

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John

Lesson #33
The Journey
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The Gospel of John

- Today we will see Jesus the man talking to a woman and Jesus the Jew talking to a Samaritan, both of these actions were no-nos in his day.
- It seems that societal protocols did not mean that much to Jesus – at least not on this occasion.
- Jesus was perfect concerning the content of his conversations with the people he met – would to God we were all as wise.

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We know where Jesus’s evangelistic efforts ended up, (with a mass conversion of many Samaritans) but it is good to know where his effort began. When we get to verse #7, we will see in Jesus’ evangelistic style what J.C. Ryle cites as an act of friendly aggression.

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The Gospel of John

- John 4:5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)
- Jesus is going through Samaria to Galilee because there is a woman there whose heart is open. (think Lydia in Acts 16)

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- We talked last week about Samaria and its people and how they came to be.
- In Jesus' day the Samaritans were treated with hostility by the Jews partly because of their mixed ethnicity.
- We call this sort of discrimination racism today, but the correct label should probably be ethnicism as there is but one race, the human race.

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Back to the Samaritans

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- Whatever name you give it, the treatment of the Samaritans was shameful, especially from ones wearing the mantle of “God’s chosen people”.
- This would be comparable to those who claimed Christ 200 years ago who also enslaved Africans – we look at that today and say, “what were you thinking?”.
- It becomes evident the Jewish people of Jesus’ day were a mess – morally as well as religiously.

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- So, when Jesus decides to travel through central Samaria and speak with a Samaritan woman he was breaking with the social norms for his day.
- Jesus treated ethnic boundaries like all who follow him should – he pretty much ignored all such false barriers as should we.
- The Samaritans were just as much in need of a Savior as the Jews and the Jews were just as unworthy of one as the Samaritans were. (sounds equal to me)

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- Now to the question J.C. Ryle labeled as “as an act of friendly aggression” – “give me a drink”.
- Culturally Jesus and the woman were not peers – he was a Jew, and she was a Samaritan, he was a man, and she was a woman.
- Forget that these separators were but human ideas, in the mind of the woman at the well they were real.

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- There is no way she is going to open a conversation with him, she felt the boundaries and would not have breached them.
- But for Jesus, those boundaries did not exist so he will do the unexpected – he will open the conversation that she needed but would not go near.
- “Give me a drink” is not code for some deep spiritual concept or strategy – it was but a doorway to the conversation he really wanted to have with her.

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- He may have had a strategy for the conversation so the fact that they were meeting at a well may have driven the question. (or were they meeting at a well because of the question he wanted to ask?)
- Looking to model our evangelistic efforts after his has serious limits as we do not know in advance what our subject may say.
- What we can do is look for principles – or perhaps concepts like “ask a leading question”.

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- Can you imagine the thoughts of Jesus as he opens his mouth to speak – he knows she will respond and believe! (she is but seconds from eternal life)
- Jesus knew Nicodemus was not ready to believe when they spoke in the night, but he spoke anyway. **(without planting seeds there is no harvest)**
- We never know another’s response so the rule for us should probably be “when in doubt, speak”.

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Many times, I have wanted to open an evangelistic conversation with others but failed to do so because I didn’t want to offend them and thus close the door forever. However, given the gravity of the situation, shouldn’t such thoughts be rejected? They should be rejected because they include the false assumptions that I am the only one who can reach this person, and that the seed I sow isn’t worth losing the relationship over.

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When I hesitate to evangelize for fear of losing the relationship, could it be true that what I really fear is what I would miss out on if my words cost the relationship?

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Given that my words could cast the Lord in a bad light, should there be room in my thinking for a strategy like, "first, do no harm"?

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The questions become easier if I surrender daily to the Holy Spirit and be ready to follow wherever he leads.

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- The setting is noon time (the 6th hour) with Jesus sitting by the well and being omniscient he was ready for the woman to come.
- He is tired – this of course points to his humanity which is no minor point at all but is not the point John wants to convey at this point.
- Jesus sent his disciples away so that he could meet with her alone – not a good strategy for men with sin natures, but it will be just fine for the Son of God.

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- He requests a drink – and she responds with a question of her own.
- The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)
- Quick sidebar, **no dealings** means “They don’t use the same utensils”, so in context he was also asking to drink from her cup and become ceremonially unclean. 22

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- She stands up to him – a skill she probably developed over time as men tend to be aggressive with loose women.
- Here is the Son of God, in all of his innocence, just asking for a drink of water and she gets a bit testy.
- Why would a Jew want some filthy Samaritan woman to give him a drink from her cup? 23

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Observation #1

Jesus is a man, specifically a Jew.

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- John 4:10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”
- So now he makes a similar leap with her very much like he did when he blurted out, “unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” with Nicodemus.

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- From this next step in the exchange, we learn that **we must be prepared to go where the conversation takes us.**
- In Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus, he was more abstract speaking of the wind blowing wherever it will and serpents on poles.
- With this woman he is going to identify himself as the Messiah in very short order.

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- He reverses their roles – he started out asking for a drink and now seeks to convince her that she is the one who should be thirsty.
- And he is already turning the conversation to the one sidedness of salvation – **“if you knew the gift”**.
- He is going to offer her something she probably got little of because of her reputation – grace.

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- Aside from Christianity, all of the world's religions are false ones – they are based on elaborate systems of quid pro quo. (this, for that)
- They all appeal to the flesh because mankind generally does not believe in a free anything – the “hook” for the target is the pride of contributing.
- The devil says, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” (Quid, Pro, Quo)

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Questions?

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