

Guest Preacher Rev Kenny I Macleod

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Preacher: Rev. Kenny I Macleod

[0 : 00] I want us just to think on this large section today of God's Word, and it's probably one of the best known in Scripture. And we find that Jesus is making His way.

He tells us that He's departing. He had been up in Jerusalem. We read about that in John chapter 2 and so on. And now we find that He's making His way to Galilee and that He has to pass through Samaria.

Now, He has to pass through Samaria on two accounts. One is, it's probably the quickest route, but the other is, there's a soul to be saved. Indeed, there are many souls to be saved.

There are no chance encounters in this world. We would think just if we were seeing this story out with it being a spiritual account, we would say, well, wasn't that a chance meeting?

But there are no chance meetings. And you and I know how often our lives have changed because of a meeting. Something unexpected has happened. And you can look back and you say, you know, that was amazing.

[1 : 07] My life took a different turn just from that meeting. That one, and you would say, a chance meeting. But it wasn't chance. Everything is ordered and directed by God.

And so we find here that this is the most amazing meeting between Jesus and this woman. Now, John highlights in John chapter 3 and John chapter 4 two totally different people.

In John chapter 3, we have Nicodemus. And Nicodemus was this upright, self-righteous, knowledgeable, educated pillar of the community.

And yet, what John shows us, despite all his religion, despite all his learning, despite all his morality, he needed Jesus.

That's why Jesus said to him, you must be born again. And then we come to chapter 4. And we couldn't have a greater contrast. Because here's this woman who would have been uneducated.

[2 : 10] Because, unfortunately, that was how it was then. This woman who had very loose morals. She had had five husbands. And the man she was with now wasn't her husband.

She was somebody who had lived life, had tried everything. She was an opportunist. She was somebody who would have been a social outcast in the community in which she lived.

But she needed Jesus just the same. And that's often a thing that people find hard to understand.

Because there's within us this kind of idea that if we're decent and upright and morally decent, and if we sort of stroke the T's and dot the I's, then that somehow God will accept us on our efforts and what we're doing.

But no, it doesn't work like that. The Bible tells us very clearly, all have sinned and all have come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous.

No, not one. Even the most morally upright, the most religious person who is still without Christ is still not righteous.

[3 : 21] No, not one. And that is why Jesus said that it was easier for the outcasts, for the socially marginalized, those who were struggling, those who had real needs to enter the kingdom, than those who were self-righteous within themselves.

That was the great problem of the Pharisees. That they thought, because they were covenant people of God, that God owed them. And that they were all right.

But you will find that Jesus is often dealing with the tax collectors, with the publicans, with the, he's dealing with the social outcasts, with the lepers, with those that have no place in society.

And they seem to be much more receptive to Jesus than those who were, as it were, as far as society were concerned, were really good and upright. And that's one of the lessons that's very difficult for us sometimes to take on board.

But it is something that we always need to take to heart. That the only way of becoming right with God is in and through his Son, Jesus Christ. There is no other name given under heaven whereby we might be saved, but, or must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 38] Now, we find here that Jesus enters into a conversation with this woman. Now, the very fact that he's in this conversation with this Samaritan woman is quite extraordinary.

We, in the culture that we live in, thankfully, we live in the day that we do live in. We live in the society that we do live in. It's not the same everywhere in the world. But back 2,000 years ago, women were incredibly marginalized.

And we find some of the writings from the rabbis, and it was forbidden on the street to talk to women, for men to talk to women. This is what it says.

One should not talk with a woman on the street, not even with his own wife, and certainly not with someone else's wife because of the gossip of men. That was one of the religious, the rabbis' laws. It is forbidden to give a woman any greeting. Imagine, imagine living in that kind of day. We can't understand that. We live in a day, thankfully, where we're equally able to socialize and to meet and to talk.

[5 : 52] But that's how it was. These were not God's laws. These were man's laws. These were the religious leaders' laws of the day. And that's one of the reasons why they hated Jesus, because Jesus paid no regard to their man-made laws.

Jesus adhered to the law of God, not to the law of man, not to these religious leaders' laws at any rate. And so we find that Jesus is somebody who's dealing with people at their greatest sore points or whatever.

