

Breaking Boundaries

15 - The Mystery of God: The Gospel of John
Church on the Park | Sunday, 27 April 2014

Text: John 4:1-26

Theme: Jesus goes out of his way to give the thirsty something real to drink

Intro: Last week we saw that John the Baptist came as a servant in order to connect the bride with the bridegroom, Jesus. This week we see that connection taking place. Jesus is divinely compelled to go through Samaria even though there was another way to get where he was going. He goes to Samaria for one woman, who according to the world and religion, would hardly be worth anyone's time. Yet, Jesus' encounter with this Samaritan woman changes the whole direction of her life. After she drinks the water that Christ gives, she is overflowing with life, and leads many to Jesus. But in order to understand the revolutionary nature of this event we need to know the historic background of the time.

Tell the Story

1) Jesus breaks through cultural boundaries

- **Samaritans** were a **half-breed** of Jews who mixed worshipping Yahweh with **idols**. They used the first five books of the Bible, but they did not worship at Jerusalem, but instead at MT Gerizim (which can be seen from Jacob's well)
- John makes it clear, "For Jews do not **associate** with Samaritans" (John 4:9)
- Moreover, it was not normal for a **man** to **speak** to a **woman** alone in public (John 4:27). Some Rabbis taught that it wasn't even right for a husband to talk to his wife in public.
- In **today's** English **Samaritan** is associated with the word '**good**.' That's because of Jesus; he changed the world's perspective. But before it was associated with sin, idolatry and moral compromise.
- Jesus **crossed** age old boundaries to bring **breakthrough** into people's lives
- Jesus is crossing **racial** lines and **gender** boundaries.
- Jesus is more concerned with the individual **soul** than with man made **cultural** boundaries.
 - He is willing to look **weird** and even be **misunderstood** to reach people
- Jesus Christ was the **greatest social liberator** of history, breaking down both racial and gender inequalities (Eph. 2:14-18)
 - Never think that Jesus was a **bigot** because some that professed to be Christians were bigots
 - We would not think about human equality as we do in the modern world if it wasn't for Jesus
- We need to **reflect** our **Messiah** in breaking negative cultural boundaries.
- Throughout history **racial tensions** have been one of the worst sins of men. We are constantly fighting over race and place, who is better and who is entitled to the best.
- It was only in 1973 that the **white Australia policy** was dismantled. But it still has left its residue in the Australian psyche. *See Notes*

2) Jesus goes out of his way to encounter the thirsty

- “Now he **had** to go through Samaria” (John 4:4)
- Our **prayer walk** through the city this week, and how we met an aboriginal blind man begging for money and lost people looking for direction. Only later did my friend Cesar see the prophetic connection
- It’s an **encounter** with Jesus that **revolutionises** people’s lives (v. 28).
 - Sometimes this encounter has **instantaneous** effects, other times it **grows** on people. Look at Nicodemus for example (John 19:38-42)
- This all happened at a **well**, Jacob’s well. So I began to **study wells** through Scripture.
- I found two repeated patterns regarding wells: 1) They were places of **encounter** with God, 2) They were places where **bride and bridegroom** met for the first time.
 - **Hagar** encountered God two times at a well (Gen. 16:7, the **God who sees**; Gen. 21:19 - **Hagar sees**). Seeing is a major theme of John.
 - Three Jewish fathers met their **wives** at a well: 1) Abraham’s servant and Rebekah (Gen 24); 2) Jacob & Rachel (Gen 29); 3) Moses & Zipporah (Exo. 2:15)
- So what is happening in this account?
 - Jesus, the **bridegroom**, is looking for his **bride**
 - This connects chapter three with chapter four
 - ***Revelations 22:17**
 - Jesus wants an **intimate** relationship with us
 - ***Religion is hanging around the well, but relationship is drinking from the well of living waters***
 - Jesus **sees** the Samaritan woman, but the Samaritan woman **sees** Jesus
 - John 4:15-19, 29
 - Jesus sees the details of our lives and we need to see Jesus
 - We need to pray that people encounter Jesus, not mere talk about him
- Our **church** is a well, a **place of encounter**
 - **Allison** last week; the week’s before people came up weeping sharing how Jesus was touching and changing their lives
- We need to **guard** the well and **drink** from it, not just **stare** at it.

