

He passed through Samaria

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Preacher: Rev. Douglas Mackeddie

[0 : 00] I would like now to turn with you to John chapter 4. John chapter 4. I'm reading again at the beginning of the chapter.

I'm reading from the authorised verse in here. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptised not but his disciples, he left Judea, departed again into Galilee, and he must needs go through Samaria.

He must needs go through Samaria. The story of the woman of Samaria is a well-worn story, and I hope I say that in the best sense.

A story that has been taught to us since we were very, very young. One that has been an influence upon many people. I would have to say it's an influence on myself, and I think I might have recounted that at a fellowship meeting one time here before.

There is no doubt that this story, this narrative of Jesus' meeting with this woman of Samaria Samaria has had a tremendous influence on a lot of people because we can identify so clearly and so readily with what is taking place in this situation.

[1 : 35] Maybe it is not so easy at this point for some who may still be outside of Christ, but having said that, there is plenty here to identify with, whether we are in Christ or not.

Because there is no doubt at the moment that Jesus met with this woman at this well. This woman was like many of us who were in the broad road leading to destruction.

But what is very interesting, in the providence of God and in the ways of Christ, for those who have tasted and have seen that God is good, that his salvation is a salvation par excellence.

Nothing can compare to what Jesus has done in the life of a poor wretched sinner. And you ask any sinner that has been saved by grace and they will tell you the same.

There is nothing to compare to it. However, of course, I would have to suggest and admit, and we would all have to, that although there was that day of our meeting with Jesus, it may not have been at Jacob's well, but we had a meeting place with Christ in God's providence.

[2 : 51] And yes, that meeting place was profound, but very often it can dispel into the distant past when the world begins to take over once again.

But I think there are things in this woman's life, pre and post, experience of conversion that will resonate with all of us to one degree or another.

And I hope that when we look at this, we do so with a desire to seek the Lord whilst he is to be found and to call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return it to God for he will abundantly pardon.

In this verse 4, it is a very timely moment in the life of this individual. And it's a timely moment that we can identify with.

[3 : 53] He must needs go through Samaria. Now, I think it is the case, as I was trying to say to the children, and maybe I wasn't making the best of jobs for it, but I think it's the same with us all.

Every day that we get up, we're never really sure what the day is going to bring. Maybe there are presumptuous thoughts and our thinking that we're going to do this, that and the next thing.

But some or other, Jesus will intervene. He will intervene in such a way that he will bring about, yes, a redemption, a salvation.

He will bring about conscience crisis. He will bring about lots of things. And I doubt if there's anyone who attends the means of grace that doesn't have some kind of pang of conscience, one way or another.

The word of God is, as Isaiah the prophet said, is powerful, sharper. Where Paul says that, sorry. But it's the word of God that I was trying to say was, what Isaiah says is, that it will not return to him void.

[4 : 59] It will accomplish something. Of course it will. It will either make the sin harder, or it will soften. But it is the power of God unto salvation.

As Paul says in Romans chapter 1, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For this woman, it was a timely approach. One has to feel a degree of sorrow for this woman.

But again, without suggesting that she's outlandish any more than what you and I might have been, but not for grace. She's a woman that comes here to this well, daily probably, with her water pot. She's fulfilling a function, the kind of which is just a usual practice. Approaching this well, not anticipating for one moment that this day is going to be the day and the event of her life that is going to change everything.

Many of us have felt that when we came to the house of God, year in, year out. Brought under conviction, yes. Convicted about our sin, but then walking away and just forgetting all about it again and leaving the conviction in the seat.

[6 : 18] But yes, we come under conviction. But the other thing is that we might come thinking that nothing's going to happen today. It's just another day like any other day.

That's what it might have been for this woman. Here she was, going for the water. But what was very sad about this woman's state, you know, we might just look at the surface of things, but underneath this is a strange phenomena.

What is it strange? Do you ever find yourself as having very few friends? Nobody seems to be interested in you. No one seems to like you.

And of course, maybe time and again you might reflect and ask yourself, why? Why do people want to pass me by? Why do they want to turn aside?

This lady was coming to this well. On her own. That was sad. She had no friends. And the reason why she had no friends was because of her lifestyle.

