

Encountering Jesus Pt. 4

Unworthy to Affirmed

John 4:4-26, 39-42

This morning I want to continue to look at the lives of people who were changed by the physical presence of Jesus in the Scriptures, and glean from it lessons that we have learned as we have been changed by the presence of an ongoing relationship with him. When Jesus steps into your life, you cannot help but be changed. I could tell you story after story of how God has taken the lost, the lonely, the outcast, the weak, the greatest of sinners, and has transformed their lives into that of love, hope, peace, and even great influence for the kingdom of God.

It doesn't take long for Jesus to step into your life and turn your life upside down. He will show you your life and show you things about yourself that you never knew. He will confront attitudes and behaviors in a way that leads you to change and find help in his faithful presence. He will give you a vision of your life, that grants your life purpose and meaning beyond the mere existence from day to day. **Jesus has a way of not only showing us who we are, but what we can become in his hands.**

Today's story is no different. We find a story about a Samaritan woman who was simply going through the chores of the day and Jesus steps in and turns her perspective and reality upside down. We pick up the story in **John 4:4-15**:

4 He had to go through Samaria on the way. 5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" 10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." 11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" 13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." 15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."*

In order for us to further understand this story we must first understand the hostility between the Samaritans and the Jewish people. To the Jews, the Samaritans were

considered a mixed race of foreigners and Jews who had intermarried, and were therefore considered unclean and defiled. The Jews felt no obligation to the Samaritans – they refused to borrow anything from them, to drink with them, to sit down to meals with them, or even eat out of the same vessels as they did. They were cursed by the Jewish people and even wished to be annihilated. The rabbinical literature specifically prohibited all contact with the Samaritans.

The animosity didn't end there. The Samaritans worshiped the God of the Israel but felt that the temple of God was to be built on Mount Gerizim instead of Jerusalem. The Jewish people believed the temple in Mount Gerizim to be a counterfeit, a distraction from the only holy place of worship. The acts of worship at Gerizim were the same of those in Jerusalem.

The Samaritans did however refuse to embrace the Prophetic books of the Bible however, and therefore didn't have the clues that the Jews did about the coming of the Messiah – they simply knew that there was going to be one.

Even through these two groups worshipped the same God, there was animosity due to a location and opinion. I think it is safe to say that even within the church today, we build walls around us, keeping us from any contact with the world, or even other churches, because of opinions and arguments over how we should worship, what style, what kind of music, what kind of teaching, what kind of drama, small groups, and various other METHODS, when we could come together and celebrate the things we have in common. **Ephesians 4:3-6** tells us:

3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all.

Therefore, **we need to celebrate the things we have in common and not divide over methodology.** Right off the bat, the woman is a little on edge because in her mind there is to be no association with Jesus, a Jewish man, and yet (just as we looked at last week) Jesus steps over cultural barriers to reach out to people in need. Jesus broke Jewish protocol, rabbinical teachings, and reach out with truth.

That is why it is so important that we don't add our own agenda to the truth of the Scriptures. Don't do what the Religious people did and add to the truth of scripture with further expectations and legalistic rules. These can become a stumbling block to people who simply need to experience the unconditional forgiveness and acceptance of God.

Jesus reaches out to the woman and asks her for a drink. The Bible tells us that Jesus was tired and thirsty, speaking of how he was a physical man. He reaches out to her to fill a physical need, and then offers her an eternal spiritual gift. He says, "If you only knew who I was and what I could give you." **I think that is the statement that Jesus speaks**

to everyone today in this world. “If you only knew who I was and what I could give you.” People live their lives on this earth without any consideration of who Jesus is and why we need him. They don’t want to know. They won’t even sit down and listen to his plan of salvation. And yet in our society there are still those who don’t know, yet one day will and will allow God to change them. As we live our life in Jesus Christ, we need to be ready and willing to share who he is and what he could do for them.

