SERMON TAKE-HOMES NOTES — March 8, 2026

Last week, the story of a Judean leader, Nicodemus, a person of relative power and privilege, who meets Jesus at midnight.

This week, the story of a Samaritan woman who meets Jesus in the midday heat at the well of their common ancestor Jacob, who met his wife Rachel at that well (Gen 29:10) — wells kind of being like bars today as a place for women and met to meet. But a Judean rabbi and a Samaritan woman . . . in the first century, a most unlikely pair.

A tale of two very different encounters: In the *first* encounter, the person of power and privilege isn't ready to give up his place in the imperial culture of death, even if it's for Jesus' new politics of life and love, for entry into God's new age of life. In the *second* encounter, the marginalized Samaritan woman is thirsty for the living water Jesus has to offer.

Evidence that the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman about her 'husbands' is coded 'prophetic' language about Judeans seeing Samaritans as having been their cousins descended from Jacob who were unfaithful in worshiping like five other nations. The Judean historian Josephus (1st century) 'prooftexted' this verse from the Bible as the reason for hatred between Judeans and Samaritans:

> 2 Kings 17:24 The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria in place of the people of Israel; they took possession of Samaria, and settled in its cities.

American Christians used a similar prooftexting to justify their enslavement of Africans:

> Genesis 9:22, 24-25 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. [24]When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, [25]he said, "Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers."

How much of our justification for going to war with Iran is based on religious differences? Quote this week from Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, an evangelical Christian, concluding that Iranians have the wrong religion:

> "The largest state sponsor of terrorism, Iran and its proxies, have killed more Americans than any other terrorist regime on Earth. They are dedicated to it. They have been, and they say the quiet parts out loud. They wanted to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth, and they'd like to take us out as well. We're the great Satan in their analogy and their misguided religion."

Can we see that Jesus is trying to get us to move past religious differences and simply be better, more loving humans beings together? To stop choosing nationalistic cultures of death and to begin choosing the living water we might share as one human family? Are we hungry and thirsty for something different? Let us share the bread of life and the cup of forgiveness together that we might be fed for new life. Here and now.