

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Who's Your One? Series

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

John 4:1-42

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Today, I will continue the series of sermons entitled “Who’s Your One?” This is a campaign we are having about finding one person to reach for Jesus.

Today’s message has five points:

- Jesus went out of his way.
- Jesus did not make excuses.
- Jesus was intentional about the message.
- Jesus saw potential.
- Jesus reaped the harvest.

1-JESUS WENT OUT OF HIS WAY

SCRIPTURE: John 4:1-4

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria.

EXPLANATION: Jesus’s ministry began to attract the attention and criticism of the Pharisees in Judea. So, he decided it was time to head back to Galilee for a while. Most Jews would have crossed the Jordan River and traveled north, then crossed the Jordan again to head into Galilee. They would have traveled this indirect route in order to avoid Samaria because the Jews and the Samaritans did not get along. In fact, their relationship was based on a long-standing, deep-seated distaste for one another. To understand this hatred, we need a little history lesson.

Years earlier, the Israelites were divided into two kingdoms. The country of Assyria defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel and took most of the people captive. They left behind the poorest. Think about that. Those people were considered so worthless that even the enemy did not want them.

The Assyrians then imported other foreign captives into the area. These foreigners brought their false gods with them. This remnant of Israelites, which came to be known as Samaritans, began to intermarry with the foreigners and to practice idolatry. Eventually, the idolatry decreased, but they picked up some worship practices that were not in line with God's commands.

A complete oversimplification of the whole situation is that many years later the Jews were no longer under captivity of the Assyrians. Now, among the descendants of Abraham, there were two groups of Jews, those who called themselves Jews and those who had mixed with other groups and were called Samaritans.

The Jews and the Samaritans feuded over several things, and the Jews burned down their Samaritan temple. By the time of Jesus, both groups hated each other with equal intensity and avoided each other at all costs.

But not Jesus. Verse 4 says that Jesus had to go through Samaria. He did not have to go through Samaria in order to get to Galilee. He did not have to go through Samaria because of some dire need that he or his disciples had. He had to go through Samaria because he had a divine appointment.

- Jesus went out of his way.

2-JESUS DID NOT MAKE EXCUSES

SCRIPTURE: John 4:5-10

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.⁷ 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.) 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.) 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.”

EXPLANATION: In this one exchange, Jesus overcame cultural, religious, and sexual barriers. As a female, the Samaritan woman would have been unaccustomed to being spoken to by a male in public, much less by a Jewish male. It was simply unheard of. In addition, as we will learn in a minute, there is most likely a reason she came to the well by herself at the hottest part of the day. Suffice it to say, this woman was probably trying to avoid as many people as she could. She could not have known that the man who was talking to her was not just any man. He was the Savior, and he did not just happen to be there that day. He came to see her. Jesus did not allow societal expectations to stop him from doing his Father’s will.

- Jesus went out of his way.
- Jesus did not make excuses.

JESUS WAS INTENTIONAL ABOUT THE MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE: John 4:11-26

“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?” ¹³ 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.” 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.” ¹⁶ 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.” ¹⁹ “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.” ²¹ “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

worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” ²⁵ 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.”

EXPLANATION: Jesus captured the woman’s attention and then he started to reel her in, but when he got personal, she balked. Like many of us, when the conversation became uncomfortable, she redirected. She was interested in the Living Water until Jesus addressed the issue of her sin. Then she changed the subject. It’s interesting that she brought up the most divisive point of contention between the Jews and the Samaritans—the place of worship. Was she trying to make Jesus mad? Maybe that was her way of trying to end the conversation. Regardless, Jesus did not let her off the hook. He knew what needed to be said, and he brought the conversation right back to himself. Interestingly, this proclamation is one of Jesus’s most direct claims to messiahship. He did not waste any words.

ILLUSTRATION: Last week a friend called me while on her way to visit her grandmother in Chattanooga. She wanted some tips on how to witness to her grandmother whose health was declining rapidly, and she only had a few days at most. I told her to cut to the chase and ask if she had ever asked for forgiveness of her sins and trusted Jesus as Savior. Jesus cut to the chase with this woman; he did not waste any time.

