

Sermon Series<(Screen 1) “How Do I Invite Them?” Lord of Life—3/26/000

Title: <(Screen 2—title and reference) “How Do I invite the Seeker?”

Text: John 4: 3-26

Introduction Illus.: WAITING FOR AN INVITATION

Theme: When we are taken over by the heart of Jesus, we take on the heart of Jesus for the lost and for those who are spiritually thirsty.

Taking on the heart of Jesus means:

We have a priority in our schedule for the spiritually lost and seeking

- **Read John 4: 3-9**
- Reasons we give to avoid reaching the lost seeker
 - I’m too busy (I know that it is necessary but my agenda is more important)
 - “Don’t think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.” Ph2:3,4

ILLUS.: PRIME THE PUMP

- I can’t tolerate that person (“woman & Samaritan” -- prejudice held against them—racial, gender, age, lifestyle)
- Always making room in our schedule and plans and journey for the lost
 - Jesus did because he knew what his purpose was— *to search out the seeker*
 - Jesus did because he knew what his role was— *to minister to the sick not the healthy*
“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5: 31-32
 - Jesus did because he knew what his power was— *to save them by invitation not obligation*
“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John 1: 17

We have the heart of Jesus for their need

- **Read John 4: 10-18**
- Roadblocks to having Jesus’ heart for the seeker
 - Hearing without listening to the seekers “felt needs”
 - The woman talked about needing water but fact she was doing in heat of day by self highlight lonely life
 - We have the answer (Jesus) but often we are not answering the question asked because not our agenda
 - Annoyance at the seeker’s spiritual ignorance
 - The woman knew the basis of the Jacob story but did not know why it was important
 - Sometimes fascination with spiritual issues (angels, after-life, end times) comes with ignorance of real issues
 - In disgust we write off spiritual ignorance in a haughty religious intellectualism which destroys witness
 - Shock over the seeker’s lifestyle
 - Woman had run through five relationships and had a live-in
 - Christians in judgmental pietism and drive seeker away with uncaring attitudes and actions when they are seeking an alternative to their destructive lifestyle
- Adopting Jesus’ seeker sensitive heart
 - Know ultimate need but do not disregard the “felt need” your friend is experiencing (Living Water for real life)
 - Thirst for future hope/happiness (*Give me to drink of that water so that I won’t be thirsty again*)
 - Thirst for true love (*I don’t have a husband*)
 - Thirst for forgiveness (*I know the Messiah will come. . .he will explain everything to us*)
 - See every moment and circumstance as a “teachable moment”
 - Jesus shows inordinate and purposeful patience in his conversation with the woman
 - No question is “dumb” in a witness opportunity
 - Bathe your contact with the seeker in grace
“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.” 1 Timothy 1: 15-16

ILLUS.: PATIENCE CONCEIVED IN GRACE

We deliver the message that will really make a difference in their life

- **Read John 4: 19-26**
- Create a thirst for Jesus not speculation on issues (Why does God . . .) with a clear presentation of who Jesus is

“So Jesus left Judea to return to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. Soon a Samaritan woman, came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, ‘You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?’” vs.3-9

“Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.” “But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this is a very deep well. Where would you get this living water? And besides, are you greater than our ancestor Jacob who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his cattle enjoyed?” Jesus replied, “People soon become thirsty again after drinking this water. But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.” “Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me some of that water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to haul water.” “Go and get your husband your husband,” Jesus told her. “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—for you have had five husbands and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now.” (vss. 10-18)

“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. Tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?” Jesus replied, “Believe me, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father here or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know so little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming and is already here when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for anyone who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” The woman said, “I know the Messiah will come—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” The Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!” (vss. 19-26)

WAITING FOR AN INVITATION

There's a story about 2 neighbors Joe and Sam. They lived next door to each other for quite a while. Every Sunday morning there was a drive-way ritual between the two of them. Joe would go out and start his car getting it ready for his family to go to church. At the same time, Sam was loading his golf clubs into the trunk of his car getting ready to go to the golf course. The two men would exchange the typical friendly greetings and then Sam would always say to Joe, "hey Joe. Why don't you grab your golf clubs and head to the course with me this morning?". And every Sunday Joe would say "thanks Sam but we're going to church today." Sam would say, "Ok, maybe some other time." This went on Sunday after Sunday. But one Sunday, Joe had about enough of this ritual. So, when Sam invited him to play golf, Joe walked across the yard to his neighbor's car and said, "Sam, every Sunday you see me getting ready to go to church yet you continue to invite me to play golf with you instead. Now why do you do that?" Sam shook his head and said, "You're right Joe. I do stop and invite you to play golf every Sunday - but I've been wondering when you were going to get around to inviting me to go to church with you." Joe had the opportunity week after week to invite Sam to church - but Joe let his fears, his perceptions, his own assessment of Sam get in the way. Joe probably feared that Sam the golfer would make fun of him, maybe afraid Sam would turn him down, or afraid that Sam would label him as a "Bible Thumper" or a "Jesus Freak".

PRIME THE PUMP FOR SOMEONE TO FOLLOW

The story is told of a man who's car broke down in Nevada. He wandered off the main road to find help but soon became desperately lost in the desert countryside. Thirsty beyond belief from the heat of the sun, he spied what looked like an abandoned mining town in the distance. He hoped to find water or an old well there. When he saw a well pump, he was overjoyed and immediately ran and began pumping but did not see any results. Despondent he fell to his knees knowing that he was surely going to die. However, out of the corner of his eye, he caught sight of an old jug with a cork in its neck and a note attached to it. He quickly grabbed it and read the note. It said, “Enclosed in this jug is a gallon of water. Don’t drink it. It has been left behind to prime the pump. This old well is in good shape. I just replaced the rubber seal gasket. If you pour this whole gallon into the pump to prime it and work the handle, it should pump you out some good, clean water. If you drink part of this water, you won’t have enough to prime the pump and will get no water. Signed, Jeb Statton, 1902 P.S.: Don’t forget to fill the jug up with water after you are done so that the next feller will have enough water to prime the pump. The man was tempted—what if he poured all the water into the pump and it didn’t work and he wasted his last hope of staying alive in the heat. He was so thirsty, all he could do was think about drinking the water in the jug to quench his immediate thirst. However, he resisted the temptation. Pour the water into the primer hole. He pumped and the handle squeaked and groaned. He pumped the handle several times and heard a sucking sound. He pumped it again and again and again and soon water began flooding out of the pump. He drank and quenched his thirst. But when he was done, he remembered to fill the jug and put the cork back on it

PATIENCE CONCEIVED IN GRACE

According to a traditional Hebrew story, Abraham was sitting outside his tent one evening when he saw an old man, weary from age and journey, coming toward him. Abraham rushed out, greeted him, and then invited him into his tent. There he washed the old man's feet and gave him food and drink. The old man immediately began eating without saying any prayer or blessing. So Abraham asked him, "Don't you worship God?" The old traveler replied, "I worship fire only and reverence no other god." When he heard this, Abraham became incensed, grabbed the old man by the shoulders, and threw him out of his tent into the cold night air. When the old man had departed, God called to his friend Abraham and asked where the stranger was. Abraham replied, "I forced him out because he did not worship you." God answered, "I have suffered him these eighty years although he dishonors me. Could you not endure him one night?"