

## **Messy Ministry**

“The CODE” Series – Part 02

### **A 15 Minute Study Guide- Read John 4:1-29**

1. Read verses 7-9, and 27 again. What do these verses tell you about the cultural expectation that “good people” should avoid those who are sinners, morally bankrupt, and religiously wrong?
2. How did Jesus go about sharing the “Good News” with this woman?
3. What personal social norms do you embrace that prevents you from interacting with “messy people”?

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### **A Fuller Study Guide-**

First, here’s a “*I want to know you better*” question:

What social clique were you a part of during high school?

**Introduction:** In Proverbs, Solomon wrote a lot of concise statements that contain powerful and practical meaning. Consider the following: “*Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.*” -Proverbs 14:4

The farmer has a choice: He can have a clean barn or he can have an abundant crop. A strong ox for plowing comes with...well manure...a constant mess!

I once encountered a church that felt it could better reach its young people by building a more functional space for them to hang out, play, and along the way, be intentionally disciplined. A church leader soon shot down the plans with the following two observations: “*Kids are destructive to buildings so there would be constant repairs, and they don’t contribute anything to the church finances.*” In his estimation, youth *could* be brought into the Kingdom of God, but he preferred to have a clean and tidy barn!

Can you cite an instance where concerns of financial cost, public opinion, and fears of unknown consequences prevented a ministry from getting started?

Our second core value at GH Church is this: *We embrace Messy Ministry: We’re here for the broken. We do what we do to reach people far from God. We get our hands messy in ministry.*

In our text below, Jesus goes against social norms and throws public opinion to the wind: He sits down and converses with a “very messy person”:

### **John 4:2-29**

So Jesus left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually He came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give Me a drink." He was alone at the time because His disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are You asking me for a drink?" Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask Me, and I would give you living water." "But sir, You don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would You get this living water? And besides, do You think You're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave

us this well? How can You offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water." "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!" "Sir," the woman said, "You must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?" Jesus replied, "Believe Me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the One you worship, while we Jews know all about Him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship Him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the One who is called Christ. When He comes, He will explain everything to us." Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"

Just then His disciples came back. They were shocked to find Him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do You want with her?" or "Why are You talking to her?"

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could He possibly be the Messiah?"

### **Lets discuss this story:**

Jesus was willing to violate cultural taboos to talk with this sinful Samaritan woman (i.e. traveling through Samaria, conversing with a Samaritan, making a request of a woman, and one with a poor reputation at that). What cultural taboos do we face that may keep us from talking with sinners about Christ?

What cultural taboos or beliefs did the Samaritan woman have that might have prevented her from having a relationship with a living Savior? Which of these beliefs still hold true for unbelievers today?

Do you know an "unlikely" convert that you think would not be interested in the gospel? What is your greatest challenge to starting a conversation with them? How could you approach him/her?

How much about Jesus does a person need to understand to be saved?

**Homework:** Is there a "messy ministry" at your church that you have been hesitant to join? What would God have you to do? Is there a "messy person" that you need to stop avoiding and approach them with a concerned heart? What's your next step to reach out to them?