

Man on a Mission

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Some time ago I remember seeing a man who was on a mission. He was on his way home from the pawnshop. In his hand was a 20-inch TV, which he was dutifully carrying westbound on Liberty Road, which from Northern Parkway is on an incline and was no easy chore. He was a man on a mission.

Some of us may remember the Blizzard of 1983 that dumped almost 30 inches of snow in the Baltimore area. My family was living at the Lantern Hill Apartments on St. Lukes Lane. My wife and I had been married a couple of years and finances were tight and we didn't have the money or the sense to prepare for the snowstorm.

The snowplow hadn't come through our complex for what seemed like a couple of days and our need for food forced me to walk down the hill to the Woodmoor Shopping Center. Of course what goes down has to come up and so I had to walk up the snow-covered road with several bags of groceries in my hands.

I was about 24 years old and was in relatively good shape but coming up that hill through more than two feet of snow had my heart pounding and I actually thought I wasn't going to make it. But I was a man on a mission.

I can also remember a time in the ministry of our church before we became "GraceWay" when a hand full of women met just two evenings to plan and to put into place their plans for what they called a "Valentines Gala." In only a few weeks, they scheduled a ballroom, had tickets and posters made, sold tickets and put together an evening of fun and romantic activities that will be remembered forever. They were women on a mission.

Today we are going to look at an event in the life of our Lord that shows us that He was "*a Man on a mission.*"

Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. (John 4:1-4 NKJV)

This passage ends telling us that Jesus "needed to go through Samaria." Why did He need to go through Samaria? We are going to look at four reasons why Jesus was a man on a mission who had to go through Samaria:

- I. Jesus was doing the will of His Father***
- II. Jesus was teaching His disciples a lesson***
- III. Jesus was reaching a lost person in Samaria***
- IV. Jesus was claiming lost people in Samaria***

I. Jesus was doing the will of His father

Scripture teaches us that Jesus was concerned about doing the will of the His Father:

(John 5:30 NKJV) "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

*(John 8:28 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.
(John 8:29 NKJV) "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."*

(Mat 26:39 NKJV) He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

Jesus was on a mission to do the will of His Father. 1 John 4:14 tells us that, "...the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." This is what Jesus came to do and He didn't let anyone or anything deter Him from fulfilling this mission.

It was so obvious wherever He went and with whatever he said that He came to die for our sins:

(Luke 19:10 NKJV) "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

(Mark 10:45 NKJV) "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus was on a mission to do the will of the Father!

Do you know what the Father's will is for your life? If you don't know let me tell you. If you're a Christian, it is the Father's will that you "spread the Gospel" and "Make disciples." (Matthew 28:19-20)

You say, "I know that, but what is God's specific will for my life?" His specific will (in the original Greek) is to "Make disciples!"

Are you a man or a woman on a mission to do the Father's will? Are you letting anyone or anything keep you from fulfilling God's will?

Jesus came to die and during His earthly ministry the Devil tried use one of Jesus' close friends to steer Him off the path that led toward the Cross.

The Bible says that there came a time in His ministry that Jesus told His disciples what He came to do:

Mat 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

Mat 16:22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

Mat 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

There may come a time when you have to look directly in the eyes of someone you love and say, "Get behind me Satan."

I remember early in our marriage when my wife Debbie had to do just that. We were having some tension one day and she was desperately trying not to be baited into a heated argument. I was trying my

best to get her upset and it was at this time when she looked me in the eye and said, “*Get behind me Satan!*”

Jesus was a man on a mission and His mission was to do the will of the Father.

John 4:4 says, “*But He needed to go through Samaria.*” Now we can’t tell from the text but this is an odd decision for a Jew living during this time. The Jews didn’t like going through Samaria. Rather than going through Samaria, Jews normally traveled the longer route, crossing over to the east side of the Jordan. They did this to display their disgust for the Samaritans.

The Samaritans were descendants of colonists whom the Assyrian kings planted in Palestine after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. They were despised by the Jews because they intermarried with the Assyrians. Their worship was different and centered at Mount Gerizim (John 4:20-22) instead of Mount Zion. So the Jews considered the Samaritans half-breeds and infidels.

But to Jesus, who always sought to do the will of the Father, the Samaritans were lost and needed a Savior so He was compelled to go into Samaria no matter what the biases and the prejudices of the time were.

II. Jesus was teaching His disciples a lesson

(John 4:5 NKJV) So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

(John 4:6 NKJV) Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

The sixth hour was 12pm or noon in Jewish time where the sun was at its highest point.

(John 4:7 NKJV) A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

(John 4:8 NKJV) For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

(John 4:9 NKJV) Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

You can't tell it from the text but this woman was shocked that Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi to ask for a drink from her.