It is also interesting that Jesus said that he had a gift for her. The term gift in the original Greek was considered a “free gift”, one given without anything expected in return. Clearly he was speaking of himself. It is a gift clearly only to be received. **Romans 6:23** tells us:

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Still stuck in her physical mindedness, the Samaritan woman is still thinking about a physical need of Jesus and states, “you don’t have a rope or a bucket.” The well was believed to be 35 yards deep (105 feet deep). I pray that a change in mindset has taken place within you as you have embraced Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Jesus wants to meet your spiritual needs first and then do the impossible in the physical realm. Jesus came to reach our hearts and do something within us – that is his priority. Yet he will move heaven and earth to make it happen. He didn’t come to take care of a temporary problem, but an eternal hunger. Jesus tells the woman in **verse 13-14:**

3 Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

Unlike the well she was pulling water from – the stagnant, dead, pool of rain water, the water Jesus as offering was fresh, new, and full of life. **John 7:38-39** tells us:

38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’ 39 (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given,* because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)*

Our lives were like dead stagnant water, lacking in all areas of life. And yet now God awakens our spirits by giving us the fresh, purifying, full of life, living Holy Spirit that awakens us from our slumber, and invigorates every area of our lives. Jesus was offering the Samaritan woman the hope of salvation through him, and the gift of the Holy Spirit living in her, making her faith something that was living and breathing, instead of a duty of worship at a temple somewhere. That is what Jesus’ whole point is in our story in **verse 20-24:**

20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?” 21 Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

This goes back to what we learned in the 40 Days of Purpose, how worship is your life and how you show God that you love him. We need to have the living God moving in our life so that we are always learning, always listening, always ready for the adventure that God has for us. But let’s go back to the Samaritan woman again where she asks for this living water thinking that this still a physical miracle water. Jesus changes the course of the conversation and begins to speak to her soul. Look at **verse 16-19**:

16 “Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her. 17 “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!” 19 “Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet.

Not only was this woman an outcast because of her nationality, but add to it the struggles in her personal life and she knew she was unworthy. Deep down within all of us, we know who we are – we know our shortcomings, we know our weaknesses, we know we have made mistakes, we know we are far from perfect. **Until we are willing to admit who we are, we will never see our need for Jesus Christ.** Jesus tells her to go get her husband. She tells him that she isn’t married and Jesus reveals that he knows her past and how she has been married 5 times and is currently living with a man.

I want you to notice that Jesus offers the free gift of himself to her despite her past. People already know they are sinners, so there is no use in beating a dead horse. **We shouldn’t go around pointing out people’s sin, they already know who they are and what they have done. Instead we should be offering the free gift of Jesus to them as a means of living a real Spirit filled life, a revelation of God.** The Samaritan woman tells Jesus in **verse 25-26**:

*The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Then Jesus told her, “I Am the Messiah!”**

Did Jesus’ offer of a free gift, of a life changing gift, of a living and vibrant change in our life, did it appeal to the Samaritan woman? Does this same free gift of salvation, of a

change in how we live, a living and vibrant change that makes life have purpose, does it appeal to this world? I don't know about you, but I know a lot of people who are merely existing, who are lost, who are confused, who are stuck, who are sad, who are lonely, who are carrying a weight on their shoulders, who are surviving from one day to the next, who need the free gift of Jesus. Do you know of anyone? Everyone deserves the opportunity to make the choice. For the Samaritan woman we find that she was changed. Look at **Verse 39-42**:

39 Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" 40 When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, 41 long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

Not only was the woman changed, but God reached others through her change. She stated, "he told me everything I ever did!" A message that Jesus knew her, he knew her past, and he still reached out to her. **Despite what others thought, her culture, her sin, and her poor choices didn't hold back the gift of Jesus. She went from one who was unworthy to one who was affirmed by Jesus himself. She was used by God to reach more.** All she had to do was to declare the goodness of God in her weaknesses and other flocked to hear the same good news that was available to them.

None of us are worthy to receive anything from God, yet God affirms his love for us everyday. He gives us his Spirit to make us alive. He gives us his Spirit who is at work within us. He gives us his Spirit who gives each day meaning a lesson to be learned. He gives us his Spirit who turns our mere existence into a living purpose filled life. Today God wants to affirm his love for you, and his acceptance of you no matter what your past may look like. Allow him to live in you and change you. As you have meet Jesus may his love for you change your life. Amen!