But a way beyond also the fact that Jesus is here talking with this woman, we also find she's a Samaritan woman. And for the Jew, the Samaritan was the ultimate taboo.

You had no dealings with Samaritans. In fact, the Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Even this woman was amazed that this Jewish man was speaking to her, because the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings.

[7 : 16] The Samaritans, of course, I believe, came from—you remember how there was the Assyrian invasion, the ten northern tribes were taken. And what had happened was that many of the Jews that were taken, there was intermarriage.

And so the Jews looked on the Samaritans as being racially and religiously impure. And so they had no dealings with them in any shape or form.

In fact, it was so extreme that it was said that some Pharisees—it's hard to believe this—prayed that no Samaritan would be raised at the resurrection.

That's how intense the hatred that some of the Jews had for the Samaritans. So that this conversation is taking place at all is really, really quite remarkable.

But as we say, Jesus, there are no chance meetings with Jesus. And Jesus initiates the conversation, and it shows us very simply.

[8 : 16] A woman from Samaria came to draw water and said to Jesus, and Jesus said to her, give me a drink. Now, before that, it tells us Jesus was wearied, as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well.

It was about the sixth hour. And it's here we see the God-man, the God who neither slumbers nor sleeps in humanity. And apart from sin, Jesus was exactly like ourselves, because he experienced in his humanity weariness, hunger, thirst, pain, all the things he had to in order to be our representative.

And so we see a weary, thirsty Jesus at this well. The disciples have gone into the city to buy food. And I'm only speculating here, but there's quite a chance that the disciples would not have gone in to the city to buy food, were it not being with Jesus, because already their horizons were being slightly widened in the way that Jesus was dealing with all kinds.

Maybe had they never met Jesus, they would never have gone into a city in Samaria. But anyway, they do. They go to get food. And Jesus speaks to this woman who has come to the well at the sixth hour, which is reckoned to be at noonday.

Now, that's the one time people didn't go to get water, because you know that midday is the time of the blazing sun, and in the Middle East, the sun is just shining down so bright.

[9 : 55] People went to draw water in the evening. So this woman would have gone at an hour when she thought nobody would be about, because she's a social outcast. She's somebody that people have avoided at all costs, because of her reputation.

If you were seen speaking to her, your reputation could be tarnished in the day you were living in, because of the type of woman she was. So she goes at a time when there's going to be nobody about. And then Jesus begins to engage with her.

And the lovely thing about how Jesus engages is that he treats her for who she is herself. He's not there belittling her. He's not looking down on her.

He's not passing judgment as such. But he is like a doctor, beginning, dealing caringly, sympathetically, sincerely, but he's probing away in order for her to discover more about herself and eventually bring her to see him.

And Jesus still deals like that with us. He still deals with us in the very same way. Maybe he's doing that with you just now. Maybe he's probing into your life. Maybe there are things going on in your life right now and you can't figure it out.

[11 : 10] And you're uncomfortable. You're not in a good place. And you're saying, what on earth is going wrong? Maybe God is working in your life just now. And he often does that by probing, by pushing into us.

Maybe upset. Maybe there are things that your life maybe was running smoothly. It's not anymore. There's kind of twists and turns that you can't figure out. And you're saying, what's going wrong? And often God shakes us up in his providence.

And that's the beginning of his grace working in our heart and in our lives. So Jesus is dealing very gently with this woman. And he asks her for this drink.

And again, as we say, she's amazed that he asks. And then he said to her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

The woman, of course, throughout this conversation, right up until the disclosure of who Jesus is, is dealing in the physical. Jesus is dealing in the spiritual.

[12 : 18] And Jesus is leading her from the physical into the spiritual. And Jesus is telling her the kind of water that he has. He said, because she's saying, are you greater than her father Jacob who gave us this well?

Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will be never thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life.

And the woman says, I want some of that water. And you and I know if you've come to faith in Jesus Christ, it's one of the great descriptions of how Jesus is the water of life for us.

Because you know if you've been really thirsty, you can think of a day maybe you were out gathering on the moor and you were out for hours. It was very often in the gatherings it's not sunny. But if it was a sunny day, you know sometimes you can get really, really, really thirsty. And when you're absolutely parched, you can't think of anything but water. That's what you want. You can think of lots of other things at other times.