- Jesus went out of his way.
- Jesus did not make excuses.
- Jesus was intentional about the message.

4-JESUS SAW POTENTIAL

SCRIPTURE: John 4:27-38

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸ 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. ³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” ³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” ³³ Then his disciples said to

each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”³⁴ “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.³⁷ Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true.³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

EXPLANATION: We do not know a lot about the city of Sychar other than an estimated geographic location and the fact that it was populated with Samaritans. It’s unlikely, however, that it was a particularly large or well-known city simply because of the way John described it as “a town in Samaria called Sychar.” If the original readers of this book had known about the town, it’s unlikely he would have phrased it this way. I mean, we don’t say “Nashville, the city in Middle Tennessee.” We just call Nashville by its name because everyone who lives near Nashville knows about it.

The Bible doesn’t tell us what the disciples thought about the people of Sychar, but given the personalities of these men and what we know from other passages, we can guess. For example, in the book of Luke, there is an instance where James and John asked Jesus for permission to call down lightning and incinerate a Samaritan town. It’s probably safe to say that none of the disciples were thrilled about being in this place at this time. They may have even been a little frustrated that they had to do business with these “inferior” people. So when they saw Jesus talking to a woman and then when Jesus refused to eat the food that they had brought him, they were confused. Jesus tried to set them straight.

In that town of Sychar, in the country of Samaria, there was not just one woman but a whole community of people who needed him just as much as they did. When Jesus looked at the woman at the well, he saw all the wives, mothers, and daughters who needed him. He knew that the distant buildings of Sychar represented a town of men, women, and children who were lost and needed a Savior. Jesus did not see a group that was less than worthy. Jesus saw people he loved, people who needed salvation, people he was willing to die for.

- Jesus went out of his way.

- Jesus did not make excuses.
- Jesus was intentional about the message.
- Jesus saw potential.

5-JESUS REAPED A HARVEST

SCRIPTURE: John 4:39-42

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."

EXPLANATION: The Woman at the Well, the one who came in the scorching heat in the middle of the day, the one with the less-than-pristine reputation, she heard what Jesus had to say and what did she do? She left her water jugs behind and ran right into the middle of that busy street square to tell the townspeople the news. She did not have all the answers. She was not even quite sure herself, but she knew enough to know that she wanted to know more. She knew enough to point others to the one who called himself Messiah.

- Jesus went out of his way.
- Jesus did not make excuses.
- Jesus was intentional about his message.
- Jesus saw potential.
- Jesus reaped the harvest.

ILLUSTRATION: Dwight was a 17-year-old man working in his uncle's shoe store. As part of his employment, Dwight's uncle required him to go to church. Dwight caught the attention of a Sunday school teacher, a man named Edward Kimbell. Mr. Kimbell took the time to not only teach Dwight but to personally talk to him about God's love. As a result of Mr. Kimbell's influence, Dwight became a believer and went on to become one of the most famous American evangelists. DL Moody founded a church, two schools for children, as well as the Moody Bible Institute and Moody Publishers. His legacy and work for the Kingdom continue to this day.

APPLICATION: On a hot day so many years ago, the Samaritan Woman was Jesus's one. Many, many years later, DL Moody was Edward Kimbell's one.

- If we go out of our way...
- If we do not make excuses...
- If we are intentional about the message...
- If we see the potential...
- We can see a harvest of souls reached for Christ's sake. It only takes one. Who's your one?

INVITATION: Maybe you are here today, and you relate to the Woman at the Well. Maybe you are the one in the story who does not know Jesus. The altar is open. I would love to tell you more about our Messiah. If you are a Christian, then ask yourself, who are you more like—Jesus, whose heart was set on sharing the gospel with the lost, or the disciples who were more concerned with their physical needs? Everybody has at least one - one person God has put in your path, one person who needs to hear from you about our Lord. I would encourage you to come forward and pray about who God wants you to tell about his love.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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