

Learn From Me - At the Well

This morning we're wrapping up the series "Learn From Me" as we head into our two week Easter series "Savior & Lord". For a few weeks I've thought I'd end this series with the passage we are going to look at today. I kept wanting to preach it but found myself pushing it off over and over, and until this week I didn't really know why. God's plans are better than mine, this is a perfect setup for "Savior & Lord"

In John chapter 4, we see Jesus and the gang are on this journey, they are headed from Judea to Galilee.

John 4:4-6 (NIV)

Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

Jesus HAD to go through Samaria....pretty important to the story about the Samaritan woman at the well, huh? Samaria was right between Judea and Galilee, however historically most Jews avoided Samaria, they travelled further to go around because they despised Samaritans. They were half breeds, offspring of Jews and Gentiles, and pagan worshippers.

But Jesus HAD to go through Samaria. See it was a necessity for Jesus.....He wasn't just taking a shorter route, He has a divine appointment. In the Greek this word means "he must needs", a little strange, I know. But it emphasizes that He must go through Samaria, He needs to go through Samaria!

It's a spiritual must, a spiritual need. Just as Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by Satan, He was led by the Spirit to the well to speak to this woman.

We can learn from Jesus here.....you don't have to follow the same path as everyone else around you. The Holy Spirit has a path just for you. It may be a path that no one else is willing to travel.....that's ok.

It's on those unfamiliar paths that we most often have the most impactful moments.

Jesus gets to this well, the well that Jacob dug back in Genesis 33, and Jesus sits down by the well at noon, it's hot, He's tired.....

John 4:7-8 (NIV)

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

This makes sense, He's tired, thirsty, and at a well without a bucket...."will you give me a drink". This is a WWJD moment.....how many of you would sit at the well and pray for a bucket but then not ask the woman for a drink when she shows up with her bucket.....

John 4:9 (NIV)

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.)

You think racism is bad today? There's this verse in Ecclesiastes that says there's nothing new under the sun.....so true. Racism is NOT new.

First it was improper for a man to speak to a strange woman in public, secondly she is a dirty Samaritan (the MSG says Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans), thirdly He is asking for a drink from HER bucket.

She knows all of this...."How can you ask ME for a drink?"

John 4:10 (NIV)

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."

Put yourself in this women's sandals for a minute....there have got to be some questions coming to mind.

1. What is this gift of God?
2. Who is this man?
3. What is living water?
4. How is He gonna get it without a bucket?

What do you think she's going to ask first? The most natural one of course....

John 4:11-12 (NIV)

"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

It seems like it all went right over her head....."this well is over a 100 ft deep.....clearly this living water isn't going to come from here, you don't have a bucket!"

She has NO IDEA that Jesus is not speaking about actual water.....and YES....He is greater than Jacob!

Do you know that not everyone understands the mysteries of God when the first hear them? That doesn't mean we shouldn't share them. Sometimes they are stepping stones or building blocks. They provoke the person to think and ask and make room for the Holy Spirit to REVEAL. It's our job to tell, the Holy Spirit's job to convince.

John 4:13-14 (NIV)

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 7:37-39 (NKJV)

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John 4:15 (NIV)

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."

She still doesn't get it...she's thinking how great it would be to not have to travel back here to the well and getting water....

John 4:16-18 (NIV)

He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "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."

Here is this woman's story....think back to v6, it's about noon....it's only her and Jesus at this well. This is NOT water drawing time. What would have been typical would be for the women of the village to all go to the well early in the morning to get their water for the day.

They would go before the heat and as they had to wait on one another, they would probably socialize. (so they probably just got back with the water at noon....jk). But this woman came at noon.....by herself.....

See you could think maybe she just needed some more water....but given what we just found out, it's more likely that she wasn't welcome with the other women. She was an outcast among outcasts.

It's not just that she has been married five times but the man she is with now is not her husband.....that doesn't mean they are just dating.....it implies that it's probably someone else's husband....

She probably was not welcome with the others and as she walked to the well in the heat of the day, at least she didn't have to hear the others talking about her or tearing her down. She expected to be alone at this time. Only today she's not alone...

She met this man....One who knew her story, One who despite her track record didn't belittle her, didn't see her as unworthy of love, didn't see her as a Samaritan, didn't see her for who she was but instead saw her as a soul in need of salvation.

This is how Jesus looks at you.

He's not a God who defines us by our past and our failures. He knows it all but He loves you anyway. He's a God that will meet you in the desert, in the heat of the day, when everyone else is mocking and shaming you, He will offer living water....

As this woman hears her life laid out before her, she becomes thirsty....I can imagine the bucket in her hand drop to the ground....it's not that well water that she thirsts for....

John 4:19-20 (NIV)

"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

Translation: "Where is God? My people say he is on the mountain. Your people say he is in Jerusalem. I don't know where he is." This is the question of God-hungry hearts everywhere. And it's the kind of question Jesus loves to answer.....

John 4:21-24 (NIV)

"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Jesus reveals a mystery to this outcast. It's not about where you worship. The Holy Spirit is getting ready to come and and worship is not going to be about a physical place but knowing God in your heart.

He says "You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know".

What about you? Are you worshipping a God that you know?

John 4:25-26 (NIV)

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

26 Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

This woman's response "I'm looking for the Messiah".....she's got a hungry heart. She wants to know the God that she worships.

Of all the places to find this.....in Samaria.....in a woman with a jacked up life.....even her own people reject her.....the outcast among outcasts.....probably the most insignificant person around....

Yet Jesus makes it known to her....I AM HE.

The Messiah....God in the flesh. A God that has walked among us, understands our struggles, yet has overcome them

John 4:28-30 (NIV)

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 Messiah?"30

They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

An encounter with Jesus transformed this woman from the town outcast into an enthusiastic evangelist. Suddenly the shame of her past disappeared. Suddenly the insignificance of her life was swallowed by the significance of her message. "God is here! God has come! God cares... for me!"

John 4:39-42 (NIV)

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. 41 And because of his words many more became believers. 42 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."