

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

John 4.1-30

Is there hope?

Hope that we can fulfill those deep-seated needs to love and be loved?

I've often asked that question of myself from time to time?

I asked that question when I was teaching in Faulkton in the 70's.

I was in a rut. I was working hard

and didn't have much time to work on a relationship

but I was reasonably good looking back then.

I had more hair and fewer pounds than I do now.

I was reasonably intelligent and had a wonderful sense of humor.

(At least I thought so.)

So was there any hope that there was some wise and wonderful woman out there just waiting for me, waiting to take me in?

I lived in the apartment above the Bakery (yummm)

on the Southwest corner where Main St. and Hwy 212 intersect.

It is one of those old brick buildings with huge windows where there are about 30 wide and steep steps getting from the first to the second floor.

It is also easy to hear about anything and everything.

I was working on something

but I kept hearing the door open and close downstairs.

I looked out the window to see what was happening.

There was this very attractive young lady and her mother

(at first I thought it was her sister) going in and out of the building

and carrying boxes up and down the steps.

She was moving in next door-hummm, there was hope.

Well, I finally finished what I was doing and went out to help.

They were just coming up the steps and so I asked if I could help.

They said no, but thanks a lot, this was the last load.

You have to know I felt really bad about that-just terrible.

But my head was spinning and my heart was filled with hope.

I found there was hope for a 25 year old busy bachelor.

Is there hope for you?

**You might not need hope in your love life,
 but, how about the hope to fall in love with your spouse again.
 Hope that your kids will turn out ok.
 Hope that you can feed those kids and pay your bills.
 Hope that you'll weather the financial crisis.**

**Hope that some binding addiction might be broken.
 Hope your loved one will heal.
 Hope that there'll be peace in our world.
 Hope that someone will forgive you for what you said or did
 or failed to say or do that hurt them.**

Is there hope that your life or the life of your loved one can be changed for the better?

There may be any number of reasons you might think or feel there is no hope.

**But first, I just want you to know, THERE IS HOPE FOR YOU.
 You don't have to believe me.
 Just sit back, listen in, and watch as Jesus chats with the woman at the well.**

**This woman needed to be loved in the worse way.
 She needed someone to love in the worse way.
 She needed hope.
 Let's look at the story.**

*John 4.3, "When Jesus learned of this,
 he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.
 Verse 4-Now he had to go through Samaria.
 Verse 5-So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar,
 Near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.
 Verse 6-Jacob's well was there, and Jesus,
 tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.
 It was the sixth hour.
 Verse 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water
 He said to her, Will you give me a drink?"*

**From what we've read already we know this woman was desperate.
 She came to the well outside the city, at high noon, and alone.**

**There was a well inside the city she could have used.
 This was a chore that was usually done in the cool of the morning,
 not the heat of the day.
 And this was a chore that wives, mothers, sisters, and friends did together.
 The women I know like to talk, walk, and work together.**

**This woman was an outcast, a marginal person, on the fringes of community.
 So she must have surely been surprised when Jesus talked to her.**

Most of the men that talked to her used, misused, and abused her.
So she might be wondering, what did Jesus really want?

Verse 9, *“The Samaritan woman said to him,
You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman.
How can you ask me for a drink?”*

She’s figured out something is really strange here,
Jewish men don’t talk to Samaritan women.

There is a lot here already to unpack.
It’ll be easier to see some interesting things
if we draw a contrast between Nicodemus,
who Pastor Eldon talked about a couple of weeks ago and this woman.
The contrasts between the two are striking.

Think about this,
Nicodemus was one of the good old boys of the Jew establishment.
He gets named in the scripture.
The woman is a shamed Samaritan woman and unnamed.

Nicodemus has power and prestige.
His character is beyond question (although it shouldn’t be).
She is powerless and put down, and, her character is certainly questionable.

Nicodemus intentionally and secretly comes to Jesus at night, hiding his doubts.
She coincidentally (or is it providentially) comes to Jesus at high noon, to hide her shame.

Nicodemus has been looking for answers, and until Jesus, in all the wrong places.
The woman has been looking for love, and until Jesus, in all the wrong places.

Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born again.
Nicodemus questions, like, you’re crazy, how can one be born again?
Jesus tells the woman about living water.
She asks, like, wow, where can I find this living water?

Nicodemus leaves and disappears into the night.
The woman leaves her jar and tells others about Jesus.

They are from different planets but you know what,
their need is surprising similar, isn’t it?
They both need to recognize who Jesus is and to receive him,
they both need to get their heads on straight and their hearts set right.

Are you more like Nicodemus or the woman at the well,
or someone in between, it doesn't matter, **YOU'LL FIND YOUR HOPE IN JESUS.**

It is as simple as that.

The woman at the well and Nicodemus both did.

*“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God
and who it is that asks you for a drink,
you would have asked him and he would give you living water.’”* (Verse 10)

She stays with what she knows.

I can hear her thinking, ya right.

This guy is a teacher, a pastor what does he know about life?

This guy is nuts, he's trying to tell me about drawing water,
and he doesn't even have a pot to draw with.

Ok, I'll play his silly game,

Verse 11-12, *“Sir, the woman said,
you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. (Strike one)*

Where can you get the living water? (Strike two)

*Are you greater than our father Jacob,
who gave us the well and drank from it himself,
as did also his sons, and his flocks and herds?” (Strike three-he out!)*

Jesus fouls off the pitch, moves the conversation to another level,
and brings the focus back to him,

Verses 13-14, *“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,
but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.*

*Indeed, the water I give him will become in him
a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

She has to shake her head and think, this guy is full of riddles.
So she cynically tries to stay with him.

