

Whoever Drinks of the Water – Part II
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John 4:1-24
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Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to the fourth chapter of John. Last Sunday we began to look at this wonderful fourth chapter in which we find the Lord Jesus Christ taking the message of salvation that He has brought to one of the most unlikely, unexpected recipients, a woman of Samaria. We began to look at that passage and examine it with the five W's and an H: Where? When? Whom? What? We got to the fourth W and we're going to pick up that fourth W again, 'What?' Then we're going to go ahead on to the H, 'How?' And then 'Why?' 'What?', 'How?', and 'Why?' will be what we look at this morning from John 4.

I want to ask you a question to consider as we look at this passage and continue to examine it. The question is this: What makes the 'Good News' truly good? What is it that makes the Gospel, another word for 'Good News', what is it that makes the Gospel truly wonderful? When you start to share the Gospel with an unbeliever, what makes the message that you are sharing with them truly a good message? Is it that this lost person can, through the Gospel, escape from the wrath of God? It's a part of it to be sure, a necessary part of the Gospel message, but that is not the particular emphasis of 'Good' in 'Good News' that Jesus makes in this passage. Here in this passage, according to Jesus, when someone receives the Gospel, what makes it 'Good News' is that they begin to truly experience the ultimate satisfaction of every human longing. When they receive Christ it's not merely only that they've escaped the wrath of God, they have come to something wonderful. It's not so much what they escape from though that is a necessary part of the message, here when Christ deals with this wayward woman, He invites her to something, to partake of the living water that He can offer, to experience nothing less than absolute and complete human fulfillment, that is 'Good News'. That is wonderful news and it's wonderful news not just for the unbeliever, it's wonderful news to keep on drinking in as one who follows Jesus Christ. Let's begin reading John 4 at Verse 1.

James 4:1-24:

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 the sixth hour.*

*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, "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."*

*15 The woman *said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw." 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." 19 The woman *said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." 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 spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we bow before Your Word and we ask that You might now teach us, that You might even in this time seek for Yourself worshippers, true worshippers who will worship You in spirit and in truth. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

1) 'What?':

Now, the question 'What?' We're looking at what makes the Gospel 'Good News' and as we continue to examine this passage I want to go back to the question 'What?' We looked at this briefly last time. What is the issue that Jesus seeks to address here in the passage? What is this all about? We noted last time that we have in the text over and over the repetition of the word 'water', the repetition of the word 'well', 'drink', and 'thirst'. Twenty-two times you have those different terms. It's all about water, it's about drinking, and it's about thirst. What is striking is that Jesus poses the possibility of providing 'living water'. Living water usually metaphorically meant, or literally kind of metaphorically, sort of metaphorically meant 'running water'. It was a metaphor even in the Old Testament for something more than that. The real spiritual significance of water is life. Washing and also life, it sustains life. The idea of spiritual life, not merely just satisfying thirst. When you read through the Psalms and you read through Isaiah, there is such emphasis on the day when the Messiah will cause living water to flow from Jerusalem. It's not talking about a great water system, it's talking about life, spiritual life, the knowledge of God.

So what Jesus does here is He brings up the issue, the 'What?' really here is the intense spiritual thirst of the human soul. That is the issue. He's thirsty physically, but He has gone to that place and sat by that well as One Who possesses omniscience because He has an appointment with a most unlikely person, a woman who is, as we see in the text, has a checkered past, a history of immorality. But Jesus goes there not to chide her, He does deal with her sin. We have to see that real clearly. We'll see it as we go through this, but His purpose is not to condemn her because the Son of Man did not come to condemn, He came to save. His purpose is to offer her life. His purpose is to meet the great spiritual thirst of her soul which she is not even fully cognizant of. He says to this woman essentially, "You suffer from spiritual dehydration. More than that, you are dead. You are a desert, but you were made to live. The Father has sent Me to offer you what you desperately need, living water."

We see in the text some things about living water that I want to make note of under this heading 'What?' What is living water? We see first of all in Verse 10, Jesus calls it the gift of God.

John 4: 10 ~ ...“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink,...

A gift of God can refer in kind of a Hebraism to the Word of God, but here I think He's beginning to lay the groundwork for living water. The gift of God is the living water which He offers. “If you knew the gift that I possess, that my Father has given Me to give.” So living water is the gift of God.

Secondly, living water satisfies. You will never thirst again. Verse 14 He says:

John 4:14 ~ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.