- The normal prejudices of the day prohibited public conversations between men and women.
- The normal prejudices of the day prohibited public conversations between Jews and Samaritans.
- The normal prejudices of the day prohibited public conversations between strangers.

One commentator says, "A Jewish Rabbi would rather go thirsty than violate these proprieties."

Remember, Jewish people had a deep dislike for the Samaritans because they were had a mixed ancestry of Jewish and heathen, they were considered by the Jews as half-breeds.

How many of us avoid people because they are different than us. They dress differently, they talk differently; they are of the “lower echelon;” Perhaps they are the kind of people we wouldn’t want our friends to find us with.

Jesus meets up with this “woman at the well” and she was surprised and could not understand how He would dare ask her for a drink, since Jews did not associate or having dealings with Samaritans.

The expression at the end of verse nine, “to associate” or “have dealings” literally means, “to use jointly.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary writes that the translation of the sentence at the end of verse nine is: "...the Jews “do not use dishes Samaritans have used.” In other words, the Jews wouldn't be caught dead at the *Golden Corral* in Samaria.

In addition to this, a Rabbinical law of A.D. 66 stated that Samaritan women were considered as “continually on their period and thus unclean.” Therefore a Jew who drank from a Samaritan woman’s cup would become ceremonially unclean.

But Jesus came to save the lost—and it didn't matter what side of the track you lived on. If you were a lost person and lived in the East Side, He came to save you! If you a lost person who lived on the West Side, He came to save you. It doesn't matter when you are rich or poor—graduated from Harvard or BCCC—He came to save you!

- In John chapter 3, Jesus speaks with a wealthy man who belonged to a religious aristocracy.
- In Luke chapter seven Jesus meets and talks with a prostitute.
- In Luke chapter 19 Jesus has dinner with a crooked tax collector
- In Matthew chapter 11, it is written, *"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."*

In Luke 5:31, Jesus answers his accusers and says to them, *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Jesus didn't waste His time going after those who were well, He was on a mission to call sinners to repentance and there was a sick sinner in Samaria. There are wounded wanderers in Woodlawn and there are Bad Barbarians in Baltimore—Jesus came to save them too!

Jesus was teaching His disciples a lesson and that lesson was that the Gospel does not discriminate.

Jesus didn't allow cultural traditions, religious traditions or even physical inconveniences get in the way of reaching out to people who needed salvation--He needed to go through Samaria..

We must not allow anything get in our way when it comes to reaching out to people who need salvation. We must be willing to "go through Samaria" if we are going to take the Gospel to those lost in sin.

- For GraceWay, "going through Samaria" may mean a slightly informal atmosphere on Sundays
- “Going through Samaria" may mean going without the traditional Sunday “suit and tie” or dress.
- “Going through Samaria" means pursuing the unsaved rather than the professing Christian.

Jesus needed to go through Samaria in order to do the will of His Father. Secondly, He needed to go through Samaria to teach His disciples a lesson.

The third reason why Jesus needed to go through Samaria was to reach a lost person in Samaria.

III. Jesus was reaching a lost person in Samaria

Our text continues as Jesus, the Master Evangelist and the Master Soul Winner proceeds to bring this woman to the point of realizing her spiritual condition. She tries to dodge the issue and change the subject when Jesus begins to shine the light on her real need but she is no match for Jesus.

She is no match for the One whose Word is *"living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. She is no match for the One whose Word "pierces even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12)

Trying to set up a smokescreen, the woman asks Jesus, *"How is it that you being a Jew ask a drink from me a Samaritan."*

Jesus, who knows what's in a person's heart, answers: *"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."*

Listen to how the conversation continues:

(John 4:11 NKJV) The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"

(John 4:12 NKJV) "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

(John 4:13 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

(John 4:14 NKJV) "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

(John 4:15 NKJV) The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

(John 4:16 NKJV) Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

Can you imagine how this woman must have felt as she and Jesus starts out talking about “water” and now He tells her to go and “call her husband.” What does “living water” have to do with “go call your husband?”

We find the answer to this questions as Jesus, the Master Evangelist, who by the power of the Holy Spirit applies the “master stroke.”

Living water is available to this woman but in order to get her to drink it she must be convinced that has a need---a *thirst*. This woman must recognize that she is a sinner who needs the “living water” so our Lord says to her, *"Go call your husband."*

Jesus was bringing this woman to where she saw herself as He saw her, a sinner in desperate need of the Savior.

(John 4:17 NKJV) The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'

(John 4:18 NKJV) "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

Notice that Jesus doesn't skirt the issue of sin. He brings the conversation around to where the woman knows that Jesus knows she is a sinner.

But this is not enough—it is not enough for her to know that He knows she is a sinner. She herself must come to the realization and the conviction that she is a sinner and this is exactly what happens.

