

JOHN 4:1-10
A HEART THAT IS OPEN!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 4 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

In our study this morning we are going to see Jesus meet a woman by a well in Samaria and this woman, who came to get water, was going to receive the living water, Jesus Christ in her life. A very remarkable story to say the least.

Of this we are told,

The entire chapter tells the story of Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman in the city of Sychar.

The Samaritans were isolated in the land of Israel as half-breeds and outcasts. But Jesus tells the woman that if she drinks of the water He can give her, she will never thirst again.

When Christ reveals to her that He knows she has been married five times, she recognizes Him as a prophet from God.

The woman also comes to believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah and shares the good news with the people of her town. As a result, many believe on the Lord as the "Savior of the world."

- Elmer Towns, John, p. 37

Now I am getting ahead of myself here, because we will be looking at that Living Water that Jesus offers this woman next time.

What I want to focus on here is this – ***A HEART THAT IS OPEN!***

Now when you hear that title you are probably thinking that I am speaking of this woman at the well in Samaria, that her heart was open to receive what Jesus had for her. And that is true, it was open, she was seeking, even though she probably never thought about it until Jesus came and shared with her.

But what I would like to focus on this morning is a different heart that is open, and that is our own heart!

Now some of you may be wondering where I am going with this, what is wrong with my heart, what I am talking about.

Here's the thing. We all have had our hearts broken by family, by friends, by other Christians and what ends up happening many times is we then close our hearts, our lives to them.

“They are going to treat me like that, then I won't have anything to do with them!”

That is the mentality!

And I am going to be honest with you, we have all felt that way and maybe some of you this morning are dealing with this very thing. That you have closed yourself off from others, that you have built up walls and you are not going to let them into your life any longer and you may have even isolated yourself from that person or persons.

Again, since I am being honest with you, let me share this with you. Over the last twenty-six years of ministry here at Calvary Chapel I have had a couple of friends, some even in leadership positions, leave, hurt me. And if I am being honest, it is much more than a few.

Now the first response from me, is the flesh loves to rise up! ***“That is it! I am not going to put myself out there. Every time I do I get burned. I can't believe that this is happening to me again!”***

And after I get through with my little pity party, sorry, that is what it is for me, the Lord lets me know that I need to soften my heart and let people back in. If they don't want that relationship, that is between them and God, but I need to stay out of the way and I need to have a heart that is open to others, to be able to minister to them.

I will give you an example that happened to me, maybe some thirty-five plus years ago.

I was in my early twenties, and I had just gotten my Registered Nurse license and I started to work in the ICU/CCU.

And during my training period I took care the really, really sick patients. I loved to be challenged and after a few weeks my preceptor and my head nurse said that they would like me to take some easy patients for a change.

As much as I didn't want to, they were in charge, so I took care one patient that was on the ventilator or breathing machine and an easy patient who came in with chest pain.

Since he was easy, I took care of him first. He was an anesthesiologist at the hospital.

So I went in to do his vital signs and check him over and he said that he was having a little chest pain.

So I gave him a nitroglycerin and stayed with him. And as I was watching, the pain was getting more intense and on the heart monitor, his EKG looked like tombstones. You don't have to know anything about medicine to know that if your heart monitor looks like a tombstone, that is not a good thing, and it wasn't!

My preceptor was with me, and she told me to give him another nitroglycerin, which I did!

Things did not get better, in fact, they got worse, much worse!

He ended up coding there, right in front of me. In other words, his heart went into a lethal rhythm and then stopped!

Now I am an ICU/CCU nurse, and I can handle this, I have handled things before. At least that is what I thought, and I think the Lord was showing me something here.

Word spread quickly of what had happened and who was coding and because everyone knew him in the hospital, all the doctors were there and they were calling for a pacemaker, this drip, a balloon pump, another drip, do this, do that!

And it went on for some time and in the end, he died!

