Song: “Wake Me Up Inside.”

**SLIDE:** I want to tell you a story of a lonely woman who needed awakening. She was drawing water alone from a deserted well in a valley in Palestine. It was noon and the reason she was out in the hot of the day and not the cool of the morning or evening—when all the other women came to draw water—was because she didn’t fit in—she was rejected, outcast by the women in her town. The woman struggled with a rejection which put her mentally, emotionally and spiritually asleep.

**SLIDE:** Then, one day—like Prince Charming kissing Sleeping Beauty—Jesus came to town with open arms of loving acceptance and woke her up!

**SLIDE:** All of us fear rejection—whether it is stepping into class on your first day at school—wondering if you will picked last on the team, or if once more your dad will tell you how worthless you are. Maybe you were petrified on a Cupid.com set up date that he might take one look, turn on his heel and go out the door!

Maybe you felt green and gawky like Mr and Mrs Shrek going to meet your in-laws for the first time. You remember the beautiful Fiona, by spell, being changed into a green ogre like her husband. She is the lovely princess returning home with her new husband—only on the outside, she is not so lovely any more. Mom and Dad are standing at the front door the castle. Hundreds of people line the walkway, waiting for glimpse or the newly married couple. Let’s meet the parents.

**VIDEO: SHREK VIDEO CLIP.**

Sometimes we get fed up with being rejected and take matters into our own hands.

“Dear Professor Willingham, chair, search committee, Whitson University.
Thank you for you letter of March 16. After careful consideration I regret to inform you that I am unable to accept your refusal to hire me as an assistant professor in your department. Despite Whitson University’s outstanding experience in rejecting applicants, I find that your rejection does not meet my needs at this time. Therefore, I will assume the position of assistant professor in your department in August. I look forward to seeing you then. Sincerely, Chris L. Jensen

Turn to John 4: If first time here and don’t have a Bible, perhaps some one near can share with you.

**SLIDE:** JOHN 4:3-4: 3 When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. 4 Now he had to go through Samaria.
Three roads led from Judea up north to Galilee: Coast, across Jordan, or through Samaria. Jews never went through Samaria – many reasons – hated enemies – different worship place—interrimmed with Assyrians in 700 BC.

Jesus had to go through the heart of Samaria. He had a divine appointment with a woman struggling with rejection—who needed love and acceptance.

Did you know that the Bible says that Jesus has His eye on you? He knew you before He laid out the foundations of the cosmos. He is longing to accept you into His family.

You might just meet Him at the well, or at dinner with a friend, or at an office party with people you are just getting to know—or in church on a Sunday morning.

**SLIDE:** JOHN 4:5: So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

**SLIDE:** JOHN 4:6: Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

6th hour – 12:00 noon. Jesus is hot, tired and thirsty.

**SLIDE:** JOHN 4:7: When a Samaritan woman came to draw water; Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

I love to see here the humanity of Jesus Christ. He is thirsty.
He made that water—and He can’t get to it.
It’s noon and He’s sweating under the hot sun that He created. And He can’t turn off the heat.
He asks a drink of a creature that He’s made.

When Christ says, “Give me to drink,” He shattered her mind!

**SLIDE:** JOHN 4:9: The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan. Tremendous racial barrier here – Samaritans were only half Jews: Jews who had intermarried with Gentiles – and Jews hated them for that.

He was a man and she was a woman. Unwritten law that men didn’t speak with women in public.

How did she know that He was a Jew? His physical features revealed that fact. That was obvious. People say that Jesus was of all different nationalities. No, He was a Jew.

Here’s what really shook her up. A Jew wanted to drink out of her glass.

None of that mattered to Christ. He knew her before the foundation of the cosmos. He was out to capture her heart: He accepts the rejected. He loves the unlovable.

*Already on screen: READ JOHN 4:10: Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

Notice that the encounter starts out He’s thirsty and she’s got the water. All of a sudden she’s thirsty and He is the water.

SLIDE: JOHN 4:11: “Sir,” the woman said, “You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?”

“You don’t even have a bucket. The well is 105 feet deep!”

Already on screen: READ JOHN 4:13-14: Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Jesus says, “Look, what H2O does for your parched, dry mouth, my water will do for your parched, dry soul!”

