

A High Noon Showdown with Jesus, part 2

(John 4:15-26)

(preached 7/29/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

As a kid, I loved magic.

My dad had a few really good coin tricks, and it really hooked me into it.

There were a couple magic shops in Greenville, and I was able to buy a few really good tricks...

But as it turns out, I ended up being a horrible magician..

First, illusions require a lot of practice and I really didn't want to do that..

But worse yet, I couldn't keep the secrets to the tricks hidden.

Most every time, I would fool someone and then immediately show them how I did it.

Part of the success of magic is keeping the secrets hidden, but I just couldn't help myself..

It was almost like telling them the secret to the trick was just as satisfying as fooling them..

In terms of sharing the gospel with people, that comes in handy.

In fact, the secret to being saved should never be hidden from people..

I can think of nothing worse than showing people their lostness but never showing them how to be saved..

In fact, evangelism should always lead to Christ as Savior and Lord..

And there is no better example of that anywhere than Jesus' evangelistic encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well...

He began a conversation with her...

Led it in a spiritual direction and then led her directly to the truth that would save her..

And that truth is verse 26 where Jesus tells her that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world..

All evangelism must start the secret of salvation and that is faith alone in Christ alone..

We are not magicians in our evangelism..

We are people who start conversations with the express purpose of giving the secret on how to get to heaven..

Last week, we got through verses 1-14 in this incredible scene..

As a quick review, let me read verses 1-6 of John 4..

1 Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. 4 And He had to pass through Samaria. 5 So He *came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; 6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about [a]the sixth hour.

Part of good Bible study is always having a Bible atlas near you as you read.

God inspired the men who wrote the Bible to give up geographic information all throughout the Scriptures that help paint the picture of where biblical events happened.

And as we learned last week, the geography of Israel in Jesus' day is often helpful and adds a lot to what we read in the gospels...

For instance, Jesus is just beginning ministry in the opening chapters of John's gospel.

He is from Nazareth in northern Israel, where he spent of his first 3 decades of life..

But as He entered ministry, he first went south to an area around the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist..

Then he went back north with a few of his followers to do his first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee..

Then he headed back to southern Israel to observe Passover and that is where he stayed for half of John 2 and all of John 3...

But as John 4 begins, Jesus is headed north again.

Tension are high in the south.

The religious leaders are confronted him and John the Baptist about their preaching and baptizing..

Even some of John the Baptist's followers are getting jealous of Jesus...

So heads back to the northern region of Israel known as Galilee..

But to get to Galilee in the most efficient manner will take him through the middle region of Israel known as Samaria, which is a region that most Jews avoided.

Samaria was home to what many considered a half breed of Jews..

Most of the people who lived there were descendants of Jews that had intermarried with unbelieving pagans, which was clearly a violation of God's law...

As a result, Samaritans were despised by Jews.

But Jesus isn't racist...

Jesus isn't concerned about the skin color or culture of someone, Jesus is concerned about those who are lost..

And going through Samaria is not only the shortest way to Galilee, it is also a great evangelistic opportunity..

The Samaritans were lost and Jesus came to seek and save the lost..

So he headed north through Samaria, and after walking for 6 hours, he and the disciples with him were exhausted.

As result, they stop near Jacob's well in Sychar, which is in the heart of Samaria.

The disciples head to town to look for food, and Jesus sits down by the well..

Verse 7..

*7 There *came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus *said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 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.) 10 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." 11 She *said to Him, "[b]Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? 12 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?" 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 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."*

As Jesus sits, a Samaritan woman approaches and Jesus strikes up a conversation.

The woman tries to end it by questioning why a Jewish man like Jesus would speak to her, but Jesus shows compassion and patience and eventually turns the conversation into a spiritual one..

Though he is speaking of salvation by comparing it to living water that never leaves you thirsty, the woman simply can't understand...

And we left off last week in verse 14 with Jesus continuing to steer this conversation in a spiritual direction by now using the phrase eternal life to get the woman's attention...

So how is this Samaritan woman going to respond?

This leads us to verse 15...

IV. The Authority of Christ (15-26)

15 The woman *said to Him, “[c]Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.”

Though we can’t be sure, this seems to be a sarcastic response from the woman..

Ok, buddy, I am not sure how crazy you are talking about this living water, but I will pay along..

Just give me this water so I dont have to come out here everyday to get water at high noon...

And as she is probably walking away to head back to her home, Jesus drops this bombshell...

Verse 16...

16 He *said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.” 17 The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus *said to her, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.”

Now put yourself in the woman’s shoes..

You have never met this guy before.

You have tried to avoid talking to him..

You have amused him by playing along with his crazy talk of living water...

But now as you are ready to head home, this man gives you an accurate rundown of your entire life up to this point...

You have had 5 husbands, 5 divorces, and now living with a man out of wedlock...

Now, let's stop right there and make a couple mental notes as we do evangelism..

First, we aren't equipped to know what Jesus knows in evangelism..

We can't know people's backgrounds with exact accuracy like Jesus...

But that doesn't mean that something we say won't get their attention..

