

Sermon Series: "Sharing Good News—A Way of Life"—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN----1/18/2009

Title: "Getting People Interested"

Text: John 4:4-30

Intro.: **Illus.:** 8am "Distracted by the Ribbon" 10: 45am skit: "The Invitation"

Theme: In a world of great distractions, we work with patience and purpose to help people see Jesus and the wonderful good news of grace which he has to offer them.

Cutting through the noise and clutter to open the conversation – 'The woman at the well' (John 4:4-9)

- Jesus had to work through barriers to share His good news
- 1. Personal (*tired as he was from the journey – vs. 6*)
- 2. Religious (not waiting for her to come to Jerusalem but going to Sychar on her home turf– *vs. 4, 5*)
- 3. Crowd (waited until his disciple had gone to get rid of the "intimidation factor" *vs. 8*)
- 4. Cultural (Jew/Samaritan, man/woman – *vs. 9*)
- Preparing ourselves to reach effectively to a friend, family member, or associate
- 1. **Illus.: Turning enemies into friends**
- 2. Listen and wait for the Spirit's leading (*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. Romans 8:14*)
- 3. Prepare your heart and mind (*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13*)
- 4. Pray for an open door (*Pray...that God may open up to us a door for the word. Colossians 4:3*)
- 5. Go to them rather than waiting for them to come to you. (*Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . Matthew 28:19*)

Caring enough to reach out with the Good News (John 4:7, 9-26)

- Find common ground (*vs. 7, 9*)
- 1. For Jesus and woman it was thirst, water, and drinking that were on their mind – but from different perspectives
- 2. Like Jesus, we are going to have to overcome preconceived prejudices about believers in another (*vs. 9,11-12*)
 - a. Patience required and grace covered ears and grace tipped tongue
 - b. *Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. Colossians 4:6*
- Quickly, connect the present with the eternal
- 1. Jesus connected water with the Water of Life and with God's gift of grace (*vs. 10, 13-14*)
- 2. Find and fill the other's thirst with Jesus (*vs. 15-18*)
 - a. **Ills.: "Castaway" scene on thirst**
- Avoid silly, religious arguments
- 1. Worship wars were present even back in Jesus' day (*vs.19–20*)
- 2. *Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 2 Timothy 2:23*
- Live authentically in the truth
- 1. Jesus answered from God's Word (*vs. 21–24*) (quote from *Isaiah 2:2-3*)
- 2. Living in truth and by the truth
 - a. *For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. 3 John 1:3-4*
 - b. Authenticity happens when what we know, what we say, and how we say it gives worship to God (*vs. 24*)
- Build on what they do know about Jesus (*vs. 25-26*)
- 1. Jesus does not treat the woman with condescension but with straightforward respect and honesty
- 2. *And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8*

Expecting God to work a good news breakthrough (John 4: 27-30)

- Let it soak and let God work (*vs. 27-28*)
- 1. In this story without the context all sorts of assumptions could be made about the woman's abrupt departure
 - a. She is overwhelmed by Jesus
 - b. She is intimidated by the disciples return
 - c. Or God Spirit was working a power conviction and confession
- 2. Don't rush to get a result but pray at the moment of the message's delivery and afterwards for God's kingdom
- When God opens a door, no one can shut it (*vs. 29-30*)
- 1. Woman, now a new believer, with joyful abandon witnesses to friend and family about her Savior who forgives her
- 2. We can expect this good news breakthrough when we have seen it within our own hearts and lives in Jesus

Distracted by the Ribbon

When it comes to our attitude toward God in worship, I have often found Christians to be like the woman in the Lexus TV commercial. On Christmas morning, she finds a full-sized luxury SUV in her living room. The vehicle is topped with a gigantic, picture-perfect red ribbon. Turning to her husband with a look of astonishment on her face, all she can think to ask is, "Where did you get a bow that big?!" She has a fully equipped SUV in her living room, yet she is transfixed by an ornament. A decoration has distracted her from the real mystery. **Michael Knott, Bemidji, Minnesota**

"Castaway" scene on Thirst

Cast Away is the story of Chuck Noland a top engineer for FedEx. While flying over the South Pacific, a violent storm damages the company jet causing it to slam into the ocean. Noland survives the crash, but everyone else aboard is killed. Clinging to a yellow life raft, he rides out the raging storm and washes up on a small deserted island. The day after Noland first sets foot on the island, the only concern greater than his fear is his desperate need for water. He is dangerously thirsty. After he discovers coconuts falling from the trees, Noland frantically attempts to open one. He repeatedly throws a coconut against a boulder, but the hard shell is unmarked. He flies into a fury when he still cannot access the juice locked inside the fibrous seed. Eventually he employs a sharp rock as an axe and is able to cut into and remove the outer husk. Left with the hard shell, he finally breaks it open only to watch as most of the milky juice spills out on the ground. Noland lifts up a fragment of the shell and drains the few remaining drops of liquid into his mouth. How like our spiritual thirst, as we desperately seek to find satisfaction. Jesus promises to fulfill our longings and declares, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." **Elapsed Time: 00:40:02 to 00:42:20 (DVD chapter 11) Cast Away (Twentieth Century Fox, 2000); written by William Broyles Jr., directed by Robert Zemeckis**

Turning Enemies into Friends

Yonggi Cho is pastor of the largest church in the world. Several years ago, as his ministry was becoming international, he told God, "I will go anywhere to preach the gospel?except Japan." He hated the Japanese with gut-deep loathing because of what Japanese troops had done to the Korean people and to members of Yonggi Cho's own family during WWII. The Japanese were his Ninevites. Through a combination of a prolonged inner struggle, several direct challenges from others, and finally an urgent and starkly worded invitation, Cho felt called by God to preach in Japan. He went, but he went with bitterness. The first speaking engagement was to a pastor's conference--1,000 Japanese pastors. Cho stood up to speak, and what came out of his mouth was this: "I hate you. I hate you. I hate you." And then he broke and wept. He was both brimming and desolate with hatred. At first one, then two, then all 1,000 pastors stood up. One by one they walked up to Yonggi Cho, knelt at his feet and asked forgiveness for what they and their people had done to him and his people. As this went on, God changed Yonggi Cho. The Lord put a single message in his heart and mouth: "I love you. I love you. I love you." Sometimes God calls us to do what we least want to do in order to reveal how powerful the blood of Christ is. **Mark Buchanan, Your God Is Too Safe (Multnomah, 2001) p. 47**

John 4:4-30

⁴Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" ¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." ¹⁶He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." ¹⁹"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." ²⁵The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

²⁷Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰They came out of the town and made their way toward him. [NIV]