



Hidden in Plain Sight
Mark Graham
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Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are studying a sermon with Pastor Mark entitled **Hidden in Plain Sight**. It is based upon the story of The Samaritan Woman or maybe better known as The Woman at the Well. It is about an appointment choreographed by Jesus Himself and it has a message for us two thousand years later as we struggle with the same shame, guilt and desire to hide away so to avoid pain as did the Samaritan woman.

SCRIPTURE¹

John 4:5-15 So he (Jesus) came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his flocks and herds?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks this water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

John 4:25-26 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I, who speak to you am he."

OBSERVATION

Here we see Jesus going out of His way to touch the life of an outcast in the area of Samaria. Other travelers deliberately avoided Sychar because Samaritans were considered half breeds and unclean, but Jesus had a divine appointment with her. The woman had had a hard life and even her own people avoided relating to her. She'd had five husbands and now lived with a sixth and these life choices were shameful to her. She went to the well at noon in the heat of the day to avoid meeting up with the other women of the town. She was wounded and did her best to live in hiding rather than expose herself to the judgment of others. There are three cultural issues involved in this meeting: She couldn't deny a stranger a drink; a man wouldn't address a woman in public without her husband; a Jew wouldn't drink out of a Samaritan jar. But we're talking about Jesus so all cultural norms are overcome by love. Now enters the metaphor: Jesus introduces **living water**, not just old Jacob's well water. He came to her for the express purpose of offering a sinner without hope, the water of eternal life. Now she has

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

heard of Jesus because she says the Messiah will explain all things – such as eternal life springing up within His disciples – and Jesus says **“I am He!!”** He declares His position as **Savior of the World** right there to that unworthy woman, just as He once did to each of us who have accepted His magnificent gift of forgiveness and salvation. Later the woman runs into town to announce that she has had this encounter and she becomes the conduit who draws her fellow town people to the opportunity of a lifetime! No more hiding for her!!

APPLICATION

So Jesus lays her life bare before her. He comes out of nowhere to confront her with deeply held secrets that she thought she could hide in plain sight. He did this because He wanted something more for her.

Question: When did Jesus lay your life before you and offer another alternative – something more?

We have all been gripped with fear and anxiety at one time or another – those times when we didn’t think we could take another step. They even affected our physical bodies to the point where we couldn’t even breathe. We told ourselves, “Keep the secret to yourself. You sound crazy. Don’t burden anyone else with it. If they wanted to know about it, they would ask. Anyway, no one would understand.” In those moments we have created a prison of isolation around ourselves. We have believed our own lies and are waging the battle alone.

Question: When have you been gripped with fear and anxiety. What did you do? What do you wish you had done?

Question: In what ways are your worth and value tied to how you perform?

The truth is that freedom is found in being known. When we lower our guard and step out of our isolation and hiding place, and take a risk, we have an opportunity to recover if we will....

- 1) **Share:** Tell someone. We were not meant to live in isolation. If we could fix ourselves, we would have done it by now.
- 2) **Surrender and get help.** We need to admit that we need help. The longer we stay trapped behind the lies, the harder it is to escape them.
- 3) **Surround ourselves with Godly people.** Living life up close with those who know Jesus best brings empowerment through the Holy Spirit within them.

Question: When have you lived in a hiding place where you couldn’t share your past with anyone else?

Question: What changed to help you seek someone out for help? Whom did you choose? Why?

Question: Why do you think Jesus wants us to fellowship together? If you belong to a small group fellowship, what is happening there that is helping you to grow in Christ?

Question: Would you seek out someone in your small group if you have a secret you haven’t been able to discuss before? What qualities would you look for in a confidante?

It is in relationships like these that we are reminded we are not alone. It is okay to not be okay, but Jesus adores us too much to leave us there. He goes in pursuit of people just as He did in Samaria for that woman. When someone speaks truth into our lives we have the opportunity to be healed of past failures and shame. We have a Savior looking for us, we have others longing to know us, we have freedom offered to us so we need to lay it all down, be known, and allow Jesus to stand in the gap for us.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, so many of us are suffering alone, hiding in shame and fear, because we don’t realize the power to heal You have provided in the name of the Holy Spirit. We think that others can’t see us in the shadows, but they are just waiting for us to acknowledge the pain and reach out for help. Give us the courage to trust the ones Jesus has placed in our paths and surrender to the Godly counsel we need for healing. After all, You placed us among fellow Christians for the purpose of taking up each others’ burdens and for the sake of the body of Christ. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.