[7 : 29] Oh, she had plenty of friends back in the city, as we'll see in a moment or two. But her lifestyle was such that as far as the other ladies whom she should have been friendly with were concerned, they were sidelining her.

No one was her friend. No one was interested. And we might be inclined to be like that with people that we know in this world. We take their lifestyle and it becomes a barrier to anything that the Lord would want us to do in relation to seeking to help those people who have a lifestyle that right yet rightly may do offend us.

We don't like, as we see it maybe on our television screens time and time again, we don't like the lifestyle that people are living. We open our papers every other day and we see things happening there and we nod our head.

But we would ever feel, would we ever think that there are people that we know and yes, we might even have a hidden concern. And I mean that, a hidden concern.

We won't go to the person and seek to help because maybe we are afraid that we might get tainted. Maybe there is that kind of spiritual presumptuousness in us.

[8 : 56] But when this woman went to that well, she never thought for one moment her life was going to change. She couldn't have got much, Lord.

No friends, nobody interested in her, except those who would pay for her services. What a lifestyle. Yes, we would want to shake our head.

But we would want to surely have some form of compassion to a soul that has become so degraded that this is all it is.

This is all life. Going to Jacob's well. Not that that was helping her. Or maybe she was of a superstitious nature. Maybe she felt that this was the one place she could feel well accepted.

But no one was really accepting her. But when she got to the well, there was somebody already there. And she recognised right away not who he was, but what he was.

[10 : 04] His dress code would seem to present to her, ah, this is not a Samaritan man. This is not one of those with whom she was having illicit dealings with.

This is a Jew. And as she said herself, she made an admission, Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. That's true.

In those days, the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans. And Jesus' message constantly comes over, especially in its evangelistic nature, calling upon people not to differentiate between class and creed, but to see a soul is in need.

That's what Jesus saw. He knew she was coming to that well. His disciples wouldn't have known a thing about it, but he knew everything and she comes to that well.

And she comes to get water. Well, the monumental event that took place.

[11 : 14] Here was Jesus, whom she didn't recognize only in as much as that he was a Jew and Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. And Jesus asks her a question, a simple question.

Give me water. That's what he says to her. Give me to drink, he says. What an introduction. Did she feel offended that a Jew would ask her for her to drink?

Yes, she was. The woman of Samaritans said to him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, ask drink of me, whom, which am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?

Here's the big cover-up, isn't it? It's what we do ourselves, you know. We try to find some kind of way of responding to a situation that makes us feel awkward and difficult.

Even in the house of God, when the word of God challenges us. Sometimes we don't like, but we want to divert the attention away. And of course, the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

[12 : 25] That was a cliché, really. But it was trying to hide and cover up something that was much deeper within her. But then as Jesus started to speak to her, she knew that this man was no ordinary man.

because he started to prick her every thought, her attitudes, her religious background, her religious thinking.

And you know what's very interesting about this woman of Samaria? She had some kind of belief in the Messiah. Is that not what she said?

She says that later on. You know, when the Messiah comes, she says, she understood that amount.

However, she is no different to many of us, maybe at one time we came into the house of God and listened about this Messiah. And maybe we would countenance a little bit of the truth that was being said, but not apply it to ourselves.

[13 : 36] when the Messiah, which is called the Christ, when he comes, he will do everything. He will do everything for us. But as Jesus started to open up the heart of this woman, there was no place to hide.

Nowhere to hide for any one of us, not even you or me. We cannot hide from the peerless eye of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mind of Christ as it reaches into the recesses of our minds and he begins to unravel what is really behind this poor woman's situation.

What is Jesus doing here? What he does to every soul that he seeks to draw to himself, he seeks to bring a conviction. Never mind making an argument a religious argument, never mind making an argument to try and boost your own position and say, well, I live a life, maybe it's not the best, but I'm not as bad as other people are.

As I say, we cover up all the time, we try to defend ourselves, but there was no room for this woman, for her to defend her. When Jesus said to her, go call your husband, what does she say?

How does she say when he argues with her? The poor woman has nowhere to hide.

[15 : 25] She begins to see that this Jesus is unraveling her soul right in front of her and there's nobody else there that she can claim could argue or help her.

Just like all of us, we cannot, we cannot prevent the activity of Christ when it starts to peer into our hearts and souls and bring about conviction.

