

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, August 8, 2010 – 11:00 AM
Rev. Steve Skates, pastor

Series: Portraits of Jesus
Jesus: The Life Changer - John 4:1-30

Introduction: Our world has changed dramatically in the past 100 years. Today, space shuttles and space stations circle the earth routinely, yet, it was only 100 years ago that the first airplane flew at Kitty Hawk.

The first mass produced Model T Ford came off the assembly only 90 plus years ago, yet we're now producing cars that use electricity, can respond to voice commands, and that almost automatically avoid collisions.

Penicillin was discovered only 70 years ago, yet today, doctors routinely perform heart transplants, and laparoscopic surgeries using cameras.

Our world is constantly changing and what applies to our culture also applies to us as individuals. We move, we think differently, we age. Many of us are like the man who accepted the invitation to attend his 25th high school reunion by writing.. *"I hope you'll recognize me. I've got the "5 B's." I'm bald, wear bifocals, And I have bridgework, bulges and bunions."*

But there is one change that is more important than all others. That is the change that Jesus Christ can bring into your life. That is one thing He came to this earth to do – change your life from unrighteous to righteous, from darkness to light, from hopelessness to hope.

In John 4, Jesus is presented as the great life-changer. In this chapter, John paints this picture of Jesus as He encounters a woman at the well. Here, we see just how much He genuinely cares for people and was even willing to go out of His way to show them. Let's join Jesus, the Life-Changer as He encounters a woman at the well.

1. The Confrontation (1-8)

A. The Savior (3-6) - In these verses, we see Jesus leaving the area of Judea where He was beginning to feel some heat from the Pharisees, and walking toward Galilee. Now Galilee was where the people were. Being the only source of fresh water in the region, Galilee is where the greatest population density was. So, Jesus went where the people were.

But notice in vs. 4, it says that Jesus *"had to go through Samaria."* Now most Jews went out of their way to avoid going through Samaria because they were prejudiced against the people who lived there. You see, The Samaritans were a mixed-race people - half Jew and half Gentile. So there was a lot of prejudice and downright hatred for these people because they were looked upon as second, third, or even no class people.

But Jesus had no such prejudice. He had to go through Samaria because He knew there was a woman who was going to be called to salvation and Jesus was determined to see that she had the opportunity to be saved.

This tells us that there is no person beyond the reach of God's grace. All are sinners and are in need of salvation. Jesus loves them all and we are commanded to do the same. If Jesus would reach out to the most despised and hated people of His day, then it is up to His church to reach out to people regardless of who they are, where they are, or where they come from!

But notice in vs. 4-6, Jesus sits down by what was commonly known as Jacob's Well to rest. But it isn't long before a woman from Sychar comes by. She's coming for water, but she's about to receive something much better. Jesus has a wonderful gift that He wants to give to her. She never gave a thought to meeting a Jewish Rabbi at the well. But Jesus knew she was coming. He planned to be there when she arrived, so He was patiently waiting to rescue this lady.

That's the way Jesus is with us as well. Many people are just cruising through life without much thought for God or His plan. Then, seemingly out of the blue, there Jesus is. But it's really not out of the blue at all. Jesus is better than State Farm Insurance because Jesus is *"there"* in the midst of whatever it is you're doing because He's planned it all the while. He's better than a good neighbor because He's *"there"* wherever you are, whenever you need Him. That's what He does. He's *"there"* to bring talk to. He's *"there"* to give counsel. He's *"there"* to listen. He's *"there"* as your Savior to offer you salvation and change your life.

B. The Sinner (7a) - The second person in this confrontation is a woman. A woman who is sinful and is in

need of salvation. According to vs. 6, it's about 12 noon. For a woman to be drawing water at this hour would be unusual. Normally, the women from the village would gather together early in the morning, while it was cool. These women would go to the well together and would catch up on the gossip of the day. But this woman is alone and is coming at during hottest time of the day because she was a social outcast. The other women of the village would have nothing to do with her because of her adulterous lifestyle. She came to the well alone to avoid the insults of the other woman.

This lady is no different from any other sinner who has ever lived. But she had problems far beyond from just being a social outcast. The problem all sinners face is that they are spiritual outcasts. The Bible says that our sins stand between us and a relationship with the Lord. **Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)** says, "...*your sins have cut you off from God...*" Until people come to Jesus, they will be spiritual outcast. But, thank God Jesus bridges the gap between God and man. **1 Timothy 2:5 (NLT)** says, "*For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man, Christ Jesus.*" Jesus takes the sinner in one hand and the Father in the other and brings them together in Himself. That is how He is able to change lives.