What an astonishing quality, this water. If you drink this water you will never ever be thirsty again. Not only will you never thirst again but you will possess it. It's not because you drank one time and you're satisfied like if you eat one meal and you're satisfied for the day, like some kind of amazing diet pill. You know, take your pill and you don't want anything else. You're fine. No it's not one drink, He says, “In reality, the reason you'll never thirst again is because I will make your soul to be a well springing up.” Look at Verse 14:

John 4:14 ~ ...but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

Bubbling up, bubbling over. Not only will you be satisfied but you will have in yourself continual satisfaction, access to running water, bubbling water. And of course the contrast, if you think about it, we always drink clean water basically. I've been hiking before and started to drink out of a stream and thought, “Well no, I can wait and get some bottled water later,” because you never know what you're going to get from a stream, right? Nowadays streams aren't as clean as they used to be, but in that day they would drink sometimes out of cisterns. That would be like drinking out of a swimming pool that hasn't got any chlorine. Well you wouldn't want to drink out of chlorine either, but imagine a swimming pool that you didn't put anything in to treat, the chemicals, and then you had to go get a drink out of it. That's the kind of water these people drank. Obviously, your stomach I guess gets used to that, but how wonderful to be able to then drink out of a flowing spring, a mountain spring, a mountain stream where it's running over the rocks and you know it's clean. It doesn't have anything upstream, nobody dumping stuff in the water. It's clean. Jesus is using that metaphor to say, “That is a glimmer, a glimpse of the difference that I bring to you. You will have not only a quenched thirst but you will become yourself a spring welling up.”

The fourth thing is eternal life, you will possess eternal life. The living water is the gift of God. It means that you will never thirst again. It becomes a spring in you, welling up. Number four, and it leads to eternal life. It is actually to possess this living water is to possess eternal life. Verse 14, it springs up to eternal life.

The fifth thing about living water is only Jesus gives this water. There's no other place to find it. There is no other One Who possesses it. Others may claim to be able to satisfy your thirst and many, many, many do, but no one can. Only Jesus has living water.

Now when we look at that and put this in the context of the larger picture, we find that really living water, if you were to define it maybe in a simple way, I would define it this way: Living water is the true knowledge of and communion with God. It's true knowledge of and communion with God. It means to know the Lord truly and to experience His presence. "That is what we're all thirsty for," Jesus says. That is what this woman is thirsty for though she has no idea that's what she's thirsty for. We are like sheep, we're just stupid. All we, like sheep, have gone astray and the Lord wasn't flattering us when He gave us that analogy. I thought that when I was a kid. You'd see a lamb. If you've seen a lamb in person you think they're just cute and you've seen little storybooks with them. "I'm Jesus' little lamb." That's kind of the way it comes across in little childrens' stories. You're God's little lamb. Then when you get a little older if you ever see a sheep, they always look like dirty, nasty-looking animals, you know? There is all kinds of stuff in their wool and they're just dumb. It's just a fact.

I remember when I was researching for a series that we did awhile back on shepherding, eldering, I researched on sheep and I found an interesting article from the University of Tennessee that talked about the things you have to do to care for sheep. It talked about, this is not from a Christian standpoint at all, this is just dealing with livestock. It's in the Livestock Department at Tennessee where they're talking about this. If you're going to own sheep and care for sheep, you need to regularly, when they come in, take time and make sure you feel of every one of them and see if they are really eating because of their wool, you can't tell if they're thinning up. Why? Because sheep forget to eat. Isn't that stupid? "My stomach is growling. What does that mean? Do you have any idea?" You know they talk to the other sheep. They say, "I don't know."

They also will become dehydrated. Sheep will stand by a source of water and not drink. So you have to look after the sheep's well-being. "This one seems to be eating. This one seems to be okay so I don't have to overcome them." Shepherds in

Palestine have talked about having to force the sheep's face into the water. They're sitting there thirsty, can't figure out what to do, so their face gets forced in the water. "Oh yeah, that's what I was needing." That's who we are. Dying of thirst and we don't know it. In unbelief, before God opens our eyes, how incredibly blind we are.