We might want to run away, as I said earlier on, we might want to run away, we might want to get out of the building as quick as possible before the conviction gets any more and that I have to submit.

But when Jesus begins a good work, he performs it to the end. And every soul in this building is thankful for what Jesus has done, are they not?

The drawing power of Christ is something supreme. Man may try to bring about convicting influences upon us.

[16 : 30] A preacher might want to buy his appeal or whatever. Others who might want to try and convince you of your condition, your need. But at the end of the day, it is only what Christ is going to do that is going to make the difference.

Is that not true? We spoke some time ago about the men who were called upon to take Jesus, captive, prisoner. Remember the soldiers, the guards?

They didn't do it, of course, because they were convinced they had never heard anyone speak like Jesus. And every sinner who comes under the convicting power of Jesus will always utter, there is no one who spoke to my soul like the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what it was for this woman. No one spoke to her ever in this manner. Oh, yes, revelation about her life, exposing her life.

We don't like it. We don't like even maybe when we read a passage of scripture and we see ourselves underlined in that passage of scripture. You can see the faults and the failings that have been, as it were, brought up in front of us.

[17:47] And we want to maybe run away from it. But where could this woman run away to? Nowhere. Jesus was there. Oh, she says, I perceive, she said, that thou art a prophet.

She's beginning to realize that this man here is more than just what she thought. The woman said to him, I know the Messiah comes, which is called Christ.

When he is come, he will tell us all things. Is that an interesting statement? When he is come, he will tell us all things. You sit under the word of God, and you listen to these words of this woman. And you know it's as though these words are from our own lips. He will tell us all things. That's what he's doing to her. He's already telling her, exposing her heart and her soul, and she cannot, up to this point, realize.

She can't realize it all. Jesus makes a difference. and you might want to hide away from him, but you cannot.

[19:01] And how do we know it makes a difference? Well, every soul that has ever been confronted by Christ, every soul who has ever had the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ upon them, it changes things.

Whatever was in that woman's mind when she went out to gather water, probably nothing more than getting water. by those things happened to her. The influence of Jesus is beyond comparison. There's nothing like unto Jesus and his word, his convicting power upon us, but also the help and the assurance that he would give to a soul that is at the very bottom, who can't get lower down, apart from being hurled into a lost eternity.

After Jesus spoke to her, this is what he says, I that speak, he says, unto thee am he. I am the Messiah, I am the Saviour, I am the world, I am the one who understands everything, I know every nook and cranny of your mind, your thinking, your motives, whatever ideas you have, what you're going to do.

Jesus had a purpose that was different to hers. When he spoke to her, when he opened up her heart, when he told her exactly what she was, go call thy husband.

[20:36] I have no husband, oh yes, in that sense how truly, you've had five husbands, isn't that true? The poor woman, where is she turning to?

Where can she turn to the Lord Jesus? And that is brought before us in two things that happened in the life of this woman.

One is the convicting influence of the power of Jesus Christ has resulted in her leaving the well that she depended upon, this shrine almost.

She left her water pot, there at the well, and went away back into the city. She left her water pot.

That's what you and I do when we embrace Christ. The world that meant everything to us, the world that was in essence really, yes, their great mysticism.

[21:44] she left the water pot, which to me is representative of the world. The thing that she came for was forgotten about, because there was something much more important.

An influence had happened, something had taken place, her life was changed, and she had to do something about it. It was not to tangle with the world anymore, but yes, as is seen in Deceit and Zacchaeus as well, he tried to make right, at least by confession, to those who he had taken money from, illegally.

Here, this woman, what does she do? It must have been a difficult thing to do, but not when grace is there, and grace abounding. She goes back into the city, she speaks to those men, those men with whom she had her illicit feelings with, those men that she never thought that this Jew would have known anything about, this Jesus.

She goes back to them. It's not an easy thing to do, is it? Never have been in that situation the day you were converted and to go back to those people with whom you had your worldly interests and tell them that you met with Jesus and that this Jesus had made the difference. She goes to them and she says, come, come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. that is not this the Christ.

[23 : 41] Now of course that wasn't the end of it and this meeting with Jesus at that well was going to have profound influence, the kind of which I was suggesting at the very beginning.

Every one of us who have heard this story, it's had an influence at some level or another. She tells them, come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did.

