

SERIES: While Going - Week 2

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When I genuinely care about people, I actually want to find their pain, their hurt, their struggle, and I want to genuinely help make a difference by introducing you to this Jesus that has so radically changed my life. That means that evangelism isn't primarily an event. It's not a program. It doesn't mean a whole bunch of additional activity. It means that we just need to be more thoughtful, more intentional in the things that we're already doing. Something as simple as going from here to there.

If you have a Bible turn with us to John Chapter Four.

Verse One:

Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. And He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. (NASB, John 4:1-6)

Now, it is interesting that John says he had to go through Samaria because a first century Jew would say, you don't have to go through Samaria. As a matter of fact, most Orthodox Jews intentionally took an eastern route that lengthened the journey simply because they did not want to go through Samaria because Samaria would contaminate them. It's really hard to describe how much the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other. They just hated each other with a passion. So much, the Jews wouldn't even walk through Samaria, so when John says he had to go that way, it's not a geographical statement; it is a theological statement. Jesus was not functioning in a sense as an Orthodox Jew, he was functioning as the Savior of the world and he had come to seek and to save those who are lost. Because of that, he had to go through Samaria.

The end of verse six that talks about the time of day. If it's Jewish time, it's noon. If it's Roman time, it's six in the evening, hard to figure out which it is. I think it's more likely to be Jewish time just simply based on the fact that there was no one else there at the heat of the day.

Verse seven,

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore

the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) (Vs. 7-9)

So this woman comes to the, well, I think expecting no one to be there and there sits Jesus. It was the responsibility of women to collect water. It was a very hard, difficult, hot assignment. So it was common that women twice a day, early in the morning, late in the evening, made the trek to the well and back in the cool of the day rather than the heat of the day. It was also very common that the women would gather at the well and, what was rare for them, they had a chance to socialize with other women. So we find ourselves asking the question, why is this woman coming when no one is there? The fact that Jesus speaks with her is shocking. You cannot begin to imagine how many social barriers Jesus is crashing through to have this conversation. A good Jewish man did not talk to a woman in public. To the extent that even a husband did not generally talk to his wife in public, let alone a Jewish man with a woman who is a stranger - let alone, a Jewish man with a Samaritan woman who is a stranger. This whole scene was really unimaginable. As a matter of fact, so much so that the woman is shocked by this. And she says, so what is the deal with you as a Jewish man talking to me? And John even feels the need parenthetically to say this is quite shocking because the Jews and the Samaritans had nothing to do with each other, making sure that we understood that.

Jesus answered and said to her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is, who says to you, give me a drink, you would have asked Him and he would have given you living water. (Vs. 10)

So, what Jesus says back is if you had any idea who it is, who's talking to you, you wouldn't even begin to imagine what I can give you. The idea of living water in that culture would have been the idea of a stream or a river. And so the idea that there's somehow a stream or a river there is what the woman reacts to.

She said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?” (Vs. 11-12)

Now I would suggest she is sporting a bit of an attitude here. She is thinking this crazy Jew is cutting through Samaria, stops at the well - first has the nerve to talk to me and then has the nerve to suggest that somewhere here there's a river or a creek. And so, she's saying, hey fella, you're not greater than Jacob, are you? We know this ground. There's no river. There's no creek. That's why Jacob built the well here. You know, it's kind of like, well, duh.

So Jesus responds to her:

Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.” (Vs. 13-14)

Jesus is saying that the heartbeat of the Gospel is, I have what you're looking for. I have what your soul has been thirsting for. I have what will ultimately satisfy, if you just knew that. I come and I offer it to you.

The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.” He said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.” (Vs. 15-18)

And Jesus has put his finger on the pain that drives her life.

What Jesus knows in one conversation, it perhaps would take us months to understand about this person, but she still doesn't get it. She's still thinking literal water. And so, Jesus needs to get to the point of her pain to change the conversation. So, he says, I'll tell you what, why don't you go get your husband, bring him back, we'll have a nice chat. She says, well, I don't have a husband. And Jesus says, I know that. You've actually had five husbands and the one you're currently shacking up with is not your husband. Culturally, this would be a way of saying, you have spent a lifetime looking for love in all the wrong places. For whatever reason she has gone through five husbands. To just live with a man in this culture would be in essence to totally give up on life. There is no hope to be happy. She has accepted the fact that she is nothing but a Samaritan loser and some where she found a guy who is equally a loser, let's at least be miserable together. That's basically what's being said here.

This is why she's at the well in the heat of the day, because she doesn't fit in. She is an outcast. She's tired of the judgments. She's tired of the looks. She's tired of the comments. She's tired of every day experiencing all the reminders that she's a loser and she'll always be a loser. So it's just easier to go to the well in the heat of the day and avoid that, and Jesus has put his finger on the pain that drives her life.

It's interesting how she responds.

The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” (Vs. 19-20)

Totally changes the subject. Hey, it sounds like you're a prophet. I wonder, are you a Calvinist or are you an Armenian? Are you Catholic, are you Protestant, I mean, what's the deal with you? All of a sudden, she wants to change the subject and have a big theological conversation. It's easy to see how we could easily get sucked into that and have this whole conversation about something that at the end of the day isn't really the point. So, Jesus responds,

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Vs. 21-24)

Jesus in essence says you're missing the whole point. It's not about that mountain. It's about a time that has come when you can personally connect with the God of the universe and have a

deeply meaningful relationship with him. Worship will come from your heart and that time is now.