I was devastated. I was ready to give up. In fact, I remember coming home and Julie was outside, and she asked me how my day was, and I said, ***“I don’t think I can do this anymore!”***

She said, ***“What happened?”***

And I explained to her what happened, that my patient coded and died and that there was nothing I could do to save him. I was devastated. My wife tried to comfort me but I just sat and cried because I loved nursing, but I could not handle this, my heart was broken. I was going to go in the next day and explain to my head nurse and preceptor that I was going to have to leave.

When I got to work that next morning my head nurse and my preceptor wanted to talk with me. I was not sure why, but I did want to talk with them.

They asked my how I was doing, and I explained to them that I was not doing good.

And they were the best nurses I know of, not because they knew about nursing, which they did, but because they sat me down, with tears in their eyes because they knew this man, and they said, ***“You can’t save everyone!”***

Now I know that people die, I was an LPN for three years, I worked as an orderly back in Arizona for a few years, so I was well aware that people die. But now this, my heart was broken, and I was ready to leave. I did not want to feel that pain anymore and I thought if I isolated myself from it, I would not get hurt again.

But those words, from seasoned nurses, encouraged me to go on. They did not tell me I would never get hurt again, I would, and I did. Working in the ICU/CCU and the Open-Heart Unit I saw a lot of death. And I did not harden my heart to the family and friends who lost loved ones. I cried with them, hugged them and yes, my heart broke, but my God was there comforting me.

We as Christians will get hurt, not might. And we need to be careful that we don't harden our hearts to people, be they Christian or not, be they nice to us or not!

In Proverbs 14:4 Solomon tells us, **“Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.”**

I know, you are probably wondering where I am going with this, but it fits in perfectly.

Here is what Solomon is saying. If there are no oxen in the barns guess what? The stables will be clean!

But if there are no oxen in the stables you will not have a bountiful harvest.

What in the world is Solomon talking about?

He is saying that life is messy and if you want a clean life, just isolate yourself from everyone. But if you do, there will be no fruit from your labors.

For me in Nursing, I had to continue on, and I can't tell you how many of my patients and their families blessed me over all those years. Did I get hurt? Of course I did, but if I did not go forward, I would have missed out on those blessings!

Let me share this with you and then we will get into our study this morning. We are told, Those of us who claim the name of Christ must choose again and again between two very distinct courses. One is to cultivate a small heart. That is the safest way to go because it minimizes our sorrows. If our ambition is to avoid the troubles of life, the formula is simple: minimize entangling relationships and carefully avoid elevated and noble ideas and we will escape a host of afflictions.

Cultivate deafness, and we will be saved from the discords of life. Cultivate blindness, and we will not see the ugly. It is universally true for all of us that if we want to get through life with a minimum of trouble, we just have to reduce the compass of our hearts. This is how many people, even those who name the name of Christ, get through life with minimal tribulation. They have cultivated smallness of heart.

But another path is also open to us – namely, to open ourselves up to others and become susceptible to a gamut of sorrows that a shriveled heart knows nothing about. Enlarge and ennoble your purpose and you will increase your vulnerability proportionately!

A sentence in the diary of James Gilmour, pioneer missionary to Mongolia, written late in his life, must have been written in blood.

In the shape of converts, I have seen no results. I have not, as far as I am aware, seen anyone who even wanted to be a Christian.

Painful words, are they not? Contrast now those words with what he wrote when he first arrived in Mongolia:

Several huts in sight! When shall I be able to speak to the people?

O Lord suggest by the Spirit how I should come among them, and guide me in gaining the language, and in preparing myself to teach the life and love of Christ Jesus!

I have not, as far as I am aware, seen anyone who even wanted to be a Christian.

James Gilmour would never have written those later pathetic lines if he had not decided to go for it all in his service for Christ.

In fact, there is a very real sense in which James Gilmour's being in this position was his fault because he had decided to follow Jesus! If James Gilmour had never set out for Mongolia, he would never have experienced those hopes or disappointments.

Enlarge your heart, cultivate a ministering heart, and you will enlarge the potential for pain. Some are hurting specifically because they have enlarged their hearts. They have pursued elevated ideals and have given themselves to others, and that decision has left them prey to sorrows that otherwise would have been avoided.