This woman had no idea what she needed. She didn't know that what she was longing for was communion with God. She thought that she could meet her needs through a relationship with a man. She was now in her sixth relationship with a man. Five marriages, at least her sixth serious relationship. A man now she's living with because she's trying to meet the needs of her soul and Jesus says, "You're looking, but you're not finding. I have the answer to the need of your heart. I am the One Who can meet that need." And He alone, no other human being can meet the needs of the human heart. So this idea of true knowledge of and communion with God, that is living water and Jesus Christ is the only One Who can give you a true knowledge of God and enable you to come into the presence of the living God. That's the 'What?'

What are we thirsty for? We're thirsty for God and the Good News. What makes the Good News wonderful is that we offer, when we share the Gospel with someone, we offer the opportunity for them to come to know the satisfaction of every longing they've had. Now they're worried about all of the wrong things, and so we don't present a Gospel that's aimed at felt needs. That's a common thing today. No, we present the Gospel that deals with the real, ultimate need of the heart. Yes, it's related to their sinfulness. Yes, it's related to their need to escape from the wrath of God, but it's not merely that. It's also a call to experience communion with the living Savior. That's 'What?' Living water, true knowledge of and communion with God.

2) 'How?':

'How?' That's our next point, and under 'How?' I want us to behold how Jesus pursues this wayward and lost sinner, because what we really have in this passage is we have the great soul hunter going after His quarry. That is what you see here. Jesus Himself had said, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which is lost." He came on a quest to find lost sinners. He's hunting for them and He is pursuing them, and of course we, as foolish sheep, naturally run from Him. We'll see how she runs.

We want to behold how this great soul hunter pursues. Look at how He makes available this living water. In doing this, one of the applications that we can see is we can learn from His pattern how we ought to share Christ, how we ought to draw the opportunities that we have to build relationship, to share Christ, even in a chance encounter, or over time with someone. What does He do? Under this heading ‘How?’, how does Jesus pursue the wayward sinner? We’re going to look at seven aspects of how Jesus deals with this woman, how He goes after her. Seven things.

A) He Places Himself in Her Path:

First of all, He places Himself right in her path. Stepping back and looking at Verse 6:

John 4:6 ~ ...So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

He knew she was coming. He knows everything about her when she comes. He has come to Samaria on the way from Judea to Galilee because He wants to bring this soul to worship the living God, His Father, and to know Him, God the Son. He places Himself right in her path. He puts Himself where she will come. We need to be careful, you can’t just wait in your closet, and pray in your closet for people to get saved. You have to engage. We have to find ways to get outside of our normal comfort zones and get where people are. That’s the first thing, He places Himself right in her path. How does Jesus pursue this wayward sinner?

B) He Jumps Over Convention and Custom:

The second thing is He, when necessary and appropriate, jumps over convention and custom, Verse 7.

John 4:7 ~ Jesus *said to her, “Give Me a drink.”

In Verse 9 she says, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, to give You a drink? These things just simply aren’t done. We have no dealings. We don’t use the same instruments. You wouldn’t want to drink from my cup, and I wouldn’t want to drink from Yours. Why are You asking?” He doesn’t let manmade convention and custom hinder His pursuit of the sinner. There is an appropriate place. Now, in general, we are to be all things to all men, which means that sometimes we even acknowledge custom and we go out of our way. Paul says, “I became like a Jew to win the Jews. I became like a Gentile to win the Gentiles. I

became like a Greek to win the Greeks.” There is a place where you don’t want to cause any offense, but there are places where you step over custom and convention, and just look for wisdom. There are places where you’re going to have to do that, we’re going to have to do that.

C) He Communicates Spiritual Truth Through Physical Realities:

The third thing we see is that not only does He place Himself right in her path, not only does He jump over convention and custom, thirdly, look at the way He communicates. He communicates spiritual truth through physical realities. He goes from the natural to the spiritual. Watching the way Jesus communicates with unbelievers is a great thing for us to consider and contemplate. I know for myself, I find it much more challenging to think this way. Some of you are more gifted at thinking in terms of word pictures. I think more propositionally. You don’t find Jesus going up and making declarations to this woman. He goes up and He touches, and He was always doing this. He was always starting with the natural and moving into the spiritual. That’s what the parables are. A certain man went out to sow. I mean, He’s going to deal with the issue that many of you out here don’t know the Lord. Many of you don’t know the Lord. He could have started it out that way. “Hey, you all think that you’re Christians. Most of you aren’t!” He didn’t do that. He said, “A certain man went out to sow.” See, He draws them in with analogy and metaphor. He ends up saying the very same thing at the end. So we need to communicate clearly moving from the natural to the spiritual. Metaphor, parables, really starting with where people are in life. What’s going on? Looking at the things right there around us. In the situation that we’re in, move from that. It’s hard to do but it’s something we have to just work at.