So she responds.

The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.” (Vs. 25-26)

Now I would say the point of this passage of this story is to reveal that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. He just claimed, *I Am*. But it's also true that the point of the text is to understand the heartbeat of the Messiah, which becomes evident as the story continues.

At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why do You speak with her?” (Vs. 27)

[Better translation would be they were shocked. As a matter of fact, the text goes on to say they were actually thinking it, but they didn't say it.]

So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, “Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?” They went out of the city, and were coming to Him. (Vs. 28-30)

It is worth noting that she leaves the water pot. All of a sudden fetching water, physical thirst was no longer on her mind. What she had heard was the possibility that her thirsty soul could actually be satisfied. She leaves the water pot, runs back into the city.

Verse 31,

Meanwhile, [back at the ranch], the disciples were urging Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples were saying to one another, “No one brought Him *anything* to eat, did he?” [They don't get it any better than she was getting it.] Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this *case* the saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor.” (Vs. 31-38)

So, Jesus is saying there's something that matters far more to me than just physical hunger. This is the hunger of my desire to see these people come to know me, to experience my healing, to meet me at their point of their pain and find what I've come for.

Now, many people believe that the statement, *the field is white for harvest* is actually a reference to looking down and seeing the Samaritans coming out of Sychar and heading up towards the well; they would have been wearing white. That was the standard dress of pretty much everybody in a culture like that. And Jesus is looking at that and saying, hey, *the field is white for*

harvest, predicting what was about to come. But part of what he was sharing is, this is my heartbeat as the Messiah. This is what matters to me. And then reminds them, this is not a presentation. This is a conversation. Some sow, some reap. We're all working together. But at the end of the day it's about God bringing forth the harvest.

From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I *have* done.” So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.” (Vs. 39-42)

I love the way this last paragraph is written because it says *and many believed*, and then the story goes on a little farther and then it says, *and many more believed*. It was a revival in the city of Sychar. These people had finally found what their souls had longed for. Jesus was beginning to restore Shalom to the city of Sychar.

The story of the Samaritans doesn't end there. If you look at Acts chapter eight there was the original Pentecost in Jerusalem, Acts chapter two. The second great Pentecost, if you will, was actually in Samaria, Acts chapter eight as people believed and responded and the Holy Spirit came upon them, and there was revival in the land of Samaria. But it all started with one outcast woman who finally found the living water that satisfies.

We make a huge mistake when we think everybody's fine and nobody wants to hear about Jesus. That just isn't true. Everybody's not fine! This world is filled with so much pain, so much despair, so much struggle, so much confusing, confusion that most people would actually welcome a meaningful, compassionate, kind conversation about the Jesus that has so changed your life.

How do we restore Shalom to a broken and fractured community? One outcast at a time.

Cara: Bryan – the story about the woman at the well is just a great reminder that pretty ordinary moments can actually become life changing! The woman at the well began her day in despair and hopelessness, but ended her day having finally found what she's actually always been looking for. Can you talk more about that?

Bryan: Yes. So this is one of the things that I love about grace. Stop and think about it. I don't know what her days were like before that day - must've been filled with hopelessness, despair. She got up that morning. There's no hope. Nothing's ever going to be different. And before she goes to bed that night, everything's changed. Because she encountered Jesus, and that's the wonder of grace. You know, Jesus didn't send her out to become religious or to fulfill some duty. But literally in a moment in time, everything changed. And you think how many people got up this morning full of despair and emptiness, convinced there's no real purpose or meaning to life. And maybe before they go to bed tonight, they'll encounter Jesus and everything changes.

Cara: We've talked about this before, but it's striking to see again how Jesus broke through those social and religious barriers. We see him reaching out to the prostitutes and tax

collectors and now to a Samaritan woman. It seems like our willingness to reach out to people changes when we think more in terms of bringing them the Good News that they're longing for rather than trying to get a foot in the door and make that presentation.

Bryan: Yeah. So it is fascinating the way Jesus sat down and spent time with the social outcasts. You know, we talked about, well who is that for us? You know, if you're very conservative Republican, maybe it's the left-wing Democrat or it's the person across the street whose skin color is different or a different religion. I mean all of us have those people that are difficult for us to love and Jesus would break through the barriers and sit down and spend time with them. So this whole question that you ask Cara, I think my assumption is most Christians care, they really do. They care about the people around them, but Arnie's research would show, most of them aren't sharing the Gospel. So what I would come back to is whatever their method is, it's not working. And so you have to figure out what's the barrier, how do we rethink this in a way that sets me free to pursue those relationships?

And I think so many people are paralyzed by the thought that I got to get my foot in the door and then make a presentation and close the deal. And so they don't even begin to pursue the relationship, versus, what if we just talk to someone? What if we were just kind, what if we're just caring, what if we just ask questions about their kids or their hopes and dreams or their hobbies? You know, Cal Ripken just released a book, the Hall of fame baseball player, and it's called, the title is, *Just Show Up* and that's what he's talking about. You just got to show up. That's like step one. And I thought that's a great book for us in terms of *just show up*. Just say something kind, just be loving, just listen. And I think people might be amazed where those conversations go.