

More Understanding Less Judgmental

After Salomon, the Jewish kingdom was divided. Israel, the northern kingdom, had nine tribes and built its capital at Samaria. Judah, the southern kingdom, ruled three tribes, capital Jerusalem. Israel was invaded by Assyria and the people were exiled. Over time, they intermarried with the locals. They were looked down upon and were called not Jews but Samaritans. More historical conflicts later made the feud even deeper. The Jews would not eat the food or use any utensil from the Samaritans. They would not talk to or even look at a Samaritan woman in public.

The Samaritan woman at the well was despised not only by the Jews but also by her own neighbors. Because she had married five times and the one she was living with was not her husband. (John 4:7-25) Some Chinese Christians would raise eyebrows on her multiple divorces, judging her low moral character.

Beginning from Song Dynasty, Chinese women who were divorced or widowed were not allowed to marry again. They were not welcome back to their parents' home either. Many had to work as servants to earn a living. Young widows had to live the rest of their lives alone.

In Qing Dynasty seven grounds of divorce were established to favor the husbands. 1. Adultery. 2. Barren. 3. Disrespect parents-in-law. 4. Loquacity. 5. Stealing. 6. Jealousy. 7. Malignant disease. Men could have many wives and concubines. Women could not have any assurance in marriage.

So was the situation in Jesus' society. If a husband were not happy with his wife, he could ask a Rabbi to be his witness and sign a divorce paper to end the marriage. Since there was no work for women, they had to remarry. A widow might even marry her late husband's brother for provisions. The Samaritan woman at the well might have been suffered multiple rejections and the man who lived with her did not even want to marry her.

Jesus did not condemn her. He broke all cultural taboos to speak with her and offered her "living waters". She finally recognized Jesus was the Messiah and invited others to see Jesus.

Let us pray: **O Lord, help me to be more understanding and less judgmental. Help me to encourage others to seek the living water. Help me to bring others to know God. Amen.**

多了解少論斷

在所羅門王去世後，政權分裂成南北兩國。北國以色列，建都撒瑪利亞，管九族。南國猶太，建都耶路撒冷，治三族。後來北國被亞述國佔領，國民被逼遷徙到外地，日久便與當地人通婚。從此被猶太國民歧視，說他們不配做猶太人，改稱他們為撒瑪利亞人。猶太人不與他們談話或同飲共食，對他們的婦女，更連看一眼都算是犯了罪。從此雙方交惡，衝突漸增，仇恨更深。

在雅各井旁的撒瑪利亞婦人不單受猶太人的歧視，連自己的族人也耻與為伍(約 4: 7-29)。原因是她曾有五個丈夫，現與她同居的，並不是她的丈夫。此情此景，連很多中國信徒，也會負起衛道的重責，心中批判她道德的低落。

中國自宋朝董仲舒以降，強調女人的貞節。寡婦或離婚的不能再嫁，更不能回娘家。可憐無數年輕守寡或被離棄的女子，因財產不遺留給婦女，只能作些女紅或粗活，終身過著清貧孤苦的生活。

滿清年間更流行七出之條，作為丈夫休妻的七大藉口，其七出即為：(1) 紅杏出牆 (2) 無兒無女 (3) 漠視翁姑 (4) 饒舌多言 (5) 鼠竊狗偷 (6) 多疑嫉妒 (7) 身有頑疾。男人可以有三妻四妾，女人婚姻毫無保障，又不能改嫁，頗不公平。

猶太及撒瑪利亞的社會，也是重男輕女。被遺棄或守寡的女人，只能再嫁才能活下去，甚至要改嫁給丈夫的兄弟，藉以求生。男人嘛，只要他不高興，找個拉比(猶太教牧師)作證，寫下一張休書，便可把老婆趕走。井旁的女人，大底是個歷盡滄桑的苦命人吧。可憐還得受鄰居的白眼呢!

只有耶穌才了解這井旁的婦人，耶穌衝破了一切文化傳統，與她談道；教導她尋求活水的盼望與喜樂。她也因此認識耶穌是救主，到處邀請別人來見耶穌。

請禱告：主啊，求祢幫助我多了解少論斷，有機會便鼓勵別人，帶領多人來認識祢。阿們。