How do we know? We know by what she does next. She tries to change the subject (again):

*(John 4:19 NKJV) The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.
(John 4:20 NKJV) "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."*

Before we go on, it must become clear to the Christian seeking to reach the lost, that the lost person they are seeking to reach must see that he or she has a spiritual need. In other words, in order for people to come to the conclusion that they need a Savior, they must come to the conviction that they are a sinner.

Sadly, the contemporary church has lost the courage to bring up the issue of sin. Like many in the world, there are those in the church who attribute the ills of mankind to a "disease," a "dysfunction," an "abnormality," or a "condition."

Being omniscient, or having all knowledge, Jesus could have gone back into this woman's childhood and discussed with her how she has had five failed marriages because she grew up and was picked on because of her mixed blood.

He could have tried to raise her self-esteem by telling her that "*Growing up on the wrong side of the track ain't so bad; They said about Me, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?'*"

Jesus doesn't deal with this woman's self-esteem or redefine her sin as some kind of psychological dysfunction. He begins get her to see her spiritual need, not for physical water but for Living Water.

Perhaps it is at this time in their discourse that she looks over her life and recalls how she has been in one relationship after another. Perhaps she is the kind of woman who has had to be involved with several men before one gets the courage to propose to her. She marries him and then something goes wrong and she is left alone.

She begins another relationship and then another until someone else gives her a ring. The something goes awry with that marriage. By the time she's married the fifth time and after that marriage dissolves, she's given her body and soul to scores of men and Jesus *knows!*

You can't hide your sin from Jesus. He knows! He knows and the amazing thing is that He still love you but He loves you too much to leave you the same.

As we follow the Scripture we find the woman perceiving Jesus is a prophet (or someone greater) and instead of repenting and confessing her sin, she throws out an intellectual "red herring." She proceeds to bring up an ancient dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans and hopes that Jesus would get distracted while solving it.

I've talked with people like this. When the Holy Spirit begins to convict the person of their sin, they come up with something like, "*Ok if the Bible is true, then where did Lot get his wife?*" Or the person

who asks, when you are getting close to him understanding the Gospel, *"You know one problem I have with the Bible is that it doesn't tell you how the dinosaurs disappeared."*

This Samaritan woman was trying to sidestep the guilt, shame and conviction she was feeling as she talked with Jesus. She tried to change the subject. Did Jesus take the bait? No way!

(John 4:21 NKJV) Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

(John 4:22 NKJV) "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

(John 4:23 NKJV) "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

(John 4:24 NKJV) "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus was up front with this woman--He didn't pull any punches. If she wanted to go there, He was going to take her.

In essence, Jesus tells this woman that the Samaritan religion was confused and in error. They were not the vehicle God would use to bring salvation to mankind; Israel was the nation chosen by God to bring forth the Messiah.

Jesus told her in verse 22, *"Salvation is of the Jews,"* meaning that salvation is available through Jesus the Messiah, who was born of the seed of Abraham.

Jesus goes on to say in verse 23 and 24, *"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

True worshippers are those who realize that Jesus is the Christ. To *"worship in truth"* means that we come informed by the objective revelation of God's Word about the great God we serve and the precepts He has spoken (Kent Hughes)

To worship *"in spirit"* (notice the small "s") is to worship God from within the spirit of man, from the spontaneous affections of your heart.

(John 4:25 NKJV) The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

In other words, she was saying, *"I don't need to listen to you--I'm going to wait on God."* In the next verse Jesus says to her, *"You don't have to wait...for "I who speak to you am He."*

What a wonderful revelation! The normal prejudices of the day prohibited public conversations between men and women, Jews and Samaritans and between strangers but here was the Messiah, here was God the Son taking the time to talk to this immoral woman.

I believe it was at this time that faith broke through and the woman became a believer. We know this from what happens in verse 28 and 29.

Verse 28 says, *"The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city."* It is interesting how people in the Bible were willing to leave things in order to follow Jesus.

- Simon Peter and his brother Andrew - their fishing trade (Matthew 4:20)
- James and John - their fishing trade and their father Zebedee (Matthew 4)
- Matthew - his tax business (Matthew 9:9)

What are you willing to leave?

Jesus needed to go through Samaria because (1) He was doing the will of His Father (2) He was teaching His disciples a lesson, (3) He was reaching a lost person in Samaria , and (4) He was claiming lost people in Samaria.

IV. Jesus was claiming lost people in Samaria

(John 4:28-29 NKJV) The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

If this woman believed, then why didn't she go running into the city telling everyone, "This is the Christ! This is the Christ!?" Her question was literally, "This couldn't be the Messiah could it?"