Let me describe the living water:

A woman causes a gardening apocalypse by using the wrong fertilizer but gardening tips from Yahoo!

Miracle Gro tv Ad: woman sprays miracle gro on dying plants in the flower bed. Plants spring to life. Keeps spraying and all of a sudden the ground opens up and a poodle comes up from under the ground and begins to run around the yard.

Mom: “Scruffy!”
Daughter Scruffy, you’re alive!”

SLIDE: JOHN 4:15: The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Already on screen: READ JOHN 4:16: He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

Already on screen: READ JOHN 4:17-18: “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

I wish I could have seen the look on His face when He said that—broken hearted with her pain.

Five men had rejected her—man could initiate a divorce—never the woman.
Five times she heard the words, “Clean out your closet and get out of the house.”

It is no wonder she has not married this sixth guy. With her track record, he could easily be marriage failure number six.

Divorce is such devastating rejection. Many find it so hard to risk love again after a divorce. Love means I am willing to open my heart again—but the thought of rejection is too much. I will not ever again risk such rejected pain. I am so sorry.

Some of life’s most painful rejections come from childhood experiences:
●SLIDE #: Acceptance—Rejection
Affection—Abuse
Appreciation—Criticism
Approval—Condemnation
Attention—Ignored
Respect—Ridicule
Security—Abandoned
Support—Betrayed

In fact, write Reject over the right side: Message: “you'll always be second best!”

SLIDE: In a Rolling Stone interview, Christina Ricci, an edgy teen actor who recently starred in Sleepy Hollow, talks about self-mutilation and pain:

She stretches; her sleeves ride up; there are raised round scars on her forearms, burns on the back of one hand. She later explains where each mark came from: how she heated a lighter, held it against her hand, a stunt to impress some boys when she was angry about "not looking very good."
The forearm scratches come from soda tops and fingernails: "It's like having a drink," Ricci says, "but it's quicker. You know how your body shuts down from pain? The emotional pain would be so bad, it would force my body to slow down, and I wouldn't be hurting as much. It made me calm."

People are designed by God to get along with others, and being excluded, has significant effects.

SLIDE: Ever After—story of Cinderella staring Drew Barrymore.
Remember loved by dad—great relationship but he died suddenly of a heart attack. No longer around to protect her from step mom.
Rejected by step mother and step sisters. Miserable rejection.

VIDEO: EVER AFTER CLIP: I just wanted a mother.

SLIDE: The woman at the well could have well said, “I just wanted a loving husband.”
But she didn’t say that.
SLIDE: She could have said, “My life’s so fouled up. I’ve had five husbands. Now, I’m living with a guy. I am hurting so badly. I am so lonely. I feel so rejected and alone.”
But, she didn’t say that either.
She has no intention of opening the door to her pain. She stiffens her upper lip and changes the subject.

SLIDE: JOHN 4:19: "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.
Some of you have endured that much hurt—and there was no one to whom you could go to help comfort the pain—so your decided never to get hurt again.

I call these “Rocks.”
1-10 in G6 seminars are rocks.
Don’t really enjoy holidays. Don’t get too excited about things, nor too upset. Just stop feelings.
SLIDE: JOHN 4:20: Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

Maybe she is trying to turn to God for help. Deep in the human heart is the desire for meaning and purpose and love—and acceptance with the God who created us.

I have discovered that a lot of people are afraid to approach God because of their fear of rejection. We think of all the things we have done wrong. We blush with reddened faces as we remember some of the shameful things we have done—and done to others. Certainly He will not accept me! I am not good enough to come into His presence—nothing could be farther from the truth.

SLIDE: Fortunately, in the life of Jesus Christ we see the heart of the real God—the one with the outstretched arms of acceptance, Who died to accept us into His family, warts and all.

SLIDE: JOHN 4:21: Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem....

SLIDE: JOHN 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

SLIDE: JOHN 4:25: The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

SLIDE: JOHN 4:26: Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

SLIDE: Now she is awake: It is like He threw a bucket of cold water in the face. An encounter with the living Jesus will always wake us up!

SLIDE: JOHN 4:28-30: Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Ah, here’s an experience that causes a woman to leave her dishes in the sink. She literally leaves her water pots and runs into town to tell the men about the man who’s told her all about herself.

SLIDE: JOHN 4:39-40: Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.