Will you serve Christ and others, or yourself? Your decision will affect the kind of heart you will have. Little hearts, though safe and protected, never contribute anything. No one benefits from restricted sympathies and limited vision.

On the other hand, ministering hearts, though vulnerable, are also the hearts that know the most joy and leave their imprint on the world.

Cultivate deafness, and you will never hear the discords of life, but neither will you hear the glorious strains of a great symphony!

Cultivate blindness, and you will never see the ugly, but neither will you see the beauty of God's creation.

Cultivate a small heart, and you may have smooth sailing, but you will never know the heady winds of the Holy Spirit in your sails! You will never be borne along in power and exhilaration and will never see lives changed and great things happening for God.

We only have to glance at a daily newspaper to see there is a great need for ministering hearts – even enlarged hearts – caring hearts.

The story of our Lord and the woman at the well gives us insight into the ministering heart.

- R. Kent Hughes, John – That You May Believe, pp. 97-98

I realize that this is not an easy subject, and I am sure all of us will have issues that we will have to deal with. And here's the thing. If you are not being challenged, then have you already attained all you need to in this life?

I think when it is put that way, we all can see we have areas to grow in and I think relationships, reaching out to hurting people, reaching out to people who you really may have nothing in common, is important.

In fact, Paul put it like this in Philippians 3:12-16, **“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”**

In other words, Paul is saying that he has not reached the place where God wanted him and where he wanted to be with the Lord. And he did not give up, he did not throw in the towel, but he – ***PRESSED ON!***

God is still working, He is not giving up on us, and thus, may we listen to what He is showing us and apply these things to our lives so that we may grow in our relationship with Him!

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning into four main points. They are,

GOD’S DIRECTION – JOHN 4:1-3

AN OPEN HEART – JOHN 4:4-6

REACHING OUT – JOHN 4:7-9

THE SHARING – JOHN 4:10

So with that as our background, let’s begin reading in John chapter 4, beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study the Gospel of John and look at the topic – ***A HEART THAT IS OPEN!***

JOHN 4**VERSES 1-3**

As you read this you can clearly see that the ministry of John the Baptist is slowing down, and the ministry of Jesus is growing.

That is interesting to me, because if you remember from our last study, we saw that John the Baptist said these words regarding Jesus, **“He must increase, but I must decrease.”** John 3:30.

Now that is what we are seeing here, the ministry of Jesus continues to grow, people are being drawn to Him and His message of hope that is found in repentance, a turning towards God.

And make no mistake about it, that is what we are to do. We are not to give people ourselves, all we have done, what we are about, we are to give them Jesus because He is the only One who can save.

Also, remember where Jesus and His men were ministering. We are told in John 3:22-23, **“After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.”**

As you can see, Jesus and His men are in the area of Judea and now the Pharisees were catching wind of what Jesus was doing, even more than what John the Baptist was doing.

And I am sure they were not happy with what was happening. First John the Baptist and then this guy named Jesus. And it could have developed into a confrontation with the Pharisees at this point. But, as we can see, **“He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.”** John 4:2.

So we see that Jesus moves out of the region of Judea to Galilee in the North.

Why did He do that?

Why would He leave an area where there is so much happening? People are turning to God; lives are being changed, and now He leaves!

I have called these verses – ***GOD’S DIRECTION!***

And I truly believe that we miss what God wants us to do because we are not paying attention, we are not listening.

Yes, from a human perspective, this was the place to be. But from a heavenly perspective, it was time for Jesus to leave that area. And He did.

Now, as we look at verse 4, we see something very interesting with this verse. Something that we would not expect, especially if you were a Jew.

Look at what John tells us.

VERSES 4-6

I have called these verses – ***AN OPEN HEART!***

And the reason being is I see Jesus in tune with the heart of God the Father and He is going where no Jew really wanted to go – ***SAMARIA!***

And this is interesting because we are told that Jesus “**needed to go through Samaria.**”

No, he didn’t! He did not have to go through Samaria.

What do I mean by that?