[13 : 24] But when you're really thirsty, you say, I could do anything just to get a drink. Well, you know when you get a drink, there's a satisfaction. There's a refreshing.

There's almost a sense of rest with it. There's a sense of peace. And that's how it is spiritually as well. When the Lord touches our heart, we find this sense of refreshing and rest.

Because we've never been at rest until we come to rest in Jesus. You and I know that. If you're a Christian today, you know that it wasn't until you came to faith in Jesus Christ that you fully began to realize what peace was in your own heart.

You might have thought you had peace before. You might have been quite a chilled person, somebody who found life, who just took it as it came. But you never really had. The peace that Jesus gives is altogether different.

My peace I give you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Maybe today you're able, you become a Christian and people say to you, what do you have that you didn't have before?

[14 : 33] And you say, well, there's a lot of things I can't explain, but there's one thing I know. I have a deep-rooted peace that I never had before. And you see, that peace is the peace of Jesus.

Jesus who has come in residence through his Spirit into your heart. It's not that Jesus takes like a portion of peace somewhere and gives it. It's him. He is the peace.

He is peace. It is him through the Spirit. Spirit conveying Jesus into your heart. And it gives refreshing, renewal.

It gives strengthening so that you're able to go on and carry on. And that's the way that this water of life works within us. And so Jesus is promising the woman this.

And then Jesus begins to probe. And he says, go call your husband. The woman answered, I have no husband. And Jesus said to her, you are right in saying I have no husband.

[15:29] For you've had five husbands. And the one you now have is not your husband. What you said is true. And the woman said, sir, I perceive that you're a prophet. And I think she's going to get a wee bit uncomfortable here.

Because you notice the next thing what she does right after that. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain. But you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

A woman's getting a little uncomfortable. So what does she do? She does what so many people do. You know, you speak to people who aren't Christians. And maybe you're getting a wee bit close to the bone.

What do they do? Very often they will bring up religious divisions. They will bring up splits. Or they will bring up, why is there this? It's a favorite tactic with people.

They use it as an excuse for not coming to church. They use it as a reason for not coming to faith. They point to divisions and so on within the Christian sphere. It's an age-old tactic.

[16:31] That's what this woman is doing. She's trying to sidetrack Jesus and say, How about we worship in this mountain? You say you have to worship in Jerusalem. She's trying to take Jesus off track here.

And Jesus says to her very clearly, The hour is coming. And that's what he says. Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on 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 the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

You see, the focus has always to come back upon the Lord. And that's what Jesus is showing. Never mind about worshiping in this place or worshiping in that place.

And when you speak to people about the Christian faith, make sure you fix on Christ. Don't get sidetracked by where they'll try and take you with religious divisions because they will.

[17:34] They'll bring up all these arguments. Keep focused on Christ. That's the key. Keep on Christ. Keep on Christ. He is the way of salvation. And when we keep focused on Christ, it disarms people.

Well, if they don't want, sometimes they'll just walk away. But that's what's so important. So Jesus is focusing her upon this. And then the woman said, I know that Messiah is coming.

He was called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things. And you know, verse 26 is quite an amazing verse. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

I who speak to you am the Christ. You know, this is one of the greatest declarations, self-declarations, that Jesus ever made. You would expect it to be maybe in the temple.

It might be in front of all the leading Pharisees, in front of all the scribes, in front of all the chief priests, in front of all the religious leaders, that he makes such a statement, I am the Christ.

[18:43] But no, it's way out at a well in Samaria, speaking to a woman who's an outcast, a woman who is noted as an undesirable.

And he's making this wonderful statement, this self-declaration as to who he is. And it's just at this moment that the disciples come back.

And it tells us they marveled that he was talking with a woman. But no one said, who do you seek her? Why are you talking with her? And we see the reaction of the woman.

She just, at that moment when Christ told her who he was. What did she do? She had come for water. She left her water pots. And she went running back into the city.

Do you know, when the Lord touches our lives, everything changes. Everything that was important to us, the water pots was what was important to that woman at that time. She left them.

[19:41] They were of no interest to it. And you'll find that happening over and over again in the lives of God's people. When Peter and Andrew and James and John, when Jesus called them, they

left their nets.