Ultimately, the Lord must get their attention by opening their ears and hearts to the gospel...

But even then, he may use us and our words to help them see their need of salvation...

And that is really all Jesus is doing here..

Everyone is carrying the weight of sin around..

It doesn't matter if a person has had 5 spouses and 5 divorces...

What matters is that everyone feels the weight of sin in their lives..

God has written his law on their hearts..

God has given them a conscience..

And his law combined with their conscience screams out their guilt all the time..

The reason that Jesus calls out this woman in here sin is to alert her to her need of salvation...

Well, it definitely gets her attention...

Verse 19...

19 The woman *said to Him, “[d]Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

In once statement to this woman, Jesus has gone from a weird stranger talking about living water to a prophet of God..

Finally, the woman begins to speak of spiritual things..

She is no longer confused about a well and living water, she now sees this man as speaking to her for God..

He is not just another crazy Jewish man that she shouldn't be talking to..

She now recognizes that God has come to her with one of his prophets...

What she doesn't know is that she is speaking to God's ultimate prophet, priest, and King..

In fact, God is speaking to her face to face..

And as she feels the weight of her sin, she senses a need to do something...

Let's read verse 20...

20 Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Now, where does this statement come from and what is it doing here?

This is where we need to understand the heart of lost people..

When the weight of sin is bearing down on someone's soul, the natural reaction of the sinner is to try and figure out how to get rid of that weight..

In other words, sinners want to “do something” to ease the burden of sin..

That is why people will come under conviction and head to church for a few Sundays in hopes of easing their conscience..

And what happens is this..

They come.

They may even listen..

But if they don't repent and trust Christ to forgive those sins, they will grow tired of coming and often say, “Well, I didn't get nothing out of church so I stopped going.”

Let me be clear.

Church doesn't exist for you to get something out of it..

The church exists for you to put something in it..

The church exists for you to grow in your faith and serve the Lord through it..

There is nothing magical here.

Someone once said that you can't put a bike in a garage and hope it becomes a car..

In the same way that you can't sit a lost person in a church and hope they become a Christian...

Salvation is not a matter of doing something...

However, that is what this woman thinks so she asks Jesus about how to worship God..

In that day, the Jews had the temple in Jerusalem and the Samaritans had a temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria..

And her comment here to Jesus is where does she need to go to get right with God..

Which temple is the right one to go to?

In other words, which religion is right?

Is the religions of her Samaritan ancestors right or it is the religion of the Jews in Jerusalem?

This lady senses her need to worship God but doesn't know where to go..

Let's listen to how Jesus answers this very important question..

Verse 21...

21 Jesus *said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 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. 24 God is [e]spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The summation of what Jesus says here is simple..

True worship, true salvation, true forgiveness is not about a place in the world..

In fact, the temple in Jerusalem and the temple on Mount Gerizim are both going to be abolished in a few short years...

In AD 70, the Romans will ransack Jerusalem and destroy the temple there, and they will head north and destroy the Samaritan temple as well...

Which is exactly what Jesus means in verse 21...

There is coming a day when there wont be any worship at either temple..

But more important than that...

True worship, true salvation is not dependent upon a place, a ritual, a ceremony...

This is why I am not a big fan of long drawn out altar calls at the end of church services..

Salvation doesn't happen only between 11:55 AM and 12 PM at the front of the church with the pastor...

In fact, there have probably been a lot of false conversions there simple because people believe that salvation only occurs at church as part of some ritual tradition of shaking the preacher's hand after the service.

Now, that doesn't mean that I am opposed to talking to people after a service...

It is often a good time to speak to people because the word preached is often very convicting..

But it does mean that we shouldn't the miracle of salvation only to occur as part of some man-made tradition...

You see true worship and true salvation which is what this woman needs is always a matter of the heart...

Salvation is a result of a heart turning from sin in repentance and turning to God in faith...

Worship is a result of a heart that is obedient and full of love for Christ...

Which means that salvation and worship can happen anywhere a human heart is willing to repent and believe in Christ..

This woman doesn't need a temple to get her life right with God...

She needs to offer her heart to the Lord in faith and worship..

Now, what you need to know is that this woman thought she had truly worshipped God before..

But listen to Jesus in verse 22..

22 You worship what you do not know;

What an incredible statement by Jesus..

Again, he is challenging her spiritually..

She had been to the temple in Samaria..

She had offered what she thought was worship..

But if you worship the wrong God, it isn't worship at all..

There will many people who leave churches today and feel that they worshipped the Lord..

But worship never takes place in a heart of unbelief..

You may pray.

You may sing.

You may give.

You may listen to the message.

But if you haven't repented and believed the gospel, you are worshipping what you do not know...

Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Muslims, Buddhists are some of the most devout people you will meet, but their worship is useless...

They are offering worship to a god who doesn't exist..

The same is true of the Roman Catholic church..

All the robes, all the chanting, all the music, all the ceremony, all the relics, all the tradition and ritual is a waste of time..

They are worshipping a god that they don't know because their god doesn't exist..

The same would be true of Jews today...

Their long black robes.

Their strict diets.

Their sabbath laws are all meaningless..