3) Like Isaac, Jesus built an altar and unblocked the wells, so that we could drink eternal, living waters (Gen. 26:25)

- John is specifically likening Jesus to **Isaac**.
 - Compare John 3:16 to Genesis 22 - the altar
 - This is talking about the **Cross**
 - Compare John 4:13-14 to Genesis 26:12-32
 - This is talking about **Pentecost**
 - ***False religious leaders block up the wells, God’s people unblock the wells***
 - On Pentecost, Jesus **unblocked** a well for all the **nations** to drink from.
- *What is the living water?*
 - John 7:37-39
 - **The Holy Spirit**

Conclusion: Jesus calls us to not just come to the well, but to drink from it. When you drink Jesus’ living waters you are transformed and become a spring of living water for others.

END NOTES

"The new Federal Parliament, as one of its first pieces of legislation, passed the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 to "place certain restrictions on immigration and... for the removal... of prohibited immigrants". The Act drew on similar legislation in South Africa. Edmund Barton, the prime minister, argued in support of the Bill with the following statement: "The doctrine of the equality of man was never intended to apply to the equality of the Englishman and the Chinaman." [10]

Outside parliament, Australia's first Catholic cardinal, Patrick Francis Moran was politically active and denounced anti-Chinese legislation as "unchristian". [17] The popular press mocked the cardinal's position and the small European population of Australia generally supported the legislation and remained fearful of being overwhelmed by an influx of non-British migrants from the vastly different cultures of the highly populated empires to Australia's north. The entrance to the temple had an altar and a laver, blood and water.

Samaritans [sə mār'ə tənʒ] (Heb. haššōmerōnî; Gk. Samareitēs). † Inhabitants of the region of Samaria and adherents of the Samaritan religious tradition.

The Jewish view of the origin and nature of the Samaritans occurs already in the Old Testament, beginning with the judgment (summarized at 2 Kgs. 17:7–23) that the northern kingdom of Israel consistently deviated from the course of true religion. Those living in the territory of the northern kingdom after its destruction by Assyria are regarded as non-Israelites settled there by Assyria who adopted Israel's religion, combining it with their own polytheism (vv. 24–41). Samaritans came to be regarded by Jews as neither fully Gentile nor fully Jewish. "Samaritan" could itself be a term of contempt among Jews (John 8:48). The Mishnah calls the Samaritans "Cuthites" (cf. 2 Kgs. 17:24), thus labeling them as non-Israelite in origin

The Samaritans' canon contains only the Pentateuch. They regard Moses as the final prophet of God and a superhuman being. Mt. Gerizim they identify as the place where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22) and where God intended that Israel's one place of sacrificial worship be established (cf. Deut. 11:29–30; 12:5–14). The Samaritans' alternative to the Jewish history of the relation between the two groups teaches that the Jewish departure from the truth began when Eli set up a shrine at Shiloh (cf. 1 Sam. 1–3), not Gerizim; Ezra compounded the falsehood by altering the Pentateuch and by rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem. Though they acknowledge that non-Israelites entered the region of Samaria under Assyrian auspices, the Samaritans regard themselves as descendants of exiled Israelites who returned to the land.