They were fishermen. When Jesus called Matthew, he left his tax booth. He was a tax collector. And went to follow Jesus. When Jesus touched the heart of the Saul of Tarshish, he was a religious fanatic.

He was steeped in all the religious laws and ways of the day. He gave it all up. What people would have given anything. There are so many people in the land who would have given anything to be Saul of Tarshish.

Of all that he had. Of all that he had achieved. Of the status that he had. What does he say later on? I counted them but refuse. But done. They're worthless. I don't count these things that people put so much store on.

They're nothing. Everything is in Christ Jesus. And that's the transforming power of Christ. He changes everything. And he changed this woman. And so she goes running back into the city to tell the great news.

[20 : 54] And in the meantime, the disciples are urging, Rabbi, eat. And they discover, and he says to them basically, eat, he said, I have food to eat that you do not know about.

And you see the great food that Christ was enjoying at that time was the whole business of saving souls. This was the joy that was set before him.

This is why he endured the cross. I don't think you and I can fully appreciate the joy that is involved in the salvation of a soul.

We're told there's rejoicing in heaven amongst the angel over one sinner that comes to repentance. There is joy. Amazing joy. And so often, how do we treat when we hear, what's our reaction when we hear somebody's come to faith?

Do we say, oh, it's nice, or do we just say, oh, okay. It's something that should stir our hearts and give us the most wonderful joy.

[21 : 59] Here's another person that Christ has come into the world to save, who has endured the cross and has serious come and he saved him, he saved her. And this is the meat that was a joy to the Father.

This is where he was getting his food. And so the woman goes into the city and says, and you know, it's a master's stroke from the woman. She said, come see a man who told me all that ever I did.

I'm sure they would be saying, oh, you did a lot. But it's what she said afterwards. Can this be the Christ? She didn't come into the city and say, come, come and see Christ.

Because they'd be saying to themselves initially, oh, this woman, this is a woman, she's always trying something new or somebody new or something. we're not paying too much store by her. But when she comes and she says, come see a man who told me all that ever I did. Then she leaves a question with them. Can this be the Christ?

[23 : 02] Now that was clever. Because natural curiosity will be such and say, oh, I wonder if it is. And so they go out in their hordes.

Very clever. from the woman because she knew straight away she had come to believe in Jesus because when Jesus said to her that he was the Christ, she believed that he was the Savior of the world and she went shooting back to tell.

She knew, but it was clever the way she said, can this be the Christ? She's putting the responsibility on them to go and find out for themselves. And in the meantime, Jesus says something very interesting to the disciples.

and he said to them, look, look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest.

Now, the disciples were blinkered. They weren't understanding. But just going to come pouring out into the countryside down to that well, there were going to come loads and loads and loads of Samaritans seeking Christ.

[24 : 07] The fields were white. The disciples weren't seeing it. And then Jesus says something very interesting. Look, already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together.

One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored and you have entered into their labor. Now, this is very interesting because in congregational life, in the historical life of a congregation, you will have sowing times and reaping

times.

Never say in a congregation, I'm not just saying to you, but I would say the same to anyone, never say nothing is happening. People might say, what's doing? Ah, nothing's happening. Yes, it's a sowing time.

When the word of God has been faithfully preached and where there's a faithful adherence to God's truth and it's been proclaimed, His word has been sown.

Now, you and I know that sowing is much harder than reaping. If you're going to sow, there's a field over there. What do you do? You have to go and clear the field, prepare the field, you have to plow the field, you have to sow, you have to water, you have to, there's so much in it.

[25 : 26] When you reap, you just come in and reap what has been sown. And Jesus is saying that's the way ministries are. That some ministers will come, that's what He's saying to the disciples here, you, I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor.

They were going to be reapers. You can see Peter at Pentecost. Thousands were saved. But there was a preparatory work had been going on before. And we've always got to remember this is the sowing.

There's the sowing and the reaping. And some people, the Lord has privileged to be great reapers. And where you, there are many, many souls come to faith.

But very often before that, there has been a sowing, a sowing time. And it's often the reapers that will get the recognition and they will maybe get the human acclaim.

But the Lord is saying that's not how it is. There's a time of sowing and a time of reaping. But in glory, the sowers and the reapers will rejoice together. It's all going to be together because it's all one work.

