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A life led by the Spirit

Jesus moves on from baptising. "Success isn't measured by numbers."

John records the movement of Jesus from this area, despite recording the growing numbers of people coming to Jesus, or more precisely to his disciples to be Baptised, Jesus does not let the "tyranny of the urgent" dominate the larger picture. In today's modern world, success equates to the numbers of people involved. Not so with God. God's chosen people have never numbered many in comparison to the global population, and here we see that Jesus leaves an ever-growing ministry to move according to the Spirit's leading. Jesus knew the authorities were looking to cast Jesus into the mould of the Messiah that they desired, and not necessarily the one that God ordained. This misperception causes Jesus to leave the area of the Pharisee's direct influence to move back towards his home and step away from their scrutiny.

Jesus takes the Samaritan route. The good news knows no borders.

Strict Jews would never walk through Samaria. Years of hatred and exclusion had deemed these Samaritans as offensive and sinful. Better in the legalist mind to take a longer route that to pollute oneself by entering the area now occupied by these pretenders. Although the Samaritans traced their lineage back to the same ancestors as the Jews, each group was keen to highlight the difference, not the similarities.

"The verb *had to* translates the same verb that appears in 3:14, 30, where it denotes a divine necessity. The intimation is that it was God's will or purpose that Jesus should pass through

Samaria."

Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida

Who are the Samaritans

"Samaria had no separate political existence in Jesus' day: it was united with Judea under the Roman procurator. Nevertheless for both Jews and Samaritans the area was defined by both history and religion. King Omri named the new capital of the northern kingdom 'Samaria' (1 Ki. 16:24), which name was then transferred to the district and sometimes to the entire northern kingdom. After the Assyrians captured Samaria in 722-721 BC, they deported all the Israelites of substance and settled the land with foreigners, who intermarried with the surviving Israelites and adhered to some form of their ancient religion (2 Ki. 17-18). After the exile, Jews returning to their homeland, the remains of the southern kingdom, viewed the Samaritans not only as the children of political rebels but as racial half-breeds whose religion was tainted by various unacceptable elements (Ne. 13; cf. Jos., *Ant.* xi. 297-347, esp. 340). About 400 BC the Samaritans erected a rival temple on Mount Gerizim; toward the end of the second century BC this was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, the Hasmonean ruler in Judea. This combination of events fuelled religious and theological animosities. Certainly by the first century the Samaritans had developed their own religious heritage based on the Pentateuch (they did not accept the other books of the Hebrew Bible as canonical), continuing to focus their worship not on Jerusalem and its temple but on Mount Gerizim. A small number of Samaritans survives to this day."

Jesus talks to a woman. Salvation overcomes all barriers.

Risking one's reputation- Speaking to the dispossessed.

In today's society holding the wrong viewpoint or acting in the wrong manner can soon lose one friend or work opportunities.

The pressure to accept the status quo is strong. Two thousand years ago things were very familiar. The pressure to see the Samaritan as less than human, and therefore deserving of less respect was in vogue. Jesus overcame this and chose instead to heed the Spirit's call. It did not stop there, the person Jesus chose to announce himself to was a woman. In a society where Men did not speak to women as equals, let alone Jewish men to Samaritan woman or a Rabbi to an outcast.

John's record of this encounter stands in stark opposition to that of Jesus and Nicodemus, see below

John may intend a contrast between the woman of this narrative and Nicodemus of ch. 3. He was learned, powerful, respected, orthodox, theologically trained; she was unschooled, without influence, despised, capable only of folk religion. He was a man, a Jew, a ruler; she was a woman, a Samaritan, a moral outcast. And both needed Jesus.

"A religious, male, Jewish aristocrat like Nicodemus, or an untrained, female Samaritan peasant who had made a mess of her life—Jesus converses frankly with both, and happily breaks social and religious taboos to do so."

"The rabbis said, "It is better that the words of the Law be burned than be delivered to a woman!" But Jesus did not agree with that narrow prejudice."

