, go. He goes, he hires a little taxi, shows up at the US Embassy, unannounced.

No appointment says, I got to see the ambassador. A miracle takes place. The ambassador just had a cancellation. The secretary said, you're welcome to go in. He walks into the US ambassador's office and he says, look, I just got off a ship. You probably heard that we just got docked. I'm on the one ship that's allowed to dock. And sir, is there a mission outfit on this island? I got to talk today. He said, oh, yeah, he said, I had tennis with the missionary this morning. This was the guy that didn't order Bibles and he's out playing tennis. James, if you're watching this, I forgive you and you've got to forgive me.

He's up there in the balcony looking at me through a camera. So he gets permission. He goes, and he shows up at the church. He walks you to the door and he says this to me and to James. Could you guys use a thousand Bibles? Yeah. My ship came in. The unique thing is only one ship could dock. And that one ship had a commander on there that was a chaplain who ordered a thousand Bibles. That night was the first service. I gave the pitch from the Word of God. They showed up at the altar. The altar was groaning with the number of, it was incredible.

It was a God moment. And the pastor had some people counseling and talking to these people. And they were handing out Bibles. And I heard this. I heard the missionary, pastor say to a lady, you know that we don't have all kinds of Bibles in different languages. But, but, but pastor, this lady's from Cuba and she just flew in last night. She understands English enough, but, but she can't read. And she looked at the Bible and said, no, Comprende. We've got to give her a Spanish Bible. Whereupon James says, we don't have Spanish. We didn't even have it except for, oh, there's the commander back there. That's the guy that brought us the Bible.

That guy thought he was being summoned. He comes up and reports for duty. He says, you want me? No, no, it's not your problem. This little lady speaks Spanish. She wants a Spanish Bible. Moments later, moments later, the military guy went to the back, got entries into a, into a cupboard, rips the Bible, boxes all open, probably muttering. I know it's here. I know it's here. I ordered it. When he came forward, he's carrying a Bible in his head. No, it wasn't German.

No, it wasn't Dutch. No, it wasn't Chinese. It was Spanish. God had ordered it. It was for a woman from Cuba. God knows how to do it. He shows her the book. It's in Spanish, Operation Restore Hope. She's all excited. He said, whoa. He said, every time. And he said, you got to, you got to open this book every day. And every time you pick up this book, you remember.

God spoke to me six months ago in the United States of America to order a thousand Bibles. But then before I sealed the order, God spoke to me and said, order one more. One more, one more. And he said, I got this little urge. Spanish. He said, when I was in the United States of America six months ago, he had his eye on you. Jesus went at 12 o'clock because he had his eye on a woman of disreputation. And because of how he ministered to her, a whole town came running out and said, talk to us, talk to us. And that town that should have rejected Jesus begged him, don't leave now. And it's recorded for you in this book. He stayed many days because they met the master and their lives changed. You better smile or say amen or something because I'm good till four o'clock.

Say amen. Say something. I will finish with this. I've told you before, but again, this is a very moving crowd, more coming all the time. So some of you have never heard this. When I travel, I travel for many, many years. Different parts of the world. By invitation. And I took a movie camera with me eventually because I realized I needed to capture some of these testimony. It blew me away. And I have a whole series of little mini tapes that I recorded in desert places, in little towns, all over the place. I have records from people when I said to them, talk to me. I got to come talk to me.

How did you find Jesus? I didn't find him. He found me. What do you mean he found you? I wasn't interested in him. I was raised a Muslim. We hate Christians. We want nothing to do with them. But he came to me in the night, stood at the end of my bed, showed me the marks in his hands, and said, I am Jesus. I'm calling you. I have a whole pile of these. And they didn't know each other. Hello?

This is not? Oh, yeah, they worked it all. It's a put on. No, no, no, no. If you believe anything that I'm telling you today, they did not know each other. They are from different parts. Of that part of the world. And they told me how Jesus made himself real to them. So can Jesus visit a prodigal? Can Jesus send some wacky, crazy preacher at one o'clock in the morning to a gas pump and scare the living daylights out of it? Kid saying, there's 501 people your mom is not alone praying for you. God has ways and means of doing what he needs to do.

He cares. He cares. He cares for grandkids. He cares about memories. And he doesn't want your memories to crush you. You know how many disappointments we've all experienced? You know how many disappointments? Everybody here has never made a mistake. How many of you don't raise your hand? Because I would say the majority of us, we have thought this and we didn't say it. God, I wish I hadn't done that. I got a message for you this morning. Leave it there.

God knows. I made a mistake and looked at it. I made huge mistakes. I'm not going to unfold it for you tomorrow. You don't want to hear my blubbering. I made some huge mistakes that affected my ministry. I had to leave it alone and say, God, I have missed your purpose. I missed the moment. I walked out what I should have sat down. Dear God, can you forgive me? Beloved, I had to leave it there and trust him. If Jesus can touch a woman at the hour of 12 and a hot, hot place, he knew what I was doing.

He could have stopped me. The father of John the Baptist, God shut him up. God could do anything, but I should. I wish I could. Dear Lord, that kind of thinking will kill you. And it's the enemy that will push your mind and he will. He's called the accuser of the brethren. Leave it with Jesus and let God meet you. Every time I say to you at the close of a service, which I'm about to do right now, every time I say, God bless you, you know that I mean. My prayer is that God will kneel down wherever you are broken, torn up like a plowed field. Disappointments, personal failures, broken relationships, coulda, woulda, shoulda. When I say, God bless you, my prayer is that God will kneel down where you are, put his arms around you.

And whisper to you and say, can you get past it now? Will you let me be God? Will you let me be the author and the finisher of your faith? God doesn't want to talk to you about your failures. He doesn't want to hear it. That's yesterday. He's not the God of yesterday. He's the God of right now and He's the God of your tomorrow. And you have a tomorrow. But if you carry the baggage from yesterday into tomorrow, you're going to make the fresh milk sour before you can take your first drink. So when I pray for you and say, God bless you, it's because I know so many of you through intimate conversations. I know the breakage.

I know the heartaches. I know the heaviness. You've been very forthright and transparent and what you've shared with me, I tell no one. I don't share these things with April because that wouldn't help anything. But when I say, God bless you, my prayer is that you will visit the well. The hottest moment of the day. The greatest inconvenience. Somebody's after well waiting for you. Somebody's there at the well and he's waiting for you. Don't disappoint him now. Show up. Okay? Dear Jesus, thank you for all your appointments.

Thank you for the divine intersections I've experienced in my life. And Lord, I confess what you already know. I've disappointed you more times than I could ever count on. But that's what grace is all about. You overlook all my stupidity and you can still use me. I'm like a dry old stick in the hand of Moses. And God said to Moses, dry old stick. I can use that. If I'm just a dry old stick, I know I'm still useful. Jesus, use me. Oh Jesus, don't refuse me. Surely there's something that I can do. I'll go where you want me to go.

I'll be what you want me to be. Speak my Lord and I will answer. Send me. Now Father God, I don't know how many divine appointments you've organized for my coming week and for all of these people here. But surely there's some divine appointments. Help us not to miss the appointments. And help us not to hesitate but to be bold and to take the risk of being misunderstood. Help us Jesus to be your mouthpiece. Even if it's one o'clock in the morning, it's the dumbest idea you've ever gotten in your life. Help me to stop the car and go into the kiosk. There's a kid waiting to hear. Jesus loves you.

Amen.

God bless you.