Keep in mind that Samaria was located in the middle of the land, between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north.

During the time of Jesus, if the Jews were traveling to Galilee from Judea or visa-a-versa, they would not go through Samaria, which was the shortest route. They instead would go east of the Jordan River along the desert strip called the Trans Jordan or Perea and then cross over again, going twice as far as if they would just go through Samaria.

They would bypass Samaria completely.

Now I don't know about you, but if I am traveling, I am going to take the shortest route to get to my destination. Especially if I am traveling long distances. Why do I want to go farther? I either want to get to my destination as quickly as possible or I want to get home as quickly as possible!

I know, some of you would like to take your time and see the sights, but if I am on a timetable, and I usually am, I want to relax at my destination before I have to head back home.

So why did the Jews not want to go through Samaria?

Why was it such a big deal?

Let me try to give you some insight into what is going on and why there was this animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans.

To do that we need to look back at their history because as we do you will see why there was this animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans.

If you remember from our Old Testament studies, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B. C. And the Assyrians were a brutal people, leading them away with fishhooks in their mouths or noses.

What would happen next is that the Assyrians would bring in other captives from different nations into the land and they inter-married with the Jews who remained there, and these people are known as the Samaritans.

Thus, to the Jews, they were half-breeds and looked down upon; they were despised by the Jews!

Morris gives to us this insight as he wrote, ***“Their route from Jerusalem to Galilee lay through the region beyond the Jordan. This was considerably longer, but it avoided contact with the Samaritans. Those who were not so strict went through Samaria.”***

In fact, Jewish Rabbis said, ***“Let no man eat the bread of the Cuthites [the Samaritans], for he who eats their bread is as he who eats swine’s flesh.”***

That is obviously not Kosher!

Not only that but a popular prayer in those days went like this, ***“And Lord, do not remember the Samaritans in the resurrection.”***

So, the Jews did not like the Samaritans, not at all. Thus, to walk through the land of Samaria would be something most would never do!

Today, this community of Samaritans total to around 800 people. And they are divided between Holon, a city just south of Tel Aviv, and Kiryat Luza, a small village near Nablus in the Palestinian controlled West Bank.

And their numbers continue to dwindle because of marrying within their own families. But the religion they practice is still the same as it was in Jesus’ day.

They believe in the first five books of Moses, but they changed some of the stories around. The Garden of Eden was located on Mount Gerizim, Noah’s Ark rested on Mount Gerizim, Abraham offered Isaac on Mount Gerizim and they had a temple on Mount Gerizim where they offered sacrifices to God, all in the land of Samaria.

So, these other issues irritated the Jews as well, and not wanting to even get the dust of Samaria on their feet, they went around this land to get to their destination.

But notice again what we read here in verse 4 as John tells us that Jesus “**needed to go through Samaria.**”

Again, the question is why did Jesus need to go through Samaria?

Some feel it was the shortest route and maybe He needed to get to His destination faster.

I don't think that is right because in verse 43 of John chapter 4 we see Jesus stayed two more days before He departed to go to Galilee.

Then why in the world did He go through Samaria?

Because He had an open heart and was sensitive to the Father's direction and He had an appointment to meet someone there, an appointment that was made before the foundations of the world were created, and thus, Jesus is going to a place that very few Jews would go, Samaria!

What about you? Is God calling you to go somewhere and you are refusing to take those steps of faith? There are people that need to hear of Jesus, are you ready to go?

When Julie and I came up here with our family, one of the things they told us that we need to change our Illinois license plates as soon as possible because Wisconsin people don't like Illinois people!

I don't know why; we are such nice people! Maybe because we call Wisconsin our state park! Could be.

But think about people that God brings across your path, or steps He wants you to take to meet someone and you close the door because you don't like that person, you don't like the way that they dress, the color of their hair, whatever that might be today, the tattoos, the rings piercing their bodies, and the list can go on. I guess today we can say what political groups they associate with or their views on COVID.

We have all kinds of excuses, and Jesus could have come up with a boatload of reasons why He should not travel to Samaria. But He did not make an excuse, he went to Samaria.