Warren W. Wiersbe

"Jesus himself was not hostage to the sexism of his day"— D. A. Carson

Jacobs' well -A point two thousand years in the making - Living Water in a dry culture.

It is hard to understand in Australia where water is "on tap" how much of a blessing this network of water pipes are to our daily lives. In a water reliant culture, a well is the central

place of life. It is place guarded and chested as without it, all else fails.

What is the modern day living water, eternal energy, the lotto!

"Sychar, the name of the Samaritan town at which Jesus arrived, is not attested in earlier literature, but is probably to be identified with the modern village of 'Askar, on the shoulder of Mount Ebal, opposite Mount Gerizim. Jacob's well, attested by a continuous line of tradition, lies about a half mile to the south of the modern village. Sychar, John tells us, was *near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph*. The reference is to Genesis 48:22, where Israel (= Jacob) on his deathbed tells Joseph, 'And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give the ridge of land [Heb. *š^ekem*, lit. "shoulder" of a mountain] I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.' When the Israelites conquered and settled Canaan, they brought with them out of Egypt the bones of their ancestor Joseph, and buried them 'at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants.' Sychar (if it is to be identified with 'Askar) lies about a mile from the ancient town of Shechem (modern Balata). Joseph's tomb lies but a few hundred yards north-west of Jacob's well."

Who we are dealing with, the Holy Spirit, his role as a source of life- (lost (in the garden) then found (in Christ's sacrifice))

Life as created in the Garden (Gen.1-2) was through the Holy Spirit, life lost, and death was through sin (Gen 3), the result was the Spirit of God left the humans who he had created. This loss, although critical was always only ever meant to be a temporary situation, God always intended humanity to dwell with Him. The return of the Spirit to humans was the outcome of Jesus sacrifice. We honour Jesus sacrifice most when we lead Spirit-led lives. Jesus uses the continuing metaphor of

water to equate the Holy Spirit to a culture which needs to understand.

God's Kindness vs. Goodness

We know the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are kindness and goodness. We often miss the difference between these two aspects, but this interchange can help highlight the human response to them.

She wants things to make her life easier.(accepts Kindness)

Jesus offers her living water; she misinterprets this to mean perpetual real water, this she is happy to accept. People are often happy to accept something which brings blessing but demands nothing in return. We need to extend these acts of kindness to those we meet. A follower of Jesus must be a person who blesses those they get to meet. The fact that these acts of kindness will often be misunderstood or even used for entirely different purposes for which they were intended should never deter us from acting in this manner.

The change in Tempo, what Jesus knows, prophecy.

Jesus abruptly changes the tempo of the conversation, calling the woman to get her husband the next interchange demonstrates that he is from God and that she is living a life that is morally unacceptable. Now we see why she gathers water alone in the midday sun! This woman "sleeps around", other women want nothing to do with her. Even among the Samaritans, she is an outcast!

Challenged by Jesus and with her sin squarely in front of her, she does what many of us do and try to change the subject. Challenging Jesus with a time old theological question, which religion is right, the Jews or the Samaritans?

This is because "It is much more comfortable to discuss religion than to face one's sins!"- Warren W. Wiersbe,

This woman is playing on what has come to be known as the blind man and the elephant.

"There is a popular analogy used to show that all religions are valid ways to describe God. Religion professors especially love this philosophic analogy, because it equalises all religions, making all religions equally "true" in their description of God.

The analogy is this: there are four blind men who discover an elephant. Since the men have never encountered an elephant, they grope about, seeking to understand and describe this new phenomenon. One grasps the trunk and concludes it is a snake. Another explores one of the elephant's legs and describes it as a tree. A third finds the elephant's tail and announces that it is a rope. And the fourth blind man, after discovering the elephant's side, concludes that it is, after all, a wall.

Each in his blindness is describing the same thing: an elephant. Each describes the same thing in a radically different way.

According to many, this is analogous to the different religions of the world -- they are describing the same thing in radically different ways. Thus one should conclude that no individual religion has a corner on truth, but that all should be viewed as essentially equally valid."

