

Conviction Precedes Conversation

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[0 : 00] I'm going to ask that you turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 4 and we're going! to multitask. What I'm going to do is ask that as I read the passage that you pray with your eyes open.

Can you do that? How many of you pray while you're driving? I'm just kind of check with me. So I'll just say how many of you do that. Okay, you drive and pray. So you can probably listen to me.

A little bit and pray. And here's what I want you to pray. I want you to pray that the Spirit of God would use his word to touch our hearts with the glory and the supremacy of Christ. That our affection and our interest would be in the Lord Jesus this morning.

And so as I begin reading and I'm going to pick up in verse 4 and read forward. Are we okay? Okay. And I don't mind stopping at all.

We are going to stop and pray for something else. I don't know anything about how faith is at this time, but let's pray together for her well-being.

[1 : 18] Precious Father, we are so thankful that you know us.

As the psalmist says, you know our down-sitting and our uprising. You know our thoughts before we think them. There's not a moment of our life that is not weighed carefully by your loving hands.

And you, loving us as you do, have given to us all that we need for life and godliness. And our hearts this morning are quiet before you as we we pray for faith, our sister and friend.

We pray for Greg and Connie and the family. Lord, that faith would be okay. That whatever is the momentary affliction would pass and that you would strengthen and encourage her at this time.

Thank you for those that are present to provide practical medical care. And we pray, Lord, that she receives the attention that she needs to allow for a quick recovery.

[2 : 55] So thankful, Lord, that we can pray together and that our hearts are knit together in oneness. For the fact that in the midst of the uncertainties and the troubles that sin has brought into the world, that we who know the Lord Jesus Christ have the abiding confidence that our story because of Jesus ends well.

And, Lord, we ask that this morning, as we think about the woman at the well, that we would be overcome with the sweetness of a Savior that loves broken people and we're all broken and loved us enough to come to this earth and live and die on the cross and rise again.

That we, who know Christ, have no need to be afraid of anything. And so let Christ be the one that is glorified in our moment of uncertainty as we consider the power and the promise of the gospel.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Ah, Kleenex. I had planned to read from verse 4 all the way through to 19 and I'm going to amend that just for a moment and remind you that in verse 4 what it tells us is that Jesus in his journey to leave the area that he was in there in the proximity of Jerusalem and go up to Galilee, that it says there in verse 4 that he had to pass through Samaria.

And it was at Samaria or in Samaria at the well in Sychar that he stopped and had a conversation with a woman who had come at noon to draw water.

[5 : 35] And so I want you to pick up with me if you will in verse 13 Jesus says this everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The woman said to him Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water. Jesus said to her Go, call your husband and come here.

The woman answered him and said I have no husband. Jesus said to her You are right in saying I have no husband for you have had five husbands and the one you now have is not your husband.

What you have said is true. The woman said to him Sir, I perceive that you're a prophet. As we look at this passage this morning and we are going to take our time to study it carefully we find a very, very important Bible truth here that we can't overlook.

[6 : 55] It is something that is at the foundation and at the base of all of our conversions. As we were singing this morning I couldn't help but think of the day when as a young boy in the process of our family devotions I remember being completely overwhelmed with the reality of my sin.

I knew I was a sinner that had offended the holiness of God and I stood justly condemned before him and I had every reason to fear what the prospect of my eternity would be.

and I remember breaking down and beginning to cry as I thought about the reality of my condition and my mom said to me hey what's wrong?

I said I just feel bad about me and she had the wisdom to say why don't you come with me and we went into another room and she refreshed the gospel truth in my hearing and I remember praying and asking Jesus to save me and I was wonderfully delivered from the burden and the curse of sin and I was given a new home and I was given a new hope and as we look this morning we recognize here in this story that what we find here is that there's really no hope of true salvation apart from coming to the grips with the reality of sin and that's what takes place in this part of the story of the woman at the well so as we pay attention to this evangelistic account and I want you to understand that it's not the first evangelistic effort that Jesus was engaged in actually the first one was with Nicodemus and Nicodemus really didn't get it in this case we find a woman meets with Jesus and Jesus ministers to her by drawing attention to what her real need was but as we work our way through this there are a couple things that I want you to zero in on and understand first of all we just don't get it and what I mean by that is that mankind has a sin problem and really doesn't know it if you would talk with most of the people that you bump into the truth of the matter is that they are really not overly sensitive and aware of how serious the sin problem is in their life

I mean they understand that some people sin and most of the people that they're concerned about that sin are other people because it affects them and so I want you to understand that as we look at this passage we find here that Jesus is working to bring the sweetness of the gospel into clear focus in this person's life wants us all of us to understand the nature of the human heart and really what is at risk in this issue I want you to look just for a moment if you would at verse 15 Jesus is there at the well and having this conversation with the woman and just imagine the scene here she is she's a little curious because after all here is a Jew a man who's having conversation with her and she finds it intriguing at least if you go back you look there in verse 15 it says the woman said to him sir give me this water so that I may not be thirsty or have to come here and draw water her heart was not the least bit touched with the reality of what her spiritual condition was in the presence of Christ there he was the one who was promising her living water namely the indwelling spirit that is the gift to a believer and she had no idea of what was going on if you look back just for a moment to verse 9 the Samaritan woman said to him how is it that you a Jew asked for a drink from me a woman of Samaria and if you're wondering what really was going on in her life you'd have to say that what she understood was that she thought