Now we can try to justify our behavior with the unsaved, and it still doesn't fly.

But are we avoiding our brothers and sisters in the Lord, other Christians? That should not be. How can you say you love God and hate your brother?

“Well, you know what they did, you know what they said!”

It doesn't matter. Can you love them and forgive them as Christ has done with you? You need to!

If there is a problem with someone in the body of Christ, you need to deal with it or you are not going to move forward until you take those steps and try to bring healing to those relationships.

We see here that Jesus came to Samaria, to an area called Sychar.

Keep in mind that the city of Sychar was ancient Shechem and was the capital city of the Samaritans.

Sychar, located between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, was the place where Jacob's well was located and even today, you can see this site located in what is now called the West Bank and it is very dangerous to go to because of all the terrorist activity that is going on in the West Bank.

But this well, Jacob's well, is still there and it reaches down some 150 feet and is fed by underground springs, but it really is a cistern in a sense, it is not necessarily fresh water, it became old and stagnant, and Jesus will expound more on that as we go through this chapter.

Now I know that there are some who believe if you are tired, if you have to sweat to work, then it is not of God, you are just doing it in the flesh.

Are you kidding me?

Of course we work, and we should work hard. A ministering heart is a working heart!

Did you know that John Wesley rode some sixty to seventy miles per day and on average preached three sermons a day! Do you think he was tired?

Of course he was tired, not of the work but in the work, physically he was tired!

And notice what we see here of Jesus. John tells us that Jesus was “**wearied**” from His journey, which may sound surprising.

The reason it is surprising to us is that we see Jesus as God and we stop there. Yes, He was fully God in the Incarnation but don’t forget His humanity. Jesus was flesh and blood in the Incarnation. Fully God and fully man and thus, He got hungry, He got tired, He got thirsty and-so-on.

Maclaren expounds on this and gives to us some interesting insight into what Jesus was feeling.

He tells us, *“That little word thus seems to have a force difficult to reproduce in English. It is apparently intended to enhance the idea of utter weariness.”*

In other words, He was exhausted!

It is as Bruce tells us, *“While our Evangelist insists that it was the divine Word that became flesh in Jesus, he insists at the same time that what the divine word became was flesh.”*

So here is Jesus, by this well in Samaria because He had – **AN OPEN HEART!**

And out of that open heart, because He was sensitive to the Father’s will, we see Him – **REACHING OUT!**

Look at what we are told starting in John 4:7.

VERSES 7-9

Keep in mind that we are told in verse 6 that the timeframe is the sixth hour and if we are going by Jewish time here, it is 12 noon. I believe that is what John is saying here.

That is why when we see this Samaritan woman come to the well for water, she is alone.

And this is an important point because it shows us what is going on here. You see, you would go for water in the morning or evening when it was cool out, not in the heat of the day, so she was all alone, like she wanted to be.

She did not want any confrontations with the women of the city because of her lifestyle.

And we do see people isolate themselves because they don't feel that they are worthy to be around others, they feel like outcasts, they just don't fit in.

So picture what is going on here.

Jesus is at this well, sitting, resting because He was exhausted, and He is alone at this point.

And as He is sitting there here comes this woman to the well and as she gets closer to Jesus, He tells her, "**Give Me a drink.**"

Now we read this and don't think much of what Jesus was doing, speaking to this Samaritan woman. You see, not only was she a Samaritan but also a woman, two big strikes against her. And then throw in her questionable character and that is strike three, you are out!

Ray Stedman tells us that,

How very beautifully Jesus overleaps the barriers that separated him from this woman. He was a rabbi, and according to the rabbinical law, rabbis were instructed to never talk to a woman in public - not even to their own wives or sisters.

In fact the rabbinical law said, "***It is better to burn the law than to give it to a woman.***"

In that culture women were regarded as totally unable to understand complicated subjects like theology and religion.

- <https://bit.ly/3wDQN3P>

And, like I have said, she was not only a woman, but she was a Samaritan woman, and the Jews did not like Samaritan's, to put it mildly. They considered them half-breads!