Listen, the most important thing that we need to remember when we’re trying to evangelize, this is the most encouraging thing that we should remember. You and I could never do it like Jesus, of course. We bumble, and stumble, and fumble along, but the reality is that when you and I just try to touch people, and we try to lift up Christ, what we will find is it’s not so much about you or me, it’s that in our witness the great hunter of souls will Himself be present. He knows how to touch someone’s heart even when we don’t. He will use His Spirit to communicate things that aren’t even what we said. I will see this from time to time in preaching. Somebody will tell me they appreciate my sermon, and they’ll say, “When you said this...” I’ll think to myself, you know I really didn’t say that. I kind of got over in that direction, but I didn’t even think of that. What happened? Well, the Spirit of God, when He was working on that person, He went there. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the One Who represents Him now, who mediates Him to

us now, when the Word is preached, Christ is present and He puts His finger on your life. It goes beyond what we say. So in evangelism the same thing is true. We may misspeak, and we might say what we didn't mean to say, or we may be off a little bit, we may think that wasn't that good of a presentation, but if He is present the heart is pierced. That's our great comfort because we're always going to mess up. We still need to work at communicating as clearly as possible. Now, He places Himself right in her path. Secondly, when necessary, He jumps over convention. Thirdly, He communicates clearly using metaphor and parable.

D) He is Unapologetically Christ-Centered:

Fourthly, He is unapologetically Christ-centered. Now let me say this in a way that will be more arresting to you. Jesus, when He teaches, is unapologetically self-centered. I read this first in a book by John Stott, Basic Christianity, an excellent book. When I first read it, I was like, "That's kind of a jarring statement. We're not supposed to be self-centered." No, we're not supposed to be. Jesus chides His disciples for being concerned about their place, but let me tell you, there's One Person who ought to be, if He loves us, self-centered, and it is the One Who is the great I AM in flesh. Listen to what Stott says about Jesus' teaching. He points out that this sets Jesus apart from every other teacher in the world history, and it sets Him apart from every other prophet who ever spoke in God's name. Listen to this:

The most striking feature of the teaching of Jesus is that He was constantly talking about Himself. It is true that He spoke much about the Fatherhood of God and the Kingdom of God, but then He added that He was the Father's Son, and that He had come to inaugurate the Kingdom. Entry into the Kingdom depended on a man's response to Him. He even did not hesitate to call the Kingdom of God 'My Kingdom'. This self-centeredness of the teaching of Jesus immediately sets Him apart from the other great, religious teachers of the world. They are self-effacing, He was self-advancing. They pointed men away from themselves saying, "That is the truth so far as I perceive it. Follow that." Jesus said, "I am the truth. Follow Me." The founder of none of the ethnic religions ever dared to say such a thing. The personal pronoun forces itself repeatedly on our attention as we read His words. For example, "I AM the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall not hunger. And he who believes in Me shall never thirst. I AM the light of the word. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he die yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me."

He is different from every other prophet because they were signposts pointing to someone coming after them. They were constantly saying, “He is coming. He is coming. The Messiah is coming.” When Jesus comes on the scene, He says, “I AM here.” He points nowhere else other than Himself because He is the Word made flesh. God has come into time and space and this fact itself ought to build your faith and show the superiority of Christianity over every other feeble, deceitful attempt of satan to lead men astray. No one ever spoke like Jesus spoke. He is the one revelation of God, the pinnacle of God’s revelation. So when He talks to this woman, He says to her, “Listen. If you knew the gift of God and Who it is you are talking to, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.” Then He says, “The water I will give him he will never thirst. The water I will give him will bubble up into a fountain of everlasting life.” Verse 25, she says, she’s been puzzled by this whole thing. She’s beginning to start to put together things but still very confused.

