

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Shock and Awe John 4:27-30

I came across a brief article about a young man named Jacob S. Fletcher who was recently killed in Iraq. This is what the article said,

"Growing up in Bay Shore, N.Y., Pfc. Jacob S. Fletcher dreamed of serving His country. He always wanted to be a soldier," said his former girlfriend, Kristi Ruppert. "He always had that kind of passion in him, and he wanted to be that kind of man." The death of a friend in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks sealed the decision. He enlisted in the Army, becoming one of the first soldiers to parachute into Iraq.

Fletcher, 28 died Nov. 13 2003, when explosives struck a bus he was on in Iraq. "He really believed he was making a difference in Iraq, said Jean DeBrant a family friend. "He felt that he was helping the women and children and that meant very much to him. It sustained him"

He is survived by his mother Dorine Kenney, and father Marlowe Fletcher.

A very brief article but it spoke of a desire that many people share, a desire to make a difference in this world. For this young man this meant joining the U.S. military, extending a helping hand to millions of women and children living in Iraq. Certainly a noble calling and one we certainly can support but there is a far greater calling that hopefully each of us here this weekend is even more committed in pursuing. What is this greater calling? To help us answer this question we need to go back to the passage that we have been considering over the past several weeks, John 4:1-26.

The passage that we have been examining records for us Christ's *interaction* with a Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26). Let us for a moment quickly review what we have already covered.

We have examined the *request* that Christ made of this Samaritan woman in John 4:1-9. In these verses, Jesus, in a very strategic move, decided to leave Judea and go to Galilee along with His disciples. Though there were several routes He could have taken, I believe He purposed to go through Samaria rather than around Samaria in order to minister to the Samaritan people who in general were despised by the Jews.

Hopefully, you remember how He initiated this ministry. Jesus, traveling through Samaria with His disciples, stopped to rest by Jacob's well while His disciples went on ahead to buy food in the nearby city of Sychar. As Jesus was sitting alone by the well, a Samaritan woman approached to draw water. Though He was bone weary tired, the time had come for His ministry in Samaria to begin, so He initiated contact with this woman with a very simple but sincere request in **verse 7, "Give me a drink."** What was her response to His request? In **verse 9** we read, **"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?"**

His request and her surprised response opened the door for the next area that we have examined in Christ's interaction with the Samaritan woman. What is that area?

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We have examined the offer that Christ made to this Samaritan woman in John 4:12-14. The Samaritan woman wanted to know why Jesus would feel the freedom to ask her for a drink of water when she knew that other Jews, for fear of defilement, would not have asked her.

What was His response? His response was expressed in terms of an offer. He told her, "**If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.**" The gift of living water was referring to the gift of life that would be made possible by the future indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus had asked her to give Him a drink so that He might tell her about the living water that He was prepared to give her as a gift from God.

Unfortunately, she misunderstood what Jesus meant by what He said and therefore thought He was talking about fresh water either found in Jacob's well or from some other unknown source in the area around Sychar versus stagnant water that might be found in a pound or cistern. This misunderstanding caused her to challenge His ability to deliver on His promise in **John 4:11-12.**

After this challenge by the woman, Jesus sought to clarify for her in **John 4:13-14** what He meant which only led to further confusion. The Samaritan woman was simply unable to think about the gift He was offering in terms of her own spiritual need.

His offer and her continuing inability to understand the true nature of His offer leads us to the next area that we have examined in Christ's interaction with the Samaritan woman. What is that next area?

We have examined Christ's insight into the Samaritan's woman's encounters with various men in John 4:15-19. The inability of the Samaritan to clearly understand what Jesus had been sharing not only led to confusion about the true nature of the gift that He was offering but it also led her most likely to view Jesus Himself with bemused skepticism. But after Jesus exposed intimate details of her life in **John 4:18**, her perception of Him changed from bemused skepticism to reverent respect. We see this change when she says to Him, "**I perceive that You are a prophet.**" This leads us to the next to final area of our examination. What is that area?

The next to final area that we have examined is the instruction Christ gave to the Samaritan woman about worship in John 4:20-26. When she said to Jesus, "**I perceive You to be a prophet,**" I believe she clearly had begun to entertain the possibility that He could be the promised Messiah since that Samaritans did not believe that there would be any other prophet after Moses other than the Messiah Himself. She preceded to introduce a long standing theological controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans about the proper place to worship hoping, I believe, to gather more information about this person who had shared with her such intimate details about her life.

