

New Testament Sermon Outline 4/12

Prostitute restored (John 4:3-30; 39-42)

1. Introduction

This story shows that Jesus can visit the most needy, unlikable people and show no disapproval for a misused life. He can visit us in the most humdrum parts of our life. During our ordinary work a day life and suddenly Jesus is there. He takes of the things around us and uses them to bring us to himself. There we can find a new life full of promise and venture.

2. An unusual journey

Jesus when travelling from Judea to Galilee decided to take the direct but unusual route to get there. Orthodox Jews went round Samaria to avoid being contaminated by its peoples even though the journey took six days instead of three. Verse 4 says he must needs go through Samaria.

3. Place of encounter & place of history

Coming towards the city of Sychar meaning drunken, he sent his disciples away for food. He stayed at Jacob's well. A very historic place where Abram first stopped on his journey from Haran to Canaan (Gen 11:31). Where God first appeared to that patriarch and promised to give him land to his seed (offspring). (Gen 12:5-7). Also the place where Abram first built and altar to the Lord and called on his name. (Gen 12:7).

4. Meeting the woman of Samaria at the well

The Samaritans were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, that grew out of the Assyrian captivity of the ten northern tribes in 727 B.C. Rejected by the Jews because they could not prove their genealogy, the Samaritans established their own temple and religious services on Mount. Gerizim.

The woman drew water at mid-day because she was shunned by the town.

Note that under Jewish Law a Jewish man, particularly a Rabbi (Teacher), would not talk to a woman publically not even his own wife. Yet here he was about to talk with and teach a woman of Samaria who was of questionable reputation. Jesus always takes risks to meet with us.

Jesus asks for a drink of water. Simple way to start a conversation normally but this was no ordinary meeting!

Examine the risk Jesus was putting himself in. He was alone with a woman. She had a poor reputation that is why she drew water when everyone else was at home. He was a Jew and she a Samaritan. – Jesus is a risk taker with us.

5. The woman tried to preserve some integrity.

The woman at the well was alarmed about a young Jewish man chatting her up. She had at least some reputation to protect.

To divert her thinking he talks about himself and who he may be by using the image of water. Jesus always takes the things we understand and speaks into that situation.

He creates a spiritual thirst within the woman and she asks for living water.

6. Gift of knowledge

Jesus, now secure in the knowledge that the woman's heart has been touched asks for her to bring along her husband. When she replies she has no husband, Jesus gently reveals she has had five men in her life, none of them married her.

She does not detect criticism but knowledge. Jesus did the same with Nicodemus. Cut into his conversation with 'You must be born again'. She replies you are a prophet and goes into the city to call the others.

7. Result of the encounter

The whole city turns to Christ.