In fact, years down the road, they came up with this rabbinical law, it was put in place around 66 A. D. that stated that Samaritan women were considered as continually menstruating and thus unclean.

That means anyone coming in contact with them would be unclean also.

Now even though this was much later than Jesus' time, they still felt the same way, they still practiced these things, you would never see a Rabbi speaking to a woman alone and I doubt if you would see a Rabbi speaking to a Samaritan woman!

In fact, in regard to women in general and Samaritan women, Barclay said this, and it is along the same lines as Ray Stedman wrote.

He wrote this, ***“The strict Rabbis forbade a Rabbi to greet a woman in public. A Rabbi might not even speak to his own wife or daughter or sister in public. There were even Pharisees who were called ‘the bruised and bleeding Pharisees’ because they shut their eyes when they saw a woman on the street and so walked into walls and houses!”***

Not very nice, but that is the way it was. Can you imagine how you would have felt as a woman in those days. You would feel like an outcast. You would feel like you were not worth anything.

Can you imagine seeing these Pharisees walking into walls because they closed their eyes when they saw a woman coming!

But here is this Rabbi, Jesus, and Jesus does something completely different. He does not close His eyes to this woman. He does not ignore her. He does not close His heart to her.

Jesus comes and reaches out to those that many people feel are untouchable, not worth anything.

And think about that for a minute. Isn't that why Jesus came, to save those who are lost, those who are in sin. And as we will see next time, this woman had plenty of sin and I am sure she was not looked upon with favor with the other women since she has been married and divorced five times and is currently living with a man.

In Luke 19:10 we are told, "**for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.**"

You mean He did not come to make me wealthy, healthy, prosperous, get a promotion, to get this or that?

No, Jesus came to save us from our sins! Never forget that message!

And never forget who that message is for!

It is for everyone, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, man, woman and child, it doesn't matter the color of your skin, it doesn't matter your status in society, it doesn't matter how many different colors your hair is or how you dress or whatever. Jesus came to save sinners and now He has given us the responsibility to share our faith to this lost world!

I think it is interesting today because many have bought into the scheme that the Devil is using to put people against each other – ***DIVIDE AND CONQUER!***

And it is working beautifully. We have different groups of people that are fighting with each other, and the sad thing is, we even see the church becoming part of this.

We look at the Democratic Party and we hate them; we want them destroyed!

We see the garbage that they are bringing into our schools, this critical race theory, and we want those people destroyed!

We see our children as well as adults accepting the homosexual – transgender lifestyles, some even becoming involved in these things at a young age, and we want those that are doing this destroyed!

And I can go on, but I probably would only make you mad, so I won't.

Now I am not saying we accept their sin, Jesus wouldn't, and He doesn't. But what would Jesus do when He confronted these people?

He would do what He did here with this woman in Samaria, reach out to her because His heart was open, He came to save that which was lost and that is exactly what we are to do.

Let me show you what I mean and look at this example for us by Jesus and what He did.

In Mark 2:15-17 we are told, **“Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, ‘How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard it, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’”**

Here we see Levi the tax collector, Matthew as we know him, called by Jesus. And like today, they didn't like tax collectors, they were wicked people. You see, the Romans would get these tax collectors who would make a profit by taxing the people over the fixed rate that Rome had set, and it was perfectly legal, that was their profit.

So these guys were corrupt, they ripped people off, and thus they were hated by the people.

Lane makes these comments regarding tax collectors, ***“When a Jew entered the customs service he was regarded as an outcast from society: he was disqualified as a judge or a witness in a court session, was excommunicated from the synagogue, and in the eyes of the community his disgrace extended to his family.”***

Here is this wonderful picture. Despised by the world, not a good person, Jesus calls Levi to come and follow Him.

Why? How could Jesus do something like that?

Because Jesus came to save those who are sick in sin, not those who were healthy, and Levi was sick, and Jesus reaches out to him.

And we see that Levi gets up and leaves his lucrative business to follow Jesus. It does cost us many times to follow Jesus, but it is worth it!