[26 : 38] And you and I are all involved in the work of sowing. It's not just from a pulpit. In your life, in your day-to-day contact, whether it's at work or at home or in the community, wherever, we're sowing seed.

Our life is sowing seed. Sometimes we think it's only by what we say. But it's also who we are. You look back over your Christian life and before you became a Christian, there were men and women whose lives, by what they were, spoke to you.

They had an impact upon you just on the kind of people that they were. And it's not just what we say, it's what we are that has our bearing. It's all part of the sowing.

So we need to be faithful and when you're sowing, there are times it's hard going and preaching is hard going and sometimes when you're saying, particularly if you're working for the Lord, if you're doing anything, when you're witnessing, you might have witnessed and witnessed to neighbors for years.

You might have witnessed to work colleagues for years. You might have witnessed, maybe you'll never see the fruit, but there might come a day when somebody else will come along and will say something and all the sowing that you took part in, that person will see the reaping result of it.

[27 : 56] You be faithful to where God has set you. You be faithful to what God has given to you because as we said, no labor in the Lord is ever in vain. And then we see that the crowds arrive, huge crowds are coming of the Samaritans and they have come on behalf of the word of the woman and it tells us very simply, many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.

He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them and it tells us many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, it is no longer because of what you said that we believe for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.

What a wonderful day that was. What a wonderful couple of days where Jesus stayed behind. You know, it's quite an extraordinary thing.

But you know, this woman that we read of here in glory is someone who's going to shine and shine and shine. We're told a wonderful version, Daniel. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above.

Those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. this woman was used to bring many souls to Christ.

[29 : 22] She is going to shine like the stars forever and ever. You know, in this world there are many people they want to be stars, they want to be famous. And in this world the star may shine for a little while but soon it fades and it's gone because everything in this world is only for a little.

but this is the only star that will shine forever. Those who are in Christ Jesus. And as I say, everything that you do for the Lord it will receive its well done.

That's one of the great surprises I believe on the great day is that the Lord will say you did this and you did that and you say when did we do that? Well remember that's what he said as much as you did it to one of these the least of my brethren you did it unto me.

So it is important that we're faithful to what we're given to where we're at and to serve the Lord. And remember if you don't have Christ yet that your soul is the most important possession that you have.

Callum Murdo last Sunday told a wonderful story about you might if anybody watched it online about a boy who asked his father and he said Dad is your soul insured?

[30 : 40] I said why are you asking that? Well he said you my uncle was saying your dad has his car insured his fields insured his house insured his barns insured he's even got an insurance for himself but I don't think he's got an insurance for his soul.

so he said Dad is your soul insured? And that's a question you have to ask yourself as well is my soul insured? Because there's not any company that can insure your soul it's one person the Lord alone and you make sure because we it's incredible how we will seek to insure all the other things that are going to pass quickly our soul is forever it's the most precious possession we have only Jesus can insure your soul and that is by taking him as your saviour let us pray Lord our God we pray to bless us and we we ask that you will indeed humble us in your presence and that you will bless your word to us we give thanks for this word and in many ways the simplicity of it and yet there are times the complexity of it we give thanks oh Lord that you are the God who are working in so many wonderful ways and mysterious ways we pray your blessing upon your word here today that fruit will come from it we pray that you'll take us all home safely and prepare us for the evening service for giving us our sin in Jesus name

Amen we're going to conclude singing in Psalm 126 and this is from Sing Psalm Psalm 126 When Zion's fortunes God restored it was a dream come true our mouths were then with laughter filled our tongues with songs anew the nation said the Lord has done great things for Israel the Lord did mighty things for us enjoy our heart in you well restore our fortunes gracious Lord like streams in desert soil a joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower's toil the man who bearing seed to sow goes out with tears of grief will come again with songs of joy bearing his harvest sheaf Psalm 126 Sing Psalms the whole psalm when Zion's fortunes God restored when Zion's fortunes God restored it was a dream come true our mouths were then with laughter filled our tongues with songs anew the nation said the Lord has done great things for Israel the Lord did mighty things for us enjoy our hearts you well restore our fortunes gracious Lord like streams in desert soil a joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower's toil the man who bearing seed to sow goes out with tears of grief will come again with songs of joy bearing his harvest mercy now may the grace mercy and peace of God the Father

Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore Amen