

Another Look at the Woman at the Well

Joe Slater

What time was it when the Samaritan woman walked out to Jacob's well outside Sychar? John 4:6 gives us that detail: "about the sixth hour" (i.e. about noon). Now why would she make that trek in the heat of the day instead of early morning or late afternoon like other women?

Even Samaritans had morals. Here was a woman who had been through five husbands and was cohabiting unmarried with number six (John 4:18). Odds are better than even that other women avoided and perhaps even shunned her.

But Jesus didn't shun her! He saw her not as an immoral Samaritan woman, but as a human being made in God's image who desperately needed salvation whether she knew it or not. Instead of bombarding her with passages from the Law condemning fornication, He asked her for a drink of water! What? A Jewish man not only speaking to a Samaritan woman, but wanting to drink from her bucket? Unheard of! Scandalous! When she questioned His request, He told her she ought to have asked Him for living water. She thought of H₂O, but of course Jesus was referring to eternal life.

First things first! Jesus exposed her sin in due time, but priority one was to help her see who He was and what He could do for her eternal wellbeing. Oh, how we need to follow His example today! American culture has become a moral cesspool, but remember that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). Show them who Jesus is and what He can do. Then they can see their sin, turn from it, and enjoy the cleansing His blood supplies.

Love Gives

"You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving." Love is essential to a life of meaning and purpose. The need to love and be loved is as important to us emotionally and spiritually as food and water is important to us physically. In fact, so keenly felt is our need for love that we will do almost anything to fill the void when it is gone. Herein lies both danger and opportunity.

Acceptance by others can become so important to us that we are willing to compromise our values in order to get it. This is one of Satan's biggest lies. You don't ever have to turn your back on your values in order to find genuine love. Real love and friendship will never ask you to do that which is contrary to God's word.

In spite of its dangers, there are also great opportunities associated with our great need for love. People need to be introduced to the good news that all of us are loved with the perfect love of our Father in heaven. This love is ours in spite of our shortcomings. God deeply cares for us even when it seems that no one else in the world is concerned. One of the greatest verses in the Bible, packed with depth and wonder, is John 3:16 where Jesus says, "*For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*" God loves you. The expression of His love is seen in the act of giving His Son so that you might be saved. In another wonderful passage, the Bible says, "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Rom. 5:8). Now we can know something about the nature of love. Love is about giving.

John explains our ability to love in these words: "*We love because He first loved us*" (1 Jn. 4:19). Our love for others will be expressed in giving. We give financially. We give of our time and energy. And, most of all, we give of ourselves. But, make no mistake about it, love demands a gift. This may be love's greatest mystery; that, in the act of giving, we always receive the greater blessing. Jesus said, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35). A life given to love is a life given to God and others. It is, therefore, life at its best — a life filled with purpose, meaning and joy.

--Glen Elliott (Greenbriar, AR)

Time And Tomorrow

I read a funny saying the other day: "How long a minute is depends on which side of the bathroom door you're on." The way we experience time is completely relative to the things we are currently going through.

Think about it. Sometimes time seems to crawl by, whole at other times it goes by in a flash. To a fifteen-year-old waiting to turn sixteen to get that coveted plastic card of freedom, a year seems to take forever. But for someone who has experienced scores of birthdays, a year seems to go by in the blink of an eye.

One thing true about time is that we are not guaranteed more of it. Not one of us knows what is going to happen. "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1).

Besides something tragic possibly happening, we're told in Matthew 24:36 that no one knows the day or hour that Jesus will return to call us home. With none of us promised tomorrow, it makes what we do today all the more important. If there is something good you should do, do it now! If there is some sin you ought to stop doing, stop it now! Let's make certain that we are not putting off until tomorrow what should (or must) be taken care of today.

--Luke Bower (Abilene, TX) via Old Paths

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Don't Just Invite People To Church

Invite them to lunch.

Invite them to your table or patio.

Invite them into your life.

Be there for them.

WE – not our building – are the church