Did Jesus really impact this man's life? You bet He did. How do I know? Because Levi throws a party and invites tax collectors and sinners to come and hear about Jesus!

Now you wouldn't think anyone would be upset over this, but there is one group that is, the religious leaders.

Why?

They didn't want to associate with those kinds of people, sinners and tax collectors. They were the scum of society.

And tragically, many Christians do the same today, they have that same awful attitude.

Jesus sat down right in the middle because He came to save that which was lost, He came to heal those who were sick, you and me! May we do the same as we reach out to people, those who are sick in sin!

And like I have said, with this woman at the well, and the time she came to that well, you can understand why she came to get water in the heat of the day, no one else was around and she did not have to deal with anyone's nasty words or any confrontation with anyone.

And as she gets to this well, here is Jesus!

And He does not ignore her and look down upon her or walk away from her, or close His eyes to her, He speaks to her!

I am thankful that God looks at us differently than man does, aren't you?

We must be careful that we don't exclude people because of the way they look, the way the dress, they lifestyle they have. Jesus ministered to them and so should we, reaching out to them in love as Jesus did so often!

Let me share this story with you because you will see how we are not to cast people away but reach out to them, you just don't know what is going on in their lives and the salvation that they need. We are told,

Stuart Briscoe has shared a story that is even more dramatic. When he was at Capernwray Bible School, he and his wife were separated from each other for a day. He had left her the car, but he had accidentally taken the keys with him.

After a couple of hours, Jill borrowed another car, and as she was driving down the road she saw some girl's hitchhiking, so she picked them up. They turned out to be three German girls visiting England.

She managed to persuade these girls to come with her to a conference for German Christian young people, and one of them was marvelously saved there.

Afterwards Stuart Briscoe told that girl's story:

She was a theological student in Germany. She had come under the influence of some false teaching that, instead of leading her to an intelligent worship of God, had filled her with much doubt and confusion.

She had delivered an ultimatum to the God whose existence she doubted. She told God that if he was there he should show himself to her in some way. He must do this within three months. If he didn't she told him, "I'll quit my schooling, quit theology, quit religion, and I think I'm going to quit living because there's nothing to live for."

After explaining this, she turned to my wife with great emotion and said, "The three months end today."

- R. Kent Hughes, John, pp. 102-103

Again, where do we need to go through? Who do we need to reach out to? Be open to where the Lord is leading you! You just don't know where people are at, the struggles they are facing and the hope they are looking for. Don't negate them, look down upon them, walk away from them, close your eyes to them, but share the love of Jesus with them!

And this is interesting to me, because when Jesus asks her for a drink of water, she responds to Him by saying, “... **‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.**” John 4:9.

She knew that what Jesus was doing was not Kosher! She could not believe that a Jewish man would be talking to a Samaritan woman, and she is confused, she is wondering what is going on, how can this be!

Which leads us to the last point – ***THE SHARING!***

VERSE 10

I guess I really want to drive this point home. You see, for many reasons, this woman would have been despised by most of the religious leaders in the days of Jesus.

Again, the reason was simple. She was a woman, a Samaritan, and a woman of questionable reputation.

Yet, in the interview with Nicodemus John showed us, ***Jesus has something to say to the religious establishment.***

In the meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well John showed us, ***Jesus has something to say to those despised by the religious establishment.***

And I think Jesus has something to say to us, that we need to be open, we need to be watching, we need to be listening and not distance ourselves from the lost of this world. We are not to be of the world, but we live in this world and isolating ourselves is not a ministry.

Remember the story of Elijah in I Kings chapter 19. He just defeated the prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel. A great victory as God displayed His power before Elijah and the people.

Then wicked queen Jezebel heard that Elijah killed her prophets. Understand that she was queen in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, her husband was wicked Ahab, the Demonic Duo of the Old Testament you might say.

And Jezebel puts a death sentence upon Elijah, and he flees for his life. He just defeated all these false prophets and now one woman had him on the run. What happened?

He took his eyes off the Lord and placed them on the situation, and he ran away!