SLIDE: JOHN 4:41: And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said, now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.’”

One of my friends asked me yesterday what my sermon was going to be about. I told her.

She said to me: “All women struggle with rejection around the well.

“I thought I’d found the perfect man. My mom always told me to find a man who loves you a little bit more than you love him.”

“I found that man. He was crazy about me. He loved children; he would be a good dad. He didn’t make enough money but everything else looked so good.

“One year later we separated. I felt so rejected.
“What really hurt was that I was being rejected by some one I didn’t care that much about. I was better looking, smarter, made more money, and godlier than he was (and more humble). This can’t be happening! How could this happen to me? We went to marriage counseling and I decided to throw myself into my marriage. It was no longer about me. Modeled myself after Hosea—I would love him regardless. For ten years I worked and loved and compromised to make it work. We had children now. But things just weren’t right. Something was hidden. I prayed with my girl friends for all to be revealed. Then, after 10 years I discovered that he was cheating on me. In fact, he had carried on a secret affair with a woman he was dating back when he first met me.

“I went to the Bible for help and claimed this verse from Isaiah: ’Woe to the wicked for destruction is upon them and they will be paid back for what their hands have done.’

“Christ became my husband. He was my sustainer, confidant, my very life. I was clinging to Him just to get through—like AA—one day, hour, minute—at a time. “Pictured my self as a little lamb that Jesus carried around His shoulders. (She was crying now.)

SLIDE: “I survived by submersing myself in the Word of God, my intimate relationship with Him, and in my girl friends in my Bible study group.”

Why did she respond so readily to Christ—because He was the only one who understood. Why did the woman at the well respond so readily at an invitation from Christ? Because Jesus knows what it’s like to be despised and rejected.

●SLIDE #: John 1:9-11: The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

“He was in the world”. Whose world? His world! “World was made by Him, and the world did not recognize Him!”

“He came to his own.” Who came? The one who made it all. And how did His own respond? They didn't want Him.

He was no stranger here. For 33 years Christ lived among men; He taught - loved - died - bore sin... and the very hands that formed men from the dust of the earth were held as the creature picked up a hammer and drive nails through the creator’s hands!

This was His world. Those were His men! His will! His world! He made it - it didn’t know Him - the unrecognized Christ.

You say, “Poor God. He must be terribly frustrated by all of this. He loved this world. He sent His Son and look what they did to His Son.”
No. God doesn’t get frustrated. Jesus Christ was a lamb slain before the foundation of the world. God knew it was coming.

●SLIDE #: John 1:9-12: Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-

Accepts and welcomes the thief on the cross.
How do you get to be a child of God?
Born into the right family? No. Doesn’t come biologically.
Notice who these children of God are. They are those who receive the Christ who died and rose again. They are the ones who affirm the incarnate Word. They receive Him, and as a result, they are born of God.

The woman at the well invited some men and a whole town to come to Jesus.
Your friend may well have invited you her today.
You have not come here to experience a deep, rich acceptance of Jesus Christ. It may be the farthest thing from your mind.
But, you felt this deep stirring in your soul. You have been rejected and alone for so long.

Woman at the well only went to draw water but she came away with Jesus.
Citizens of Sychar only followed to see what an outcast woman was so excited about. They came away with Jesus—and full acceptance with God and others.

You can go away with Him and His opened-armed love and acceptance today.
Receive Him into your life now.

Only God can meet all your need and be your sufficiency in every situation.
Through your relationship with Jesus Christ you hold a valued place in the family of God that no one else can occupy.

PRAYER RESPONSE TIME:

Have you ever thought about “Trusting your issue with Christ?”

With heads bowed, raise your hand if you’ve been rejected by (give examples). Let me pray for you.

Who is having a struggle in your life (examples) raise your hand. Let me pray for you.

Who has been hurt (give examples) raise your hand and let me pray for you.

Those who did not raise their hands but still have gone through these hurts, let me pray for you.

●SLIDE #: Jesus loves you—You have a valued place in His life: even if you feel like an outcast, that’s the way it is! … 16-year-old teenager betrayed by your friends…struggling with rejection at work… lonely grandfather estranged from his children… watching mom and dad go through a divorce…
The character of Jesus’ nature is to love and accept.

Wake up.