C. The Scene (7b-8) - Notice that it is just Jesus and the woman at the well. All the distractions of her life have been removed. None of her ex-husbands are present. Her current man is nowhere around. None of the women who hated her and her lifestyle are to be found here. And none of the town people who loved to talk about her are around. It is just her and Jesus.

Ultimately, it always comes down to just you and Jesus. In the end, it isn't going to matter what you did in life, how much money or popularity you had, who you tried to impress, or even who you know. What will ultimately be of utmost importance is what you did with Jesus when you had opportunities.

2. The Conversation (9-26)

(9-10) When Jesus asked this lady for a drink, she responded with amazement that a Jew would ask for a drink from a woman, much less a Samaritan. (It was considered inappropriate for a Rabbi to speak to a woman in public.) Jesus, then, offers her a drink of "*living water.*" He tells her that she can drink from Jacob's Well every day and she will still get thirsty and will have to come back and draw again. However, He tells her that He can give her a drink of water that will satisfy her forever.

This is the nature of salvation. You can drink of the pleasures of this world, like this woman did, and will still have to try to find more ways to satisfy yourself. But with just one trip to the fountain of living water the thirsty soul can be satisfied forever.

(11-15) But this woman, like Nicodemus before her, is still confusing the physical and the spiritual.

(16-18) In an effort to awaken her to her spiritual need, Jesus touches a sensitive spot in this woman's life. He pointed out her sinfulness! I can almost imagine the guilt this woman lived with day after day - Being dogged and ridiculed by the other women, being constantly reminded of her failed marriages. I can imagine her life being in constant turmoil because of her sins.

And now, here's this stranger bringing all this to her attention again. This may seem rather blunt of the Lord, but listen; unless people are brought face-to-face with their sin, they are going to continue to justify it. They will continue to put things off. True salvation doesn't take place unless there is a confrontation between a person and their sin. Until the sinner knows he is lost, he will never desire to be found. Conviction is important. But this is something only God can do. And Jesus does it with wisdom and tact. And it certainly got her attention.

(19-24) But the woman continues to dodge the issue. She insists on diverting the subject to a discussion of religion. In vs. 20, she tries to start an argument about the proper place to worship. Jesus simply tells her that true worship is never found in external rituals and substitutes for God, but can only be found in spiritual worship of the Lord - from His indwelling Spirit.

With so many religions and beliefs in the world, it shows us that people are trying to reach a higher form of spirituality. They'll worship almost anything to attain it, but they'll never work!

(25-26) So as Jesus continues to talk with her about her need, the woman becomes more and more open to Him. She reveals that she is concerned about salvation and about the things of God. Jesus simply reveals Himself as everything she needs.

This is what Jesus does for every sinner. He doesn't come to you as a judge to condemn you. He never condemned this woman. He doesn't come as a bully to force you to come to Him. He's not offering you a buffet so

you may choose a way of salvation. He comes as the Way, the Truth and the Life and offers Himself to you as the only way of salvation.

Jesus gave this woman all she needed to make a decision about her salvation. But I want to show you what she did with what she heard and how you can do the very same thing.

3. The Conversion (27-30)

A. It Was Immediate (28a) - As soon as Jesus revealed Himself to this lady, she responded in faith and her salvation was instantaneous. There was no confirmation classes, no 12 step program. She simply trusted and she was instantly saved.

It will work the same for you too. When you come to Jesus, and put your faith in Him, you are instantly changed from a dying sinner into an eternally alive child of God!

B. It Was Complete (28b) - In this woman's excitement, she ran off and forgot why she even went to the well. She just left her water pot behind. She forgot about her old life when she met Jesus. She met Jesus and was forever changed.

This is how salvation works. When the sinner comes to Christ, there is an immediate transformation that takes place. It goes deeper than getting our souls saved. When we come to Jesus, we are changed totality - Paul calls us in 2 Cor. 5:17 "*new creations.*"

C. It Was Compelling (28c-29) - She ran to the city to tell the others about this man she had met and the salvation that she had just experienced. She became a soul winner. **Read vs. 39-42.**

Salvation will give you a message to share and a broken heart to share it from. When you have been delivered from death and Hell, you want to help others find their way out of sin also.

Conclusion: What was it that took this woman from being a hardened sinner, and transformed her into a powerful witness for the Lord? It can be summed up in one word: Jesus! He makes the difference in any life He touches. And He can make a life-changing difference in your life today.

Would you see Him as He waits patiently for you to come to Him? Would you hear Him as He tells you all about the shortcomings of your life and how He can make you whole? Would you respond to Him as this lady did by responding in faith?