Now I'm quite sure that those men with whom she was having her illicit dealings with, they would be gobsmacked. This woman, this adulteress, this woman who had cheapened her life and her kind to such a degree that she was left without any friends at all, she tells them about this man, Jesus.

And you cannot help but tell people about this man, Jesus, especially if he has done so much for you that you know yourself to be a different person altogether.

Did they taboo it? Did they laugh and mock at her? Maybe some of them might have done. We're not told that. But what we are told is that eventually these men went to see this Jesus, see the influence that one soul having been brought out of darkness into the marvelous light of Jesus at Christ, what one soul can do by the grace of the Lord Jesus.

[25 : 19] She tells them they go to see Jesus. And what's their testimony? Now we believe, if you read further on, we didn't read further on, but now we believe, they said, not because of the saying of the woman only, but because we've seen him for ourselves.

And if I'm speaking to anyone at all this morning, you and you haven't got faith in Jesus Christ, but you find yourself by the word of God pounded upon to seek the Lord whilst he is to be found, don't let another day go by.

And who knows what God will work in and through you as a servant of the Most High God. Instead of being a servant to the world, to a servant to the things of this world, and the master of deceit, but let us be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, serving him day and night.

What opportunities you and I have been given to speak a word in season. Is it not the case that the Lord Jesus Christ has given so much and we deserve nothing?

Let me read towards that part of the passage, verse 39. Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman which testified he told me all that ever I did.

[27 : 02] So when the Samaritans were come unto him they besought him that he would tarry with them and he abode there two days and many more believed because of his own word and said unto the woman now we believe not because of thy saying for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ the saviour of the world.

A momentous event. And again I know it's always dangerous to read too much into these things but again I'm trying to think of these men I mean you know they weren't illtless they were abusing her. okay her lifestyle she maybe flaunted herself too much she was much more interested in what they could give her in terms of finance.

But here they had the audacity you might say to go to Jesus. They were the ones who were dealing with her in the way that they were.

I don't want to go into details and try to be too graphic in these things but we know fine. And yet they had the courage of yes conviction of sin in their own hearts to go to this Jesus and to learn from this Jesus themselves as a sinner unsaved.

[28 : 36] Can you go to that Jesus assuredly believing that he will not turn you away? After all from his own lips he is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to a knowledge of the truth.

He must need Scothru Samaria. Is this your meeting place with Christ for the first time? Is it the meeting place with Christ that is regular for you and that you never want him to leave your side to always be with you?

Shall we pray? Oh gracious and ever-blessed God thy word is a testimony to our hearts and souls reminding us that without Christ we are hopelessly lost.

Oh Lord we pray that for any who may have a desire for these things but are so taken up by this world and holding on to their water pot oh Lord we pray that thou is unloose it from them and that thou wouldst bring them to the footstool of Christ in that humble submission God be merciful to me

a sinner.

Oh Lord take away all our offenses and if we have said anything that is an offense to thy word Lord blotted out from our minds may the love of the Lord Jesus Christ surround our hearts and all we ask is in his name Amen we're going to sing in Psalm 73 in the new version Psalm 73 at verse 21 and singing to the end of the psalm when my spirit was embittered and my heart with grief brought low like a beast I was before you dull and understanding slow yet oh Lord you hold my right hand with you I will always go to your glory you will bring me with your counsel as my guide I have none but you in heaven all on earth

[31 : 10] I lay aside flesh and heart may fail but ever God my portion will abide those far off from you will perish you give them their due reward as for me it is a blessing to be near the sovereign Lord I have made my God my refuge and your deeds I will record Psalm 73 at verse 21 when my spirit was embittered when in my heart I was answered with fear and when my soul was filled with bitterness then I was like a brute beast in your sight so full of ignorance and foolishness yet yet

I remain with you continually by my right hand you hold me as my guide you lead me with your counsel to the end and take me into glory to abide in heaven abide in heaven whom have I but you alone oh there's no one else whom I adore my heart oh though my heart may fail and fresh grow weak

God is my strength and portion evermore those who are far from you will be alive all those who are unfaithful you destroy a child drawn near and shelter in my God your deeds O Lord I will bring on with all sorry with that I give you the wrong verse sorry now may grace mercy and peace from the son and holy spirit rest upon and remain with you and with all the Israel of God both now and always amen