John 4:25 ~ ...“I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.”²⁶ Jesus *said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

Literally in the Greek it says, “I AM the One speaking to you.” That’s His first ‘I AM’ statement in the Gospel. “Ego ami. Yahweh has come. You were hungry for a relationship with the living God. That’s what you need and I am here. Stop looking.” Now, I point that out because that means that our evangelism, the difference between us and Jesus is that it’s nothing about us, is it? It ought to all be about Him, and we ought to be unapologetically, and unequivocally Christ-centered. We ought to look for opportunity as quickly as possible, sensitive to the situation, but I want to lift up Jesus. I want to bring His name up. I want to talk about His glory, and the quicker the better. In general, you’ve got to be sensitive to the situation of course. It’s not always going to be the same, but that needs to be our heartbeat. “I want to tell you about Jesus. I don’t want to tell you about how to live. I don’t want to tell you about how you should change the way you’re living, because I don’t like the way that you look, or I don’t like what you’re doing. I am irrelevant. I want to tell you about Jesus. He is the most relevant.” Unapologetically Christ-centered. I mean, that’s the hope. There is no other hope. What is our message? It’s only Jesus Christ.

Paul says, “We don’t preach ourselves, we preach Christ and Him crucified.” The only hope of the wayward sinner that you and I encounter every day, the only hope

for us when we were wayward, lost sinners was Jesus Christ. The One Who loved us and Who sought us. Who came into this world, Who was so committed to loving you that He came into this world, He left the glory of Heaven, He entered into time and space, He became a man, He lived under the experience of the horror of all that we had made out of His world He had made perfect. We destroyed it, we marred it. He came into it and came underneath it as it were, made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He lived His whole life being rejected, and then He was ultimately rejected on the cross when He hung there in agony at Calvary and experienced the wrath of God for lost sinners, and paid every bit of your sin debt there. Then He rose again from the dead on the third day to say God had accepted His offering, and He alone is the only way to Heaven. He alone is the bread of life. He alone has living water. He alone is the light of the world. Do you see that? He is bread, He is water, He is life. He, as John said in the very beginning of His book, Verse 4, John 1, "In Him was life." Where do you find life? Nowhere else but Jesus. So our message is Jesus Christ. That was His message. Praise His name, He lifted up Himself and He said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me." He placed Himself right in her path. He jumped over convention and custom, He communicated clearly through metaphor, He unapologetically lifted Himself up, He was Christ-centered.

E) He Makes Requests and Asks Questions Rather Than Makes Declarations:

This is another angle on this idea of how He communicates clearly. He knows this woman is an adulteress, but He doesn't say, "You are an adulteress." He could have. Was there ever a more appropriate time for someone to say that than when Jesus, pure and holy, absolutely unstained by sin stands in the presence of one who was so wicked? Could He not have said, "You are wicked."? Yeah, He could have, but He didn't. He says instead, He leads her to the same conclusion gently, He says, "Go find your husband. You want this living water..." She's not even understanding yet. She's thinking it's some kind of trick to get the water out of the bottom of the well. The two words that are used in the Greek that are both translated 'well' in English, one means 'an underground spring', and the other means 'a place that's dug out'. So apparently they dug out and reached down to an underground spring. Sometimes well are just water tables that you tap into, but here was an underground spring, bubbling water at the bottom of this well. The well had been operating for almost 2,000 years when Jesus sits down there. I'm told by commentators it's still bubbling today, Jacob's Well. It was a good well, but it was nothing compared to what Jesus was offering. She just thinks, "Hey, I'm going to get the water easier," in Verse 15, but He takes that opportunity and He goes after her heart, but He does it gently.

Rather than make a declaration, He says, “Go find your husband.” He knows her sin and He goes gently here. If He did this, how much more careful we should be in how we speak to people about their sin. We should deal with it, but we should deal with it gently because we’re sinners too. He wasn’t. We don’t want to skirt around it though, but we should ask questions. This is one of the things in counseling we talk about, in the counseling ministry. We’re trying to learn how to be better counselors. A question opens the heart, an accusation closes it. The Lord is so wise at how He communicates. If He wants someone’s heart, He doesn’t close their heart. He has every right to just declare, but look how often you find Jesus asking questions. When the rich, young ruler comes. “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Let me ask you a question. Have you kept the ten commandments?” “Yeah, I have since my youth.” He didn’t start off with, he could have started off with him, “You are a greedy, young man.” He knows his heart. He goes for his heart, but He starts off with questions. “How do you read the law?” Then He makes a request. He says, “Go sell all that you have.” He makes a request. He doesn’t make a declaration. “You are a greedy man who will not let go of the love of money.” He could have said that, but He said, “Go sell all that you have.” That was a pretty bold statement, but it was still a soft one, you see? He didn’t condemn him, He invited him.

