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LET JESUS DEFINE HIMSELF (John 4:16-30, 39-42)

JESUS' CONFRONTATION OF SIN

*John 4:16-18 — He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; for **you have had five husbands**, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."*

In our last study, we saw Jesus cross several cultural boundaries to engage this woman in a conversation. He was Jewish, she was a Samaritan. He was a man, she was a woman. He was a teacher, she had a loose moral reputation. There were multiple reasons for Jesus to walk away from her. Everyone else did.

Jesus addressed her longing for satisfaction when He offered her living water that never runs out. Still confused by this spiritual lesson, this woman (with her waterpot in tow) wanted to know how she could get this "living water". At that moment, Jesus told her why she really needs the spiritual satisfaction only He provides.

Jesus immediately pointed out that she had been trying to find fulfillment in her life with things that would not satisfy. In her case, it was her multiple marriages and the fact she was currently living with a man she wasn't married to.

Many will say that in their mind, Jesus is all about love and non-judgment. He just wants us to be happy, right? But in these verses, we have to let Him define Himself and Jesus confronts sin. It was a pattern of His ministry, because it's why He came. If people didn't need a redeemer, He was wasting His time. If we are only comfortable with a Messiah who rubber stamps all of our decisions (as long as they make us happy), He didn't have to come to earth to die. Jesus had no problem calling sin what it was, though.

**MEN ARE OPPOSED TO GOD IN THEIR SIN,
AND GOD IS OPPOSED TO MEN IN HIS HOLINESS.**

~ J. I. PACKER ~

JESUS' COURSE IN WORSHIP

*John 4:19-24— The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 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. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**"*

Maybe she was used to people talking about her moral failure. Maybe she wanted to change the subject as quickly as possible. Whatever her reason, the Samaritan woman acknowledged that Jesus knew things about her a stranger shouldn't know. Then she asked Him about something all Samaritans probably wondered about but, due to their conflict with Jews, rarely asked. It was a question about worship and once again, she showed her external focus. For her, the place of worship is the issue.

The Samaritans believed God had designated Mount Gerizim (4:20) as the proper place for worship. They had built a temple there to rival the worship center in Jerusalem. The Samaritans believed in a coming Messiah who was to be primarily a teacher, a priest, and a restorer of true worship on Mount Gerizim. Jesus articulated the difference between worship that was expressed in external rituals alone and true worship in spirit (4:23). The term "spirit" refers to the sphere of worship.

True worship happens when a believer's spirit is connected with God's Spirit, not when a believer is in a particular physical place like Jerusalem or Samaria. God's Spirit is everywhere, therefore worship can happen anywhere. The term "truth" implies that the human worshiper is open and conforming to God's revealed ways of worship and life, specifically Jesus' call to repentance and honest, spiritual worship.
(Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary)

Jesus again exploded the expectations of men and preconceived traditions. This teaching on worship is crucial for us today, since we can focus on externals as well. Do we have to have a certain setting to worship? Music? Dress? Technology? Our tendency to center on physical things is always present in our attitudes toward worship. We must let God define how worship is to happen. You might be reminded of God's spiritual emphasis when David's brother was discounted as Israel's future king:

1 Samuel 16:7 - But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

JESUS' CLAIM OF DEITY

John 4:25-30— 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." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?" So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.

All claims that Jesus was simply a good man because of His loving teaching and acts of compassion to the poor are not biblical claims. Why? Primarily, because Jesus Himself never claimed that. It's stunning that people will extol the teachings of Jesus as a mere human prophet or philosopher and not acknowledge what He actually **taught!** Scripture loudly declares Jesus'

divinity, from Old Testament prophecy through the gospels' historical narratives through the apostolic letters to the early churches finishing with Christ's final kingdom established in the book of Revelation.

Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah. He plainly said this to the Samaritan woman who started to show signs of finally understanding Him. This conversation with the King of kings had changed her completely and she had to tell someone. Once concerned about being an outcast and drawing water when no one was around, now she ran directly to the town and invited them to meet Jesus, open to the thought that He is the Messiah. She was letting Jesus define Himself.

JESUS' CALL TO FOLLOW

*John 4:39-42 – From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. **Many more believed because of His word;** and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."*

Her words grabbed their attention, but His words converted their hearts. That was the reason they believed and received His forgiveness. The people of the little town of Sychar let Jesus define Himself, not the opinions of others or their own suppositions.

How we feel about Jesus is the wrong place to start. The true issue is whether we will believe what He has revealed about Himself. Start there and search the Scriptures to see who He really is. Like the Samaritan woman, you may never be the same again.

BIBLE STUDY

Legislators and Staff (During Session)
Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.
Room 153, House Office Building