"The Elephant in the room."

Clear definition of Who God is, refuting the Elephant in the room, God knows who he is. (Goodness)

Jesus bypasses this whole argument. People never give time to consider that the Elephant knows who it is, and in the same manner, Jesus as God knows who he is. Jesus is clear that the time has now come when both these erroneous religions, The Samaritans through bad knowledge, the Jews through bad

practice, would be united in Jesus, orthodoxy and orthopraxy united in the person of Jesus.

Jesus self-declaration, to the outcast people

Now Jesus chooses the outcast of the outcasts to declare his private name, an intimate moment. Jesus records that he is the Messiah, literally "I AM", the use of God's personal name in his revelation to Moses is now employed by Jesus to the nameless woman at a well.

Gutless wonders.

The disciples return, paralysed by convention, they can not challenge Jesus to explain himself, not stop them selves from thinking he should!, We must remember John the Evangelist was present at this moment, these these and his fellow disciple's thoughts recorded in humbling clarity.

Jesus tries to explain to these earth bound men that the Kingdom is all around, but they cannot see it. Trapped into human thinking, they fail to see the wonder of what was plainly evident to their own eyes. Jesus in response to their dull minds lifts the veil to explain the those about God's business find assistance from differing sources.

"But Jesus promptly disabuses them: *My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.* Almost certainly Jesus is echoing Deuteronomy 8:3," D. A. Carson

Deuteronomy 8:3 (NLT)

³ Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

A time for Reaping- The Harvest is White (God's timing)

In excitement the woman leaves her initial task of water gathering to go and tell the people the good news. She explains the coming of the Messiah, to a group of individuals who have no desire in relating to her, but since "Passion persuades" they find her account compelling, and we see them start to try to investigate Jesus.

As Warren Wiersbe says "There can be no conversion without conviction."

also "Nobody knows how many lost sinners have come to the Saviour because of the witness of this woman recorded in John 4." Warren W. Wiersbe

In this traditional dress of white, we see walking towards Jesus a movement of people who all want to know who he is, no wonder Jesus says to his disciples that the harvest is white! All around stand white clothed people who need to know the good news.

"the fields are ~~ripe~~ WHITE for harvesting" - Many versions have "ripe" when the word is actually "white." There are a lot people who will talk about some grain turning almost white close to harvest. And this may be true. But there is a deeper meaning here. Remember, the Samaritans, in their traditional garb, are on their way to see Jesus. Imagine this with me: as Jesus is talking about the fields being white/ripe for harvest, the disciples turn around and see a group of Samaritans walking towards them, all wearing their traditional white robes (see the image to the right). There is a multitude of thirsty people who need divine quenching coming towards them. That is the harvest awaiting to be reaped - to offer God's living water to a people without."

Jerusalem, Samaria, the world

"It is interesting to trace our Lord's movements that brought Him to Samaria. He was in Jerusalem (John 2:23) and then came into Judea (John 3:22). From Judea He went into Samaria (John 4:4), and the Samaritans declared Him to be "the Saviour of the world." This is a perfect parallel to Acts 1:8—"And ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Our Lord has set the example. If we follow, He will give us the harvest." Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 302.

Application

1) What are we prepared to throw out to find Jesus?

"That Samaritans should urge a Jewish rabbi to stay with them attests not only the degree of confidence he had earned, but their conviction that he was none less than the promised Taheb, the Messiah." D. A. Carson,

2) We can do what Jesus does- A Spirit-led life is in God's timing

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT)

⁴ Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant.
If they watch every cloud, they never harvest.

We should be "expecting evangelism."

"The disciples were learning a valuable lesson that would encourage them in the years to come. They were not alone in the work of the Lord, and they must never look on any

opportunity for witness as wasted time and energy. It takes faith to plow the soil and plant the seed, but God has promised a harvest” -Warren W. Wiersbe

3) "Good news for all people" is there a border we are being called to cross?

4) Do we need to risk our reputation to reach others?

References Used.

D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 216.

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Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 300.