F) He’s Intentional in Going for the Heart:

Now the sixth point. I’ve been kind of going back and forth because this point is hard to separate from the previous one. He not only makes requests and asks questions, but He is intentional in going for the heart. He doesn’t skirt around sin. He’s gentle, but He goes at the person’s sin. If you look at how Jesus operates, as I just mentioned the rich, young ruler, and here this Samaritan woman, what He does is He goes to the point of greatest sin and idolatry of the heart. In a sense it’s like He goes for the jugular. A better illustration is, “How do you get to the heart? Through an open wound.” People have heart catherizations. I’ve had one. They make a wound in your heart. Why do they make a wound? “Hey, why are you hurting me?” “Because that’s the only way I can get to your heart?” The path to the heart is through an open wound. Jesus always went for the heart through the open wound. So for us in sharing with people, we should not be afraid to address the open wound. The elephant in the room, right in front of you, that is obvious, is the way that you go. You just go gently. That’s what He did. He is determined to help her see her sin, but He walks so softly. He doesn’t tread her down. A bruised reed He will not break, a smoking flax He will not extinguish. Behold Your Savior. He even deals gently with her in her response. He says, “Go call your husband and come here.” She said, “I have no husband.” Listen to the tenderness of the Savior.

“You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband.’” What could He have said? He’s going to go on to say, “Yeah, you’re correct.” But He says, “You are correct in what you said. You’ve spoken truly. You only gave me a little bit of truth, but I’m going to point out the little bit that you gave me.” But He doesn’t fail to go after her heart.

Then He goes to the heart, He says, “No, you’ve had five husbands, and man you live with now is not your husband.” What He’s done is gently and carefully laid open her heart. I mean it’s bare right there before Him. Do you see that? Our tendency is to avoid anything confrontational. Many of us struggle with that. Some of us struggle with the other thing of just plod on ahead. We have to meet in the middle where Jesus is, where you don’t just trample them down but you still deal with the issue. This would mean if you meet with somebody that you can tell by their dress, and their language, is struggling with some deep sin, you don’t avoid that. You don’t start off right away making declarations. No, you don’t make declarations at all. You just ask questions, you probe, and you ask God to help you because we don’t have omniscience. We don’t know what the issues are, but where you see something, the old saying ‘Where there is smoke, there is fire.’ There’s a lot of truth in that isn’t there? If smoke is coming out of your house and you don’t know why it’s coming out, that’s not something to ignore. When smoke is coming out of somebody’s life, try to find as you talk with them, gently, lovingly, not judgmentally, where is that coming from. The clearest path to the heart is through an open wound. He’s intentionally going for her heart through her dominant sin, but He deals gently with her.

So what He’s done is He’s exposed her sin, her heart idolatry. This woman has sought to meet the needs of her heart above everything else. She’s got lots of issue. We all have lots of issues. We all have all kinds of sin problems we struggle with, but this woman’s dominant heart idolatry was she wanted to get her needs met through romantic relationships with men. She believed as a woman that is what would satisfy the longing in her soul. What Jesus has done is say, “Look at what you’ve done. Look at the mess that you’ve made as you’ve tried to satisfy your own thirst.” But see how cleverly, and wisely, and gently He got there? Now she is undone and she is actually on the retreat. What you have here is Jesus the great soul-hunter going after her soul and you see in Verse 19, she is on the run. She changes the subject. “Because You’ve laid open my heart and shown that my great need is that I am looking to meet the needs of my heart by going after men. That brings an important thing to mind. Should we worship on this mountain or in Jerusalem?” You know an animal that’s caught in a trap will gnaw off its leg to escape, and that’s what she’s doing. “I’ve got to get away. I can’t handle this. He’s

opened up my heart.” So she’s running as fast as she can spiritually, though she’s standing in His presence. Look at His wisdom even here because it’s going to happen when we share with people, they’ll try to evade, they’ll try to avoid. How do you deal with it? Well sometimes you do what He does. He basically, at this point, follows her down her rabbit trail. She darts off the path and says, “Let’s talk about the whole issue that divides Samaritans from Jews. Should we worship on this mountain, or on the mountain in Jerusalem?” And He follows her because actually she’s running right into His trap. This is what He wanted to talk with her about in the first place because the way that you meet the needs of the human heart is all about what or whom you worship. What or whom your worship, that’s where you get your needs met. What are you bowing down to? What is most important to you? What is it that drives you? This is what Jesus wanted to talk with her about. She darts down the path and He circled around and is waiting for her there. But He’s not doing it as a hunter who just wants to get game for Himself. He’s doing it as the hunter and lover of her soul. That brings us to ‘Why?’ ‘What?’, ‘How?’, ‘Why?’