Jesus, rather than responding directly to the controversy that she introduced, chose to change the discussion from the proper place of worship to the true nature of worship. He was attempting to move her away from looking at worship in terms of externals to rather looking at worship in terms of internals.

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What did He say with her? Let me read for you **John 4:23**. "**But an hour is coming** (referring to the cross) **and now is**, (referring to the immanency of the cross) **when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.**" What did He mean when He spoke about worshipping God in spirit and truth?

When Jesus spoke of worshipping "in spirit" He was talking about the human spirit. Jesus wants us to know that worship must be sincere and not just simply lip service. When Jesus spoke of worshipping God "in truth", He meant that those who are worshipping God must be truly seeking to live lives consistent with God's Word. Worshipping God in spirit and truth are very closely linked. Those who worship God in spirit will be worshipping God in truth, and those who are worshipping God in truth will in fact be worshipping God in spirit. Those who God has chosen to worship Him in spirit and truth are the true worshipers that God is even now seeking.

After Jesus disclosed to this Samaritan woman the true nature of worship, her messianic speculation was only fueled further. What had been rattling around in the back of her head now went forward to her frontal lobes, so she concluded by saying to Him in **John 4:25**, "**I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.**" The Samaritan woman in **John 4:25** is in effect saying, "If you are the Messiah, declare it."

Did Christ do this? The answer is yes. Look at **John 4:26**. "**Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."** The one who had sat by the well and asked her for a drink was none other than the promised Messiah, the one who could indeed provide her with living water and satisfy the deepest longing of her soul.

This leads us to the final area of our examination. What is the final area?

The final area that we will examine is the response to Christ's interaction with the Samaritan woman in John 4:27-30. Let me read for you **John 4:27-30**. "**And at this point the disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?" (28) So the woman left her water pot, and went into the city, and said to the men, (29) "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" (30) They went out of the city, and were coming to Him. The response to Christ's interaction with the Samaritan woman was one of shock and awe.** Let us first of all consider the shock of the disciples.

The response of the disciples was shock not because she was a Samaritan but rather because she was a woman (John 4:27). Let me read for you **John 4:27**. "**And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a "Samaritan"?** No, this is not what it says. It says, "**And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman.**" This is what the passage says. Why would this be such a problem for the disciples?

It was commonly viewed as inappropriate at that time for a man to talk to a woman socially. This way of thinking is typified in the following rabbinical comment: A man shall not be alone with a woman in an inn, nor even with his sister or his daughter, on account of what men may think.

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A man shall not talk with a woman in the street, nor even with his own wife, and especially not with another woman, on account of what men may say."

To the disciples Christ speaking to this Samaritan woman was a breach of convention. One Jewish writer went so far as to say, "He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon Himself and neglects the study of the Law and at last will inherit Gehenna."

Obviously, people living at that time in that part of the world were very concerned with how members of the opposite sex interacted with one another. Certainly those concerns led to some very extreme cultural practices.

Before we, as 21st century Americans, dismiss those concerns out of hand we need to look at what is happening around us in our world today. Men and women are continually putting themselves too close to the fire in regard to interpersonal relationships with members of the opposite sex. There are married men and women today who see nothing wrong in going out to lunch with a member of the opposite sex. They will represent it as being innocent. And this might be very well be true initially, but this can change very quickly within a matter of moments. There are married men and women today who feel that they are free to talk with members of the opposite sex about the intimate details of their lives under the guise of friendship. This is a prescription for disaster. There are also young people who think it is cool to have boyfriend or girlfriend and to confirm that relationship with each other through private and public displays of physical affection long before they are in a position to even think about marriage and the establishment of a family. These actions I believe are dangerous and ultimately in effect are making provision for the lust of the flesh which we are told not to do in **Romans 13:14**. Should we exercise discretion when we are relating to members of the opposite sex? Of course! Should there be more discretion exercised today in the United States than there is in matters pertaining to how members of the opposite sex interact with one another? I believe, absolutely!