Verse 15, *“The woman said to him,
Sir, give this water so that I won't get thirsty
and have to keep coming here to draw water.”*

I'll bet Jesus smiled, at least smiled inside,
not a malicious smile, just a little knowing smile, you know.
Just remember he loves this woman,
and is going to the cross for her.

Verse 16, *“He tells her, ‘Go, call your husband and come back.’”*

Oh, oh. She fesses up, saying she has no husband.

Jesus reminded her she has had five husbands and is working on the sixth.

I don't think Jesus is concerned about her marital history.
 Jesus knows her hurt and knows her heart.
 Those of you that have been in broken relationships would easily understand her pain.

His words weren't to push her deeper in her shame,
 but they are to draw her out of her pain.

Remember John 3.17 says something about God sending Jesus
 into the world not to condemn, but to save.
 The Message says it this way,
 "God didn't go to all the trouble sending his son
 just to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it is.
 He came to help to put the world right." (John 3.17 MSG)

Jesus just wants her to understand who he is (to get her head on straight)
 and let him love her (to get her heart set right).

And friends, she's almost there.
 She says, "*Sir, I can see you are a prophet.*"(verse 19)

Knowing he is a religious man so she asks about right worship.
 Maybe she really wants to know, maybe not,
 but she senses Jesus cares.
 No one has cared before so she keeps the conversation going, verse 20,
 "*Our fathers worshiped on this mountain,
 but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.*"

Jesus renews her hope and redefines worship for her.
 Verse 23, "*Yet a time is coming and has now come
 when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.*"

Jesus is simply saying true worship is not identified with a place,
 true worship is identified by spirit and truth.

We hear her try to catch up again, verse 25,
 "*I know that Messiah is coming.
 When he comes he will explain everything to us.*"

Jesus simply takes the guessing game away,
 he dots the i's and crosses the t's,
 Verse 26(MSG), "*Then Jesus declared, 'I am he,
 you don't have to look any longer or look any farther.'*"

The woman is so overwhelmed and so moved,
 she leaves her water jar, goes into town and tells of her experience.

And guess what, others believe, others believe, and others believe.

And that brings us to our last point,
WE MUST SHARE OUR HOPE WITH OTHERS.

Here is a story that has brought hope to others.

Three weeks ago I received a letter from Becky Soske.
 She and I worked together in the SHARE food program in Rapid City.
 She has a fascinating testimony.

Here is a part of her letter.
 "I felt like the woman at the well.
 I was thirsty for true life and healing.
 I was a woman who aborted my baby
 and then spent years trying to destroy my own life.

I tried to find that healing through sexual relationships and drunkenness.
 I even contemplated suicide
 and no attempt to quench my thirst, ever quenched my thirst!

But Jesus got to me just like he did the woman at the well.
 I had the "well" experience when a neighbor
 who was legally blind took me on a tour of Boston.

He wanted me to see Faneuil Hall,
 which is historically known as the cradle of liberty.
 He was walking me to the hall and unbeknownst to him,
 we walked right into the middle of a pro-life demonstration.

They had big, larger than life pictures of aborted babies.
 I was hit on the head with the reality, "I did that to my baby."
 Jesus was confronting me, like the woman at the well.

I realized I was living outside God's will.
 I realized abortion hurts, it ends a life,
 I realized it destroys other lives and it was destroying mine.

I realized I couldn't live without Jesus in my life any longer.
 I asked Jesus to be my savior and confessed my sins to him.

Isn't that amazing, a blind man leads her to the cradle of liberty
 and she meets the Jesus Christ of the cross who forgives and gives her life and liberty.

You don't have to be a woman who has had an abortion to experience that.
 But you might be like a Nicodemus, hiding something, afraid to confess fears and failures,

**Or you may have cheated on your spouse,
filing your tax returns, or on a test at school.**

**You may be struggling with drunkenness or drugs,
pride or pornography, greed, gluttony, or gossip.**

**Maybe you have an uncontrolled tongue or uncontrolled anger,
or even just some sin that don't even seem like sin, but it is.**

**The list is endless and we'll all find ourselves on that list someplace.
It doesn't matter. Jesus knows everything anyway.**

**Jesus knows, but loves you anyway, loves you just the way you are,
Do you know that?**

**And he loves you too much not to leave you just the way you are.
Do you know that?**

**The Bible tells us Jesus was tired from the journey,
worn out, so he sat down to rest...to talk to the woman at the well.**

**The Bible also tells us Jesus sits in the throne room of God,
at the right hand of God to intercede, to advocate, to talk to God on our behalf.**

**The Bible also tells us that he wants to sit with you and I,
In Isaiah God says, come now, let us reason (let's sit down and talk),
though your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow.**

**And the Bible tells us that God not only wants to sit with us,
but he wants to be a spring in us, a fountain of living water, refreshing life giving water,
life giving water that renews, restores, revives your soul,
life-giving water that sets your head on straight and your heart set right.**

**By the Power of the Spirit Jesus did it for an unwanted, unnamed, unclaimed woman at the well.
By the Power of the Spirit he did it for the elite, well established, and well educated, Nicodemus.
And by the Power of the Spirit he wants to as well, do that for you and me.**

**It is nice to be loved.
There really is hope.
Let's pray.**