3) ‘Why?’:

We could ask why does He expose her sin? Why does He confront, we saw very gently, but still, why does He confront the most painful of her life? Why does He do it? Would it not be kinder just to leave it alone? Why does He do it? Why does He pursue her so relentlessly? This is the answer: So that He can lead her to replace her heart idolatry with true worship. He exposes her sin so that He can show her her spiritual thirst, and the empty ways that she’s trying to fulfill that thirst, so that He can show her, “Look at the magnitude of your thirst that has driven you to this kind of immorality that you would have never imagined when you were a young woman of 15 or 16 years old. That you would be sitting here in your 30’s now having lived with six different men. You would never have imagined that. What drove you to that? The thirst of your soul and seeking to find it outside of God.” So He calls her to the one thing that satisfies, the true knowledge of and communion with God that comes through Himself that Christ offers. He says, “Listen, everything that you long for is found in Me. Everything that you’ve been searching for is found in a relationship with Me.” That’s what He’s doing. This woman who had her heart exposed, and was confused about this whole issue of living water, is coming to see that she was dealing with Someone Who saw right into her heart and Who saw the ugliness in her heart. He saw the ugliness, listen to this, and kept coming. He didn’t turn away. Isn’t that one of the greatest needs of every human heart? To know that you could really open up and let someone see all that is in there, nothing hidden, and they would still love you?

This woman has had her heart laid bare and there He is, not like all the men in her past, leaving her. She had tried like all people do to hide the ugliness. It had worked for a while, she had gotten her relationships going, but what she found was you marry ugly people too. She saw the ugliness in them, they saw the ugliness in her, but it ended up rejection, rejection, rejection. Here she finds a man, the God-man, Who loves her perfectly. Who knows her perfectly and loves her perfectly.

Everybody longs to be loved. Jesus is the only One Who can love you like you long to be loved. Some few fortunate in the world find what they think is human love, wonderful to them. You look at the storybooks, you look at the testimonials, all the online dating that's going on. How much money is in the online dating thing? It's amazing. Online marriage, find your spouse. I can't think of the title. Something dot com, of course. People are looking for love, they're looking to find the needs of their hearts, but they're looking to people and too often Christians go into marriages looking to find the needs of their hearts met in their spouse. People who know better. In pre-marital counseling, I'm always trying to tell people that. "You can't look for your needs to be met by your spouse. You're there to serve them 100%, and get zero." They're like, "Yeah, we understand." Then a couple of years later you have post-marital counseling, not premarital counseling, right? We all need that. That's nothing to be ashamed of. We're all sheep. You find a sheep that's dumb and hungry, thirsty, what do you say? "Well, you're just like me. I need somebody to remind me." But the Lord Jesus is the only One that will love them. People in the world who have known love, and you hear about some great romances the world talks about. Maybe a few have found something that's wonderful, but let me tell you, it doesn't compare to being loved by Jesus. It does not touch it. They maintain some sense of illusion, come to some happiness. The world basically knows that you fall in love and you fall out of love, but it can't last. With Jesus it never stops. Nothing can change it. Nothing can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. He knows all about you and He will always be loving you. Everything that we long for is found in Jesus. Joy.

I was watching a documentary recently about Gilda Radner and her husband, Gene Wilder. They're both comedians you may remember from years ago, movie stars, comedians. Gilda Radner died in the 80's from cancer. Gene Wilder, they quoted him as saying:

I just want to be happy. All I want to do is be happy and make other people happy. If I had two weeks to live or one day to live, I would seek to be happy to make people happy. It's all about happiness.

