

During Lent, we are inviting our congregation to spend time in God’s word. Once a week, we will guide this time with a devotional reading from Scripture and a reflection from someone within our church family. Begin by centering yourself in prayer; ask God to reveal something new and speak to you today. Next, spend time reading the Scripture passage for the day, noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through the text for *you*. Then, move to reading the reflection shared below. Below, you will see that we have also included a piece of visual art for you to consider as you reflect on the passage. I (Pastor Ashley) encourage you to actually get out your Bible and engage with the text on your own first, before reading the reflections shared below. Also, we would love to hear what God was saying to you through this passage! Comment on our [Facebook post](#) for today with what stood out to you from the Scripture passage.

Lenten Devotional: Week Two

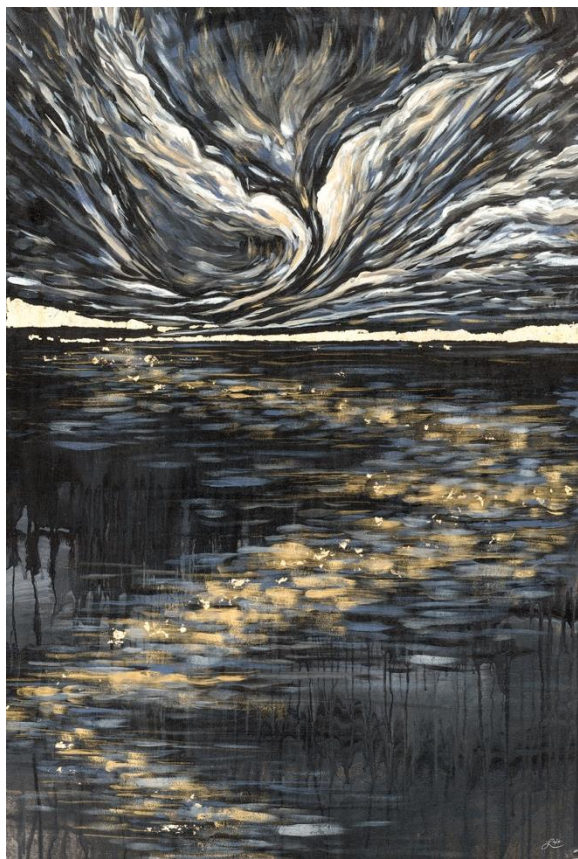
Step One: *Prior to reading the Scripture passage, spend a moment centering yourself in prayer.*

Step Two: Our Scripture reading today is **John 4:1-42**. Read through the text (maybe even twice), noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through this text for *you* today. This is a longer passage, but it’s important to read the entirety to get a picture of this full story

Step Three: Now, enjoy this reflection from Cornerstone member, John Walsworth:

Jesus Had to Go Through Samaria

This story of Jesus and an unknown, unnamed woman talking in the noon day sun at Jacob’s well outside a small town in Samaria has been told and retold through the centuries.



"The Promise" by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity
A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Jesus and his disciples decided to leave Jerusalem and Judea and return to Galilee. The usual route for the Jews for this trip would be to go around Samaria through the Jordan Valley because they were enemies of the Samaritans for centuries and avoided them at all cost. But Jesus had other plans from a higher Source. Our text says that Jesus “*had* to go through Samaria.” Geographically it was the shortest. And the word translated as “had to” is usually associated in John’s Gospel as God’s plan or purpose. The gospel writer several times characterized God as the One who sent Jesus, whose mission was to do God’s will and to complete His Work (v 34). This was the spiritual food that sustained and energized Jesus in his ministry.

The Way of Jesus in the story was a “Samaritan Mission Trip.” After the conflict with the Jewish leaders in the Temple and his late-night debate with Nicodemus, Jesus showed the disciples by example that the good news was to be proclaimed to the “rejected” as well as the “chosen” ones. The drama of this encounter began with a simple conversation – Jesus asking the woman for a drink of water from her bucket. The specifics of the conversation have too many layers to explain here. But in summary Jesus spoke without condemnation, with patience, of true worship, of hope and value for her life, and of his identity and mission. She listened, asked deep questions, and shared her personal life admissions. At first, she addressed him as “sir” and then later she promoted him to a prophet, and finally exclaimed, “could he be possibly the

Messiah?” God had found her and had broken into her messy life with overwhelming love. Her response was to go and tell the towns’ people to “come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done.” (v. 30) The

villagers then came to Jesus to find out for themselves and to invite Him to spend time with him, and the results were “many more believed because of his word.” Jesus’ Way was to transform a life to become a witness who would share her rebirth with her neighbors. Jesus had the ability to transform conventional norms and challenge the status quo.

The narrative and conversation of this text draws us into the story. The metaphors of living water, worship in spirit and truth, and now is the time for the harvest invite us into the conversation with Jesus and calls the Church into a renewed relationship with God and one another. As an act of spiritual discipline, put yourself into this story by becoming one the players in the drama of this Mission Trip – the lonely, misunderstood woman who came to the well and found strength to engage with Jesus who gave her hope, value and love by revealing himself as the Anointed One she had been waiting for; the disciples who recently had started following Jesus and were amazed at his signs and wonders but had so many questions; and the town’s people who caught the excitement from the woman witness and got to spend two days with the “Savior of the world.” And to you brothers and sisters of Cornerstone, seekers, followers and disciples of Jesus, as our church moves forward into our next Mission Trip, who are our Samaritans and what is our good news?

Now Jesus *Had* to Go Through Samaria.

- *John Walsworth*

Step Four: Close in prayer, thanking God for what has been revealed to you today and asking the Lord to help you carry it into this day and the days ahead. John W. has written a prayer to go along with his devotion that you can pray:

Gracious God, we thank you for being the giver of all good gifts. We thank you for this story of Jesus who brought the gospel to all of us. Help us through your spirit to do the will of Him who sends us and to do our part to complete the work. Amen.

Step Five: Join us as we continue reading God’s Word this week. Here are daily suggestions for further reading:

- **Thursday, Feb 25** – Isaiah 44:1-8
- **Friday, Feb 26** – John 7:37-44
- **Saturday, Feb 27** – Psalm 65
- **Sunday, Feb 28** – John 6:1-15
- **Monday, Mar 1** – 1 John 3:11-24
- **Tuesday, Mar 2** – Revelation 7:9-17