The reason why she framed her question this way was because of the culture of that day. She framed the question this way, in all probability, because she knew the people would not respond favorably to such a declaration from a woman, especially one with her reputation.

But God used her question to capture the people's curiosity and they decided to investigate.

(John 4:30 NKJV) Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

(John 4:31 NKJV) In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

(John 4:32 NKJV) But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

(John 4:33 NKJV) Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"

Notice the chronology of events:

- Jesus has to go through Samaria. (vs. 4)
- He arrives and is hungry and thirsty after such a strenuous journey in the hot sun. (vs. 6)
- His disciples go to get refreshments (vs. 8)
- Jesus converses with a Samaritan woman and gives her "the Living Water." (vs. 15)
- His disciples return (vs. 27)
- Jesus is no longer hungry--His appetite has changed--He is talking about "other food." (vs. 32, 34)

There is something about sharing the Gospel with someone!

You can be sad and it makes you glad!

You can be down and it picks you up!

You can be hungry but then no longer have a desire to eat! (Some need to be on an Evangelism Diet!)

In John 4:34, Jesus says to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

Ripe for the Pickin'

(John 4:35 NKJV) "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

In verse 34 Jesus was more than likely quoting a local proverb that is spoken. *"There are still four months and then comes the harvest?"* was probably a common saying that there is a long wait until the crop is ready but Jesus uses it to show that in the spiritual realm there is no long wait.

His disciples were thinking about food and Jesus says that all they had to do was look up and see that a harvest was ready right before them. You see, the Samaritan woman had run into the city and "witnessed" about Jesus the Messiah who told her "all about the things that she did."

In response, her countrymen, the Samaritans, who were dressed in their typical white garments had come out of the city to see Jesus. All the disciples had to do was lift their eyes and look at the fields to see that the harvest was ripe for the pickin'. Jesus is requiring no more from us.

It was several years ago when our church had "a ripe for the pickin'" experience. This principal of Scripture was played out with such precision as I had ever seen it. God saved a man as a result of us "going through Samaria."

This new brother in the Lord was as excited as the Samaritan woman was. So excited that he began to tell people how God had worked in his life. He began to point people to the instrument that God used to save him--our church.

As a result of his witness, his wife came to church; his sons came to church; his sons girlfriends came to church; his grandchildren came; his coworkers came; his mother even came to our church.

The discouraging thing was that our congregation was, like Jesus' disciples, so preoccupied with earthly things that we did not lift our eyes and look at the fields? As quickly as this family came to our church, they left our church.

There is an important rule about farming. You must pick the fruit when it is ripe. If you miss the opportunity it is not God's fault, it is your fault.

Jesus wanted his disciples to know that the harvest was *"ripe for the pickin'"*.

(John 4:36 NKJV) "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

(John 4:37 NKJV) "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'

(John 4:38 NKJV) "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

Jesus is saying in these verses that as reapers, the disciples had the great and rewarding privilege of leading people to faith in Christ.

Others had already done the work of sowing. In this case, the Old Testament prophets or perhaps it was John the Baptist's ministry of preparation that had sown the seeds. It could have been Jesus or the Samaritan Woman who could be credited with doing the work of sowing the seeds.

It works the same way today. You, for example, could tell someone how Jesus died for his or her sins. Another might come along and show the love of Christ to this person by ministering to them in Jesus' Name. By the time the third Christian comes along and sows into this person's life they are *ripe for the pickin'*!

In our text, the Samaritan pointed her countrymen to Jesus who had impacted her life and they came to check it out for themselves.

(John 4:39 NKJV) And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."

(John 4:40 NKJV) So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

(John 4:41 NKJV) And many more believed because of His own word.

(John 4:42 NKJV) Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Jesus needed to go through Samaria because (1) He was doing the will of His Father (2) He was teaching His disciples a lesson, (3) He was reaching a lost person in Samaria, and (4) He was claiming lost people in Samaria.

What is your Samaria? It could be Baltimore City if you live in the county. Your Samaria could be Baltimore County if you live in the city. Do you have a driving compulsion to go through?

Testimony

There may be someone here who like the friends of the Samaritan Woman have only heard the testimony of one who has been touched by the Savior. I challenge you to do as the citizens of Samaria to check Him out for yourself.

Like the Samaritan woman you must agree with God when He declares that you have been trying to live by your own terms--this is called sin. You must turn away from sin and come by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness.

Pray with me: "Lord Jesus, I have sinned against you. I having been trying to run my own life according to my own rules. I believe that you died to take my sin away. I trust you now as my Savior from sin and the Boss of my life. Amen"

If you prayed with me today, please check the "I'm committing my life to Christ" box on the Communicator Card in your bulletin and someone will contact you to talk with you about your new life in Christ.