

**NBC Devotional**  
**October 27, 2021**  
**“The Masterpiece We Were Intended to Be”**

It was noon and the Samaritan woman did the same thing she did every day. She gathered her empty water jug and walked to the well alone. Every day she made this trip to the well by herself. It was not an accident that she chose this time of day but an intentional effort to steer clear of the other women who would come to the well. She wanted to avoid the stares and the whispering, the condemnation she knew she deserved. But there was a hero at the well that day, a Savior who knew her secrets and offered her living water.

Let's look at John 4:1-4.

*Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them – his disciples did). So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way.*

Let me stop here for a minute because we know that Jesus did not have to go through Samaria to get to Galilee. It was the habit of many Jews to travel around Samaria because of the history of this broken relationship between the Samaritans (those Jews whose ancestors had intermarried with the Assyrians after the fall of the northern Kingdom) and the Jews (those whose ancestors were exiled to Babylon or other areas across the region). It was a prejudice that had formed over 500 years before and still lived on strong when Jesus arrived. So, let's consider the possibility that Jesus did not have to go through Samaria, but that he **CHOSE** to go through Samaria.

John 4:5-8

*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.*

Jesus was alone. He had 12 disciples, and he sent ALL 12 of them into town to buy some food. It kind of sounds like the beginning of a joke doesn't it? "How many disciples does it take to pick up lunch for Jesus? All of them, Jesus wanted to be alone." We have all had moments when we were ready for some "alone time." It would be easy to attribute our own needs to Jesus, after all, the scripture says he was tired from the long walk. We can assume that Jesus needed a break, time alone, some peace and quiet.

But it seems clear when we read the rest of this story that nothing about that day was a coincidence. Jesus knew the Samaritan woman would come at the same time she came every day. He knew he would have the opportunity to talk with her if he simply came to the well alone. So, Jesus, knowing everything about her, and caring more about her future than he did about her past, strategically positioned himself in her path. He chose that place at that time for this very special woman.

John 4:9-15:

*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.”*

When I read that verse, I hear the desperation in her voice? Can you picture the look on her face as she begs Jesus for the opportunity to never have to walk to the well again – never have to face the shame and guilt of the choices she has made and the mess she has created out of her life. But Jesus loved her despite the MESS, because He could look at her and see the MASTERPIECE she would become.

John 4:16-18

*“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!” ...*

And there she was. The sins of her past revealed by a stranger. But it was not condemnation that she saw in Jesus’ eyes, but love. It was not accusations she heard in Jesus’ voice, but compassion. Everything in her life was about to change because she had met the Giver of Life Himself. She had met the Messiah.

The Samaritan woman was simply living out her routine of daily coming to the well and Jesus met her there. Her life was never the same. God had a plan for her life; she was on a JOURNEY OF GRACE – a journey that would take her a long way from the sinful life she had known for so long; a new life in which she would never thirst again.

Many of you know that I am currently working for a Compassionate Ministry Center in Illinois and Indiana — the ministry to which God has called me 18 years ago.

These are the kinds of moments we exist for at the Pregnancy Resource Center — moments like Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well. Knowing the needs of women across our country, Living Alternatives has **strategically positioned** pregnancy medical clinics in Bloomington, Champaign, Rantoul, Joliet, Coal City, Kankakee, Frankfort, Kokomo, Lincoln, Pekin, Shelbyville, and Jacksonville. This month we are adding two new locations in Illinois to that list — the Southside of Peoria, where the level of poverty is high and access to care is low, and Bolingbrook, where the income level is high and the presence of the abortion industry is strong. While meeting the medical needs of each woman who walks through our doors or steps onto our mobile clinic, we are strategically positioned for a conversation. And our hope is to introduce her

to the One who can change her life – who can give her living water, so she will never thirst again.

*Living Alternatives is committed to providing excellent care, compassionate support, and honest information to those facing pregnancy decisions through authentic relationships that display grace, honor life, and foster community.*

This is the mission of Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center. It is why this ministry was created 36 years ago and why I have spent almost 18 years of my life serving God through the ministry of Living Alternatives. It is why we open up our doors each week and pray she will come.

At the Pregnancy Resource Center, we are there to listen to her story — to walk alongside her on her journey of grace. We are committed to showing her love and compassion regardless of the choices she has made — not guilt or condemnation, but grace and mercy.

If she needs an answer to the question “Am I pregnant?”, we are there to offer her a free pregnancy test and ultrasound to verify her pregnancy. In the process, her questions are being answered. She is seeing first-hand how far along she is and she is meeting her little one for the first time through the miracle of sonography.

Her next question sometimes has an obvious answer, and for some it is the biggest decision they have ever made. Her next question is, “What now?” What am I going to do? How am I going to tell my parents? Can I afford another child? Will keeping this baby prevent me from finishing school? What will everyone at church say if they find out I’m pregnant? She has so many questions and we are there to help her process the decision before her. It is a big decision and we believe she has the right to make a fully informed decision — to have all the information she needs to make that decision. In other words, we care enough to give her the TRUTH about her options...

At the Pregnancy Resource Center, we provide resources and build support to encourage her to choose from the LIVING ALTERNATIVES of parenting or adoption. If she chooses to parent her baby, she has the option of enrolling in our parenting program. Now she has a place where she can learn how to have a healthy pregnancy, what to expect in labor and delivery, how to take care of a newborn baby and other general parenting skills. She is surrounded by some pretty incredible women who have been where she is and love her enough to mentor her through the first few steps of motherhood. And out of these mentoring relationships come beautiful spiritual conversations.

After considering her options, some women choose to create an adoption plan for their child. This is never an easy decision to make but, after working through an adoption plan with her mentor at the Pregnancy Resource Center, she knows the reasons why she is choosing adoption. She has purposely chosen the life she desires for the precious baby growing within her and her gift is selfless beyond words.

Sadly, some women feel they have no other choice but to end the life of the baby, to terminate their pregnancy. Abortion is never an easy decision to make and never an easy decision to live with. Women who have an abortion in their past often suffer from depression, shame and guilt.

Oh, but our heavenly Father is full of mercy, grace and compassion. He longs to see the wounded and grief-stricken healed and set free from their captivity. The Bible teaches in [Isaiah 61:1-3](#) that

God has anointed us, His people, to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and to bring freedom to the prisoners. Further it says that we are to comfort all who mourn, to give a garland of beauty instead of ashes, to anoint with the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and to place a mantle of praise where there has been a spirit of fainting.

I believe this mission of Living Alternatives Pregnancy Center (LAPRC) is similar to the mission of Nazarene Bible College. Each of you is strategically positioned in the lives of someone with a calling. They are on a journey of grace, and you have the privilege of walking alongside them — whether that is a 10-minute phone call or an academic block or for the entire time it takes them to complete their degree. It's not a coincidence that Nazarene Bible College offers them what they need to pursue the calling God has placed on their lives. You are there to answer their question, "What now?"

You have heard their stories — each one different from the student before them. Some have been running from God's call like Jonah; some have been hiding in the luggage like Saul, others dropped their nets and followed Jesus, never looking back. Still others have a story similar to that of the Samaritan woman. They carry with them shame for the decisions they have made and they daily fight the thought that they are not good enough to be a pastor — that they do not deserve the opportunity to serve in the church. God has strategically positioned you today to remind them that we serve a God of mercy, and that we are all on a journey of grace. Jesus loves us despite the MESS we have made, because He looks at us and sees the MASTERPIECE we can become. And just like Jesus used the woman who came to the well to reach her entire village, God can use their story to reach others with the message of reconciliation and redemption.

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