He is hiding in a cave and please understand, as far as I can tell, there are no cave ministries!

And it is interesting because God asks Elijah a question and then there is the response back by Elijah.

God said, *“What are you doing here?”*

Please understand that God did not ask Elijah, *“Why are you here?”*

And we see that Elijah has no problem telling God why he is down there in this cave, but he never answers the question of what he was doing down in this cave!

And what we see here is that Elijah has this little pity party for himself, and tells God that no one is left but him, and now they want to kill him.

That is not true, God has seven thousand who did not bow their knee to Baal! But for Elijah, he thinks that he is the only one!

His mentality was this, *“Nobody loves you Lord like me and now they want to kill me!”*

How sad but how untrue!

And here’s the thing, God never called Elijah to be a **CAVE MAN**, but a **CALLED MAN!**

What is Elijah really doing in this cave?

What is Elijah accomplishing down in this cave?

The only answer is ***NOTHING!***

We can behave like Elijah many times and have ourselves a little pity party! We can isolate ourselves in the cave of our homes, or the cave of our lives and not let anyone in because we don't want to come into contact with anyone.

We might think that no one loves God like we do and thus, what is the use. And the problem is, the more you stay in this cave of self-pity the worse it is going to get.

The only solution is to turn to God and get up and move, do something for the Lord because that is why you were created, for His good pleasure not yours!

And I will tell you this, when you do what you were created for, there truly is joy, peace, there are those times of refreshing but we have to get our eyes off of self and get up and move as we seek direction from the Lord!

Like I have said, we are not called to be ***CAVE MEN***, but ***CALLED MEN OR CALLED WOMEN!*** May we not forget that!

We need to reach out to people, come in contact with their lives so that we can understand where they are at, and the Holy Spirit can show us what they need!

Here we see that Jesus started out on the physical level, "**Give Me a drink.**"

And now moves on into a deeper issue, the spiritual level, "**living water.**"

And here is a great witnessing tool. Jesus drew this woman into a conversation and in doing so she was curious about what He was saying.

You don't want to preach to people, you want to draw them into a conversation about the things of God, who Jesus is, what God has for them, so they can ask questions, talk about these things. It is a conversation!

Now this “**living water**” that Jesus spoke of was, in ancient times called a spring because the water bubbled up from the ground.

But Jesus was not speaking of a spring of water but the spiritual water that will quench your spiritual thirst and give to you everlasting life!

And the “**living water**” that Jesus was speaking of here is God Himself, the fountain of living waters.

We see this spoken of in Jeremiah 2:13, which says, “**For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water.**”

Also, in Jeremiah 17:13 we see the Lord spoken of as the fountain of living waters, “**O Lord, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. ‘Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken the Lord, The fountain of living waters.’**”

We have seen – ***GOD’S DIRECTION!***

We need to be open to where God is directing us to go, the people He wants us to meet, the things we need to say.

We have seen – ***AN OPEN HEART!***

We need to have an open heart because God will bring people, all kinds of people into our lives and we need to not close ourselves off from them but love them with the love of Jesus Christ.

We have seen – ***REACHING OUT!***

We need to reach out to people, and we are not reaching out to righteous people, but sinners, so don't close yourself off from them because of who they are, what they look like, the things that they say.

We have seen – ***THE SHARING!***

We are to share with them the living water, Jesus Christ. And we will deal more with this living water next time. But don't negate the message, it is what they need to hear!

Let me close with these words. We are told,

A ministering heart is an expansive heart that ministers when it is weary.

A ministering heart is so filled with love that it crosses the normal barriers of life and reaches out.

A ministering heart sees the divine potential in its relationships.

It is an enlarged heart, and it is remarkably vulnerable, just as Christ's was. This is not a safe path, but it is the only way to go.

As C. S. Lewis wrote:

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in the casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations [distresses] of love is Hell.

- R. Kent Hughes, John – That You May Believe, p. 103

Remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”** John 3:16-17.

May we have that same kind of love for the lost and even for the saved and let them see our love for them is a love that is from God for them!