Certainly I don't believe that it needs to be taken to the extremes that are found in certain rabbinical writings, but it does appear from the response of the disciples in **John 4:27** that they in fact had embraced a more extreme view of how men and women should interact at least when it came to talking with Samaritan women.

The response of the disciples was not just shock but shocked *silence*. Let us continue to read **John 4:27**. "**And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?"**" This is what you call an awkward moment. The disciples didn't know exactly what Christ was seeking or why. They were clueless, but apparently out of respect for Christ they did not ask Him, "**What do you seek?"**" or "**Why do you speak with her?"**" They chose rather to remain silent not wanting to infer any kind of disrespect or disapproval by their questions. Their response of shocked silence was unfortunate. Why do I say this?

The disciples would not have experienced this shocked silence if they had fully understood Christ and His *mission*. The disciples up to this point in time thought Christ's mission was directed toward the Jews alone. They obviously failed to understand the full extent of Christ's mission and the extraordinary lengths Christ was prepared to go in order to fulfill it.

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If they had completely understood the extent of Christ's mission and the extraordinary lengths that He was prepared to go in order to fulfill it they would have known what Christ was doing when they saw Him interacting with the Samaritan woman.

Was He actually seeking something from her? Yes, He was seeking an expression of faith from her. Why? Not only so that she might receive the living water that would become within her a well of water springing up to eternal, but that she would also become a true worshiper who would worship God in spirit and truth. If the disciples had fully understood Christ and His mission they would have known this and they certainly would not have reacted as they did, which was to stand there in shocked silence.

What is the first response that we see to Christ's interaction with the Samaritan woman? The first response that we see in this passage is one of shock, shocked silence on the part of the disciples of Christ. What was the response of the Samaritan woman?

The response of the Samaritan woman to her interaction with Christ was one of awe generated by genuine faith (John 4:28-30).

Let us begin by reading the first part of **John 4:28**. "**So the woman left her water pot, and went into the city.**" The apostle John tells us that she "**left her water pot, and went into the city.**" What a strange turn of events. It would appear that the water in the well, which earlier had been of interest to both Christ and the Samaritan, was presently of no interest and so much so that the Samaritan woman left her utensil, or in other words the water pot, with Christ and his disciples so that she could go into the city of Sychar. Why would she want to go into the city of Sychar?

Let us continue to read **John 4:28**. "**So the woman left her water pot, and went into the city, and said to the men.**" She left her water pot at the well in order to go into the city of Sychar to talk to the men. When it says that she went into the city to talk to the men I don't think we can understand this to be referring to men in general. I would think we would have to understand this to be referring to a specific group of men perhaps leaders within the city. This encounter was not about a social contact, but rather it was all about a certain pressing matter of business that she felt needed to be acted upon quickly.

What did she say to them? Let us read **John 4:29**. "**Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done.**"

She begins by asking these men to leave the city of Sychar in order to go out to a man who told her all that things that she had ever done. Obviously, the Samaritan woman was exaggerating what actually happened in order to make a point. Just in case these men might miss the importance of what she was saying, she follows up on her personal testimony with a question in **John 4:29**. What was the question she addressed to them? "**This is not the Christ, is it?**"

The Samaritan woman's question addressed to the men "This is not the Christ is it" is a leading question designed to stir their curiosity not to express her own lack of faith (John 4:39-42). I believe this is clear when we read **John 4:39-42**. Let me read these verses for you. "**And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the Samaritan woman who**

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testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." (40) So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. (41) And many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

Therefore, in light of this, I believe that we would have to conclude her question in **John 4:29** was a leading question designed to stir their curiosity not to express her own lack of faith. The Samaritan woman went from what appears to be somewhat solitary life to a more public life solely to advance the cause of Christ. I believe she did this in order to get the news out that the Messiah had come. Was she successful? Did they respond to her? Listen to **John 4:30**. "**They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.**"

CONCLUSION

How about ourselves? Will we be like the Samaritan woman who after taking a drink of living water left her water pot behind in order to spread the good news? I would hope the answer would be yes.

Is there something you need to leave behind today in order to make yourself available for the work of Christ? If there is, I would hope that even now you might present it to the Lord.

May we by God's grace like the Samaritan woman be able to leave our water pots behind as we seek to make a *difference* in this world for Christ.