It's just like our Declaration of Independence says, the pursuit of happiness. People want joy. Where do you find joy? Well a few people find it in a consistent way in this life. A few people find success and seem to find some measure of happiness. But the best that a few people find does not touch the joy that comes from Jesus Christ. Oh the joy of knowing the living God. Oh the joy of seeing His glory. Oh the joy of knowing that He loves you and that He delights in you. Oh the joy, the fulfillment of being in His service. I mean this whole Gospel is picturing Jesus as the answer to everything. Think back in John 2, the wedding at Cana of Galilee is picturing the superiority of what Jesus is bringing now to whatever was before. It uses the image of the need of wine. Remember, they run out of wine at the wedding? They've drunk up the wine they had, and they're out of wine, and Jesus' mother comes and says, "What are they going to do? They need You to help." "What do I have to do with you woman?" "Whatever He says to you, do it," she says. So He says, "Take these six water pots, fill them with water," and He turns them into wine. Instantly, they're wine, and they're the best wine. When we share that the Old Testament shows wine was a metaphor. In this fallen world, it was something God gave to make men glad. It was something that satisfies the human heart. Psalm 104:15 says just that: *And wine which makes man's heart glad...* Isaiah 35:5-9, the Messiah will be the One Who makes a banquet and gives abundant aged wine at this banquet. What's that about? It's about joy. It wasn't because they needed the wine so much, it's because Jesus has come to bring joy. He's come to bring joy so that you don't even need wine anymore. He's come to bring such lavish, extravagant joy.

Do you remember the six water pots, how much wine He made? Probably a couple of hundred of people at most, maybe a hundred really likely, at this wedding. He made between 120 and 180 gallons of wine. Gallons! Let's say 150. You know how many bottles of wine that is? The fine wine He made? That's over 750 bottles of wine. They didn't need 750 bottles of wine. They probably could have gotten by with a couple of dozen. What's He doing? He's saying, "I am Messiah, and I have come to usher in incredible, unimaginable joy. To know Me is to know joy." So John presents that picture as part of his portrait of Christ, just as he does this. These passages, the wedding at Cana, the encounter with Nicodemus, the woman in Samaria, all unique to John's Gospel, things he wants us to know about Jesus that we didn't have in the previous three gospels. Him writing last, remember? About 80 or 85 A.D. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, He brings out some things about Jesus. I don't want you to miss this. He's the One Who brings joy, unspeakable. He's the One Who will fill your heart with love. Everything you need is in Jesus Christ. That's what John is saying. Why has Jesus exposed her sin? Why

has He pursued this woman relentlessly? Why is He hunting for her? Because He knows that what she needs, everything she needs, He has.

The great soul hunter is pursuing some in this room today. He is relentless and passionate in his pursuit of your soul. He is coming after you. You can almost hear the sound of His feet following hard after some of you this morning. He is intent on finding you for Himself. Stop fleeing. Come out of hiding. Give up your efforts to escape. Allow yourself to be found by Him, and in being found by Him, find life for yourself. How many Christians among us today could gladly testify what it was like to be where you are today, running from Christ. Foolish. Thinking you're going to find life apart from Him. We all were there. We thought He was the cosmic killjoy Who would take our joy and rob us of everything valuable. Then we found one day He was pursuing us and we were running, and running, and we were running, until finally we ran out of energy and we stopped running from Him. We found Him, rather we were found by Him.

We found what C.S. Lewis said when he described his own run from Christ in atheism and philosophy, when he finally found himself to be found by Christ, he described his conversion experience in the title of his book, Surprised by Joy. He was overtaken by Christ and he was overtaken by joy. He had imagined that joy was outside of Christ, joy is only found in Christ. Our great Savior is still committed to seeking you, even those who were already His today, who have already come to know His joy, rejoice in this, that He's still seeking you. He is wanting you to drink from that fountain that continues to bubble up in your soul and so He's using the difficulties in your life, He's using the circumstances in your life, the difficult people in your life. He's using all of those things so that you will keep turning to Him, and drinking from Him, and finding that He's everything that you ever longed for. How glorious a Savior He is. When we take that message, isn't that good news? That's the new everyone needs to hear. May God help us be more faithful, and may God help us be more satisfied so that it just bubbles out of us. Let's pray together.

Our Father, we thank You that You are so good and so kind, that You looked at us when we were in our stubbornness, and our rebellion, and our hardness of heart, not wanting You but You kept wanting us. Thank You that You did not give us what we desired. We wanted freedom apart from you which was really just bondage. You didn't give us what we desired, You gave us what we needed. You came and You found us. Lord Jesus, thank You. Thank You for coming and finding us. Thank You for doing everything necessary to make us Your own, to know perfect love, to know true joy. Father, our prayer is for those that are here today who don't know

Christ, that You would find them, that You would break their will and their resistance. Show them the emptiness of the way they're pursuing. Show them that there's a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death. Lord, open eyes, change hearts, and help all of us to be more and more content, and joyful, and satisfied with Jesus Christ. We pray in His Name, Amen.

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