

## **Lessons from the Woman at the Well**

### **Bramalea Baptist Church**

### **Sept. 7, 2014**

Last Sunday, Stephen looked at the story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well. I love this story because it portrays beautifully what can happen in the life of any person when they encounter Jesus. This morning we'll continue to look at the same story, specifically the end of the story. Let's see what we can learn from the response of the Samaritan woman when she comes to the realization that Jesus is the Messiah. Turn your Bibles to John 4:25.

**The woman said, "I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."**

The Samaritan woman has just had a lengthy conversation with the Messiah himself. This is, in fact, the longest recorded one on one conversation that Jesus has with anyone. She reveals that she expects that Messiah will come and that things will be made clear. Jesus says, "I am he." I'm the guy. She has just had a personal conversation with Messiah, she knows him and he knows her. What about you, do you know Him?

#### **1. RELATIONSHIP - You must know Jesus.**

Relationships are vital. God has wired us for personal relationships, with one another and with God. Think back if you will to the story of creation in Genesis. God created us – man and woman – to have a relationship with him. In his book *God Enters – Stage Left*, Tim Day says this, **"God creates a man and a woman, who together make up a beautiful relational and spiritual picture of God. And he does it not to show everyone who is boss. He does it to create friends."** He goes on to say, **"Love is the only guide for their lives as they look forward to an every-deepening experience of joy and intimacy with God and with each other."**

Do you know Jesus? Do you really know him? I'm not talking about superficial knowledge about him; I'm talking about an intimate relationship, a deep friendship with him. If you want to be able to reach others in the name of Jesus, **you must know Jesus.**

Some of us get a bit "weirded-out" when we toss around words like "deep" and "intimate" when it comes to relationships, including our relationship with Jesus. I've heard people say things – particularly guys - like, "I'm not into all that warm, fuzzy, touchy, feely stuff." Well guess what, Jesus is and he isn't weirded-out, it's what he desires!

**Knowing facts about Jesus is enough. Going to church every week is not enough. Being part of the “religion” called Christianity is enough.** If you believe that any of these things are enough for you, you are robbing yourself of the most important relationship you will ever have! Jesus desires a deep, intimate, all-in relationship with you.

This summer, Lisa and I had the joy of attending a five-day “Soul Care” retreat with eleven other pastoral couples. We were in a beautiful setting in north-central Michigan. The whole purpose of the five days was this, to renew and refresh your relationship with your spouse and with Jesus. There was no agenda, no speakers we had to listen to, no workshops we had to attend. We had to observe a media fast – no TV, no internet, no computer, no cell phones unless absolutely necessary. No checking e-mails or working on church related stuff.

This was one of the most joyous and fulfilling times Lisa and I have ever spent away. We made some great friends, we spent times praying with and for one another, laughing and dreaming together and – most important – deepening our relationship with Jesus.

We’re wired for relationship and a relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship you will ever have. He wants a deep, intimate, all-relationship with you.

The depth of your relationship with Jesus is often revealed in your priorities.  
**Jesus must be your priority.**

## **2. PRIORITY - Jesus must be your priority**

As we continue in verse 28, we read, **“Then leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’”** In the Message it reads, **“In her confusion she left her water pot. Back in the village she told the people, ‘Come and see a man who knew all about the things I did, who knows me inside and out. Do you think he could be the Messiah?’”**

“In her confusion she left her water pot.” Jesus has a way of doing that doesn’t he? When you truly encounter Jesus he turns your world upside down. Remember, the woman had come to town with an important task, to get water. Her world was so turned on its head by Jesus that she completely forgot about her task and rushed back to the village to tell other about her encounter.

When was the last time your world was turned upside down this way? When was the last time you allowed Jesus the time to turn your world upside down?

We lead very busy lives as North Americans. As such we are called to prioritize. It's sounds very reasonable. We think of all the things we need to accomplish and we rank their importance and allot a certain amount of time to them. Where does Jesus rank on your list of priorities? How much time have you allotted him?

It may seem crass to ask where Jesus ranks in your priorities but at the end of the day, many people who profess to be believers give very little time to Jesus. You may say, "But Pastor, I have three kids, a business to run, then there's hockey practice and piano lessons, not to mention trying to fit in time with my spouse." I hear you, but here's the thing, **Jesus must be your priority – period.**

If you want to encounter Jesus in confusing, turn your world upside down ways, you must make room for him in your life; **let him own your time.** First, carve out some time, regular time just for you and him. Spend time in his word, in prayer, or simply sitting in quiet with him. In order to know someone deeply, you must spend time with them. This is true of our human relationships and it is true of our relationship with Jesus.

Second, give him all of your time. What do I mean by this? Let him be in the time you spend with your kids, the time you spend running your business, the time you spend with your spouse or your friends. Make him the priority in everything you do and your relationship with him will flourish and you'll see him change your life in amazing ways.

### **3. WITNESS - Share your stories about your relationship with Jesus.**

Do you get excited to tell people about great events in your life? When Lisa and I found out not too long ago that we were going to be grandparents – just a little disclaimer, it is our son, Brandon and his wife Sarah that are having a baby, not Brittany and Dean – we couldn't wait to tell people. I know most if not all of you have had exciting events in your lives that you couldn't wait to share with others. What about the stories about your relationship with Jesus? Are you excited to share those stories?

<sup>29</sup> **"Then leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.'"**

The Samaritan woman was a "witness". The word witness is defined like this, as a verb it means, *"to see something happen; to experience important events."* As a noun it means, *"an individual who personally sees or experiences a thing."* When someone goes to court as a witness they tell the story of what they have seen or experienced regarding a specific event or events.