Only a portion of Israel's population was exiled after defeat by Assyria (cf. 2 Chr. 34:9), and it is possible that some of these did return. Those who remained were assimilated with the new inhabitants the Assyrians had resettled from elsewhere. Furthermore, it would appear that the Jewish view of the Samaritan religion as indebted to non-Israelite religions is exaggerated. The division between the Jews and the Samaritans developed gradually over a long period of time. King Josiah of Judah (640–609 B.C.) destroyed Samaritan worship places at a time of Assyrian weakness (2 Kgs. 23:19–20). Some of the Samaritans did, nonetheless, continue for some time regular pilgrimages to the Jerusalem temple (Jer. 41:5). Postexilic Judah was reconstituted under the strict reformation of religion under Ezra and Nehemiah, in which the Samaritans could not participate because of their supposed non-Israelite ancestry and

syncretism (Ezra 4:2–3; Neh. 2:20). Having been rebuffed by the Judahites, the Samaritans opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and were successful for a time (Ezra 4:9–24; cf. Neh. 2:19; 4:2 [MT 3:34]). The schism was made complete by the building of a Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim, probably early in the fourth century B.C. (according to Josephus Ant. xi.8.4 [321–324], at the beginning of Alexander’s rule over the region), and that temple’s destruction by John Hyrcanus in 129–128 B.C.

The Jewish report that the Samaritans willingly paganized their temple under pressure from Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc. 6:2) is at least exaggerated. Samaritan worship continues on Mt. Gerizim in modern times, though no temple survives. The Passover lamb is sacrificed every year, and other Pentateuchal feast days are occasions for pilgrimage.

Jesus’ ministry was not normally directed to Samaritans, and he directed his disciples as they embarked on speaking and healing missions during his ministry not to go to Samaria (Matt. 10:5–6). In Jesus’ encounter with a Samaritan woman (John 4:1–42), the decisive issue of the proper place for worship was faced (v. 20). Isa. 66:1–2 anticipates what Jesus told the woman: the answer is neither this place nor that place, because the religion of spirit and truth will supplant the religion of place (John 4:21–24). Thus, despite his loyalty to Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 23:37–38; Luke 9:52–53) and the Jews (John 4:22), Jesus laid the foundation for a transcendence of the division between the two peoples. Samaritans appear in positive roles in Jesus’ teaching and the record of his ministry, mainly because faith and mercy on the part of Samaritans would not be expected by Jesus’ Jewish audience and were, therefore, worthy of note (Luke 10:30–37; 17:11–19).

After his resurrection Jesus specifically instructed his apostles to take the gospel to Samaria (Acts 1:8). It was because of persecution directed against the Hellenistic branch of the church at Jerusalem that missionary work in Samaria was begun (8:1, 5–25). The work was successful at least for a time in establishing a lasting Christian fellowship in the region (9:31; 15:3). What effect this Samaritan Christianity had on the New Testament is disputed. It has been suggested that Stephen’s origin was Samaritan and that the gospel of John, particularly its christology, reflects Samaritan influences.

John makes it clear that “Jews do not associate with Samaritans” (John 4:9)

Why?

The only reason why the modern world thinks racial inequality is wrong is because of Jesus’ life and teaching. Though, the world does not usually acknowledge Jesus, he has been the chief pioneer in history to breakdown dividing walls.

Jesus was and always will be the greatest social liberator. Never equate Jesus with bigotry. Real Christians are not bigots, they are champions of honouring all peoples.

Jesus shows us by example to cross boundaries and get out of our comfort zone to tell all people the good news.

We are reminded of Isaac when we read John chapters 3 & 4.

“one and only son” - Gen 22

“wells” - Gen. 26

Jesus came to willingly sacrifice his life (like a lamb led to slaughter he was silent). He also came to unblock Abraham’s ancient well.

Remember God’s promise the Abraham? The nations

Eph 3 - Jesus breaks down the dividing wall of hostility

What is Jesus doing for this woman? Re-digging the wells like Isaac.

What is the living water? The Holy Spirit

Australia as a nation has blocked up the wells of revival out of jealousy, envy and fear.

Our church is a well

When we drink this living water we ourselves become springs of living water.

Like Isaac, Jesus built an altar, the cross, and dig a well, pentecost (Gen. 26:25)

Both Isaac and Jacob met their wives at wells (Gen. 24:17, 29:10)

Remember, Jesus was just called the Bridegroom in John 3

Here is an unlikely bride...and yet the Samaritans understand Jesus before the Jewish leaders do.

John is filled with irony.

Breaking boxes and obliterating categories

Jesus’ living water is given to those who ask