They might as well be sleeping in..

They don't know God because they don't know his Son...

And Jesus is right...

Salvation is of the Jews...

This doesn't mean that the Jew are saved...

It simply means that salvation is possible because of the Jewish people..

They were given the Word of God.

Their nation brought Messiah into the world..

Yet all of their blessings are going away because the Jews are going to reject Jesus...

And as result, their temple will fall...

Their way of life will be destroyed..

Their nation will be wiped out..

And all of that is seen at the cross when Jesus dies and the veil in the temple is torn in two...

That is the death of the Jewish religion..

All sacrifices to cover sin are no more since the one true sacrifice has come..

All access to God through the holy of holies is no more since Jesus is now the only access to God..

Jesus brought in an era of worship that is internal more than external...

His followers will be the temple of God..

His followers will worship from the heart..

His followers will be filled with the Holy Spirit and have access to the truth of God..

This is the point of verse 23...

23 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

This is the foundation of true worship..

I tell people all the time..

This building is not special.

Yes, we love it because it allows the church to get together and learn and enjoy fellowship but this building doesn't cause anyone to worship..

It is not holy ground...

God is not more present here..

It is not the only place to worship..

Worship happens anywhere the heart is filled with adoration of who God is..

And worship is not just an emotional reaction to music or singing or prayer..

Worship is more intellectual than emotional..

Worship happens when your love of God is increased and that most often happens in the context of learning more about the nature of God..

In my life, my greatest worship happens as I prepare for sermons or listen to great sermons..

People often break up church services into worship and then preaching, but that is so incorrect...

Worship occurs in the context of preaching..

That is not say you only worship as you hear the Word of God...

You can worship through songs of truth about God..

You can worship by giving...

You can worship by serving..

But much worship occurs as the word of God is explained to you and increases your undemanding and love of God.

Worship occurs anywhere and anytime our hearts connect with the heart of God..

Now as great as these verses are and as full of truth as they are, we must limit our time and return to the scene of all this information...

How is the Samaritan woman going to respond to this side that she doesn't need a temple to have her sins forgiven?

Verse 25..

25 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."

In other words, "look, this conversation with you has been very helpful."

I know you are a prophet..

I know you are speaking truth..

But she isn't quite convinced of just who this man is and what is happening to her, so she looks for a way out..

Look, this is all great but there is coming a greater prophet called the Christ, and when he gets here...

I will deal with all of these things in my life..

I have seen people react almost exactly like this in the world..

I have shared the truth of the gospel with people, and they have listened...

They have understood their own sin..

They have admitted that they were lost and headed to hell...

But even in spite of all of that, they will still put off a decision for Christ..

I have heard things like...

“Let me sleep on it.”

Let me think about it.

Let me talk to someone else..

This is the sinner under conviction...

Sees his sins..

Knows the truth...

But is so prideful that he would rather leave than repent..

Well, Jesus drops a final bombshell on this lady in verse 26..

26 Jesus *said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

In other words, “lady, there is no need to wait.”

I am that Christ..

I am the Messiah.

This is not something to put off.

You have heard the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth...

There is nowhere to run..

Life and death is now before you.

Which will you choose?

What does this Samaritan woman do?

Well, let's wait to next week to find out...

Conclusion

Let me offer a few notes to end our time together..

#1 - Is your worship from the heart?

There are so many people today running so many places looking for a better place to worship God..

Look, are some churches better than others?

Absolutely.

But generally speaking, better worship is not a matter of a place but a matter of the heart.

We live in a culture that is so emotional..

People value feelings over facts, and that leads to all sorts of issues...

People go to churches looking for goosebumps when they should be looking for how well the Bible is taught..

As a result, there are scores of people who look for better worship but never look at their own hearts..

Worshippers that focuses on externals will check out the music of a church..

They will check out the furniture of the church or the look of the church..

Yet, the biggest hindrance to worship is not what is around you but rather what is inside you..

A heart that is far from God will never be brought closer by things on the outside..

And a heart that is near to God will never be separated by what is outside either..

Worship is a matter of your heart connecting to the heart of God..

#2 - Is your evangelism convicting?

Last week, we admitted that sharing the gospel is hard.

It is awkward.

It is uncomfortable.

But there is another element that we saw today that only adds to the discomfort of it..

Jesus called out this woman's sin.

There is a tendency in our evangelism to never confront people, which is really a result of so many weak pulpits that never confront sin...

Yet, the gospel is not the gospel unless it calls people to repentance..

This lady needed to turn from her sin...

Yes, Jesus was compassionate to her..

Yes, Jesus was patient with her..

But ultimately, Jesus confronted her in her sin...

And he also called her to make a decision by revealing himself to her..

I would simply say this...

In your evangelism, leave the sinner with a decision to make..

Call them to a verdict..

Help them to see the urgency of their lostness..

And offer them a way out..

Jesus was gentle and kind and compassionate, but Jesus was not a coward.

And we can't be cowards as we share the gospel...

Today is the day to repent of your sin and believe in Christ, and we can't be afraid to tell people that..

May God give us grace to do just that...

Let us pray..