The Samaritan Woman was excited to go back to her town and tell others about Jesus and her encounter with him. If you know Jesus and have made him the priority in your life, my hunch is that you have some incredible stories to share. You too need to be a witness. **Share your stories about your relationship with Jesus.**

A couple of weeks ago, Stephen shared this quote. ***“Christians and non-Christians have something in common. We’re both uptight about evangelism. Christians are afraid of offending, while non-Christians are afraid of being assaulted.”*** Becky Pippert Molenhouse

Let me give you a personal example that paints a picture of this. When I was doing graduate work in opera, I had a colleague who was a born-again Christian. She told me, and others repeatedly that we needed to come to her church; we needed get baptized. She talked about doctrine and told us what we needed to think. I have no doubt that she was sincere and trying to share her faith, but she was offensive and obnoxious. That is the assault that non-Christians are afraid of. She didn’t share her story. She didn’t speak of what Jesus meant to her, how he had intersected and changed her life. She didn’t exhibit the love and grace of Jesus. All I saw and heard was judgment and condemnation. All it did for me was to convince me that I would never be one of those Christians.

The Samaritan Woman by contrast excitedly spoke of her personal encounter – she told her story. She had a long conversation with Jesus about worship. But she didn’t come back to her village and say, *“You’ll never believe it! I just had the most amazing theological discourse about the laws of religious worship and the controversy that exists between our worship and the worship of the Jewish people.”* No. She talked about her personal encounter. She said, **“Come and see this man who told me everything I ever did”, the man who knew me inside and out**” as The Message puts it. It was the personal aspect of her conversation that impacted her and that she shared.

Don’t forget, she came to draw water at a different time from most women because of her poor reputation. She was the subject of gossip. She’d had five husbands and was now living with a sixth man – a truth that Jesus revealed he already knew. There are numerous words that could be used to describe her, none of which are pretty.

I don’t know what the woman might have been thinking as she headed back toward her village, but we don’t read of any hint of the woman worrying about her reputation. If Jesus has transformed your life, don’t let Satan use your past to prevent you from sharing your story with others. Don’t listen to the little voice that sometimes says, “If they knew about your past, if they knew what you had done...”

Use the changes that Jesus has brought about in your life to bring him glory. One of the things God has taught me and continues to teach me is that sharing the stories of his working in my life, particularly in the messes I've made, can impact and bless others.

One of the greatest examples I have seen in recent years is my friend Mike Bull Roberts. Many of you have heard his story. God took a life of abuse, a life spent in the world of gangs, drugs and crime, and turned it upside down. He invaded Mike's life with his relentless love and turned it upside down. In turn Mike has passionately pursued a relationship with God, made him his #1 priority and has shared his story in a book and speaks frequently to churches, youth and anyone who will listen. If you are friends with him on Facebook you know what I mean. You can't shut him up when it comes to Jesus and he doesn't worry about what anyone thinks of him for being sold out to Jesus!

Do what Mike does, do what the Samaritan woman did and be a bold witness. Share your stories of your encounter with Jesus. Talk about how you came to know him, talk about how he has changed your life; make it personal. If you are excited about who Jesus is and what he has done and is doing in your life, if your story is sincere that will have a far greater impact than you simply sharing facts about Jesus or the Bible.

Finally, we are responsible to share our stories, but we are not responsible for the results, God is. Too often we want to control the outcome of sharing our stories; that is human nature. We want to see results; we want to control the outcome. We need to learn to wait and see what God does; to **leave the results to Jesus.**

#### **4. RESULTS – Leave the results to Jesus**

After the woman came back to town and invited people to come and see Jesus we read this in verse 30, **“They came out of the town and made their way toward him.”** Jumping down to verse 39, the story continues, **“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.<sup>41</sup> And because of his words many more became believers.<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you have said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.’”**

You do not know what the results will be when you share your story with others. In the case of the Samaritan woman many believed because of her story. Others became interested in Jesus, they wanted to meet him and hang out with him. And, it is likely, that there were those that weren't the least bit interested.

Don't be discouraged if you don't see an immediate response to your story or if you don't get the reaction that you hoped for or expected. Your story may be linked to another story, and another story, and another story...all of which God may use in time to draw someone to himself. In writing to the Corinthian church, Paul wrote, **"I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants, but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the centre of this process, but God who makes things grow."** The Message 1 Cor. 3:6

Our stories are vital and God certainly uses them. But, our stories only accomplish so much. In verse 42, the Samaritans said this to the woman, **"We no longer believe just because of what you have said; now we have heard it for ourselves and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."**

**"We have heard it for ourselves and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."** It is through a personal encounter with Jesus that our lives are changed and that we are saved. Make no mistake, our stories are important. Equally important is that we follow them up with conversation inviting people to get to know Jesus. The Samaritan woman didn't shy away from this, she told them her story and she invited people to come and meet Jesus. We should do the same. That's why we've been encouraging you to invite people in your circles of influence to come to church – we want to introduce them to Jesus. But, ultimately, we must leave the results of those stories, conversations and invitations to Jesus.

A relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship you can ever have. The depth of your relationship with him will directly influence the priority he has in your life. The priority he has in your life will impact the stories you tell, or whether you tell stories at all. Hopefully, the result of those stories will lead – as they did for the Samaritan woman – to people coming to know Jesus.

I want to close this morning by asking a simple question that I began with, "Do you know Jesus? Do you really know him?" I ask you because I think it is one of the most important questions you will ever consider in your life.