[11:21] Jesus was hitting on her and she was finding it a little entertaining what are you doing talking to me a woman and a woman of Samaria and asking me for a drink you see in that day men just did not strike up conversations with women they did not know and she was picking up on that and playing it for all she was worth even after Jesus pushed back a little bit in verse 10 Jesus answered and said if you knew the gift of God and then again in verse 13 where he speaks about the fact that he was the one who had the ability to give to her the gift of eternal life and the spirit in particular in both cases she didn't get it the truth of the matter is that that woman's thinking was not the least bit on spiritual matters and she certainly wasn't thinking that her sin was a problem how do we know that you look there at verse 11 and her conversation is all about physical things that really were not at the heart of the issue in verse 11 she says hey you're talking about water but she says you don't understand you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep 75 some feet and how in the world was he going to get water without a rope you find out that her response really is focused on nothing other than her personal comfort and she really didn't understand what was at risk and yet

Jesus made that statement I'm going to give you living water and you won't be thirsty again and she said well okay let's do that thing give me the water that you speak of so I don't have to come hiking down here and get it and as you stop and think about this story the thing that I trust is very very clear to you is that this woman in the midst of this conversation with the Lord of glory with the creator of the universe in no way shape or form understood what was going on there she was in the presence of the only one who could make a difference the only one who could do anything about the mess in her life and yet she was entirely dead spiritually to what was taking place and as a matter of fact what we find in this passage is an indication of the reality that all mankind is spiritually dead by nature we're all spiritually dead apart from grace and the Samaritan woman wasn't the only person who didn't get it we shouldn't be surprised because apart from the grace of God the truth of the matter is that the Bible is very very clear on the condition of the person who has not come to faith in Christ and there is a clear recognition that apart from God doing something spectacular we're dead let me have you look at a couple passages so that this is not just kind of hearsay evidence but you can see it with your own eyes take your

Bible and turn in it to Ephesians chapter 2 how bad off is anyone prior to conversion prior to the grace of God getting a hold of a person's life and bringing them to that point where they recognize they're convicted of the reality of the darkness and the blackness of their heart Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1 let me read it to you it says this and you were dead in the trespasses and sins I as a pastor have spent many years well for one growing up in a medical home where my father was a surgeon and I saw death firsthand in India but then as a pastor I've been at the graveside and in funeral homes and one of the things I've always found a little troubling to me is when a person says standing at the casket oh doesn't she look good I have never seen any corpse that look good now pancake makeup and some other things may make it tolerable but the fact of the matter is dead is dead and here is the bible telling us that prior to conversion individuals are dead

Colossians chapter 2 verse 13 we find a very similar statement and I want you to turn there if you would Colossians chapter 2 verse 13 it says this it says and you were dead you were dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 verse 4 and I'll just make the reference and draw the piece out of it it speaks of the fact that prior to conversion we're blinded we're blinded I mean it's bad enough to stagger around at night when you think you know your environment and you've got a night light right we all want to be sure that we don't get tripped up by something left on the floor but blind is blind blind people can't see what's in front of them and what's really going on I want you to turn furthermore back to John chapter 3 19 and 20 and understand that this business of the condition of the person prior to conversion is not just a matter of dead and blind but it also is one of a clear rejection of what gives hope

John chapter 3 verse 19 and this is the judgment the light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil evil listen to me and I want you to pay attention to this when people are doing something that is wrong and you turn on the light they do what they react against it hey turn that off don't bother me don't let me know what's going on in my life don't tell me that that's wrong because I've decided it's what I want to do and Jesus says this hey don't be surprised they hate the light because their deeds are evil verse 20 for everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works be exposed you know I think Christians in many cases are just flat irritating by not living godly holy lives and the thing that is irritating is that we go around and talk about the fact that we are his examples and his illustrations but people got it figured out that we're not really what we say we are on the other hand when you live a godly holy life guess what's going to happen surprise people are not going to like the fact that you make the truth clear so you have a choice being disliked by the world for being hypocritical on your faith or being disliked by the world because you are what you say you are as you look at this woman going back to John chapter 4 I want you to understand that when I make the statement to you that she didn't get it and for that fact all men apart from the grace of God don't understand the sinfulness of their heart we should recognize that the Bible is very very clear that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God men women boys girls stand condemned before a holy God because they have chosen willfully live in sin and rebellion against God the very easiest doctrine in the Bible to prove is the doctrine of the depravity of man do you understand that you don't have to look very far outside your own heart to recognize that hey sin is a nasty and unbelievable problem and it's one I can't solve myself and yet we see this woman at the well and that's what I want you to recognize she had a problem in her life that was greater than her physical thirst and the truth of the matter is she really didn't get it when Jesus was there present with her so how is Jesus going to draw her to faith well I want you to recognize second the law and the truth is what helps us when Jesus instructed there you are in John chapter four I want you to look at verse 16 she makes that statement hey I'll take that water I don't have to make this hike I'd appreciate having that Jesus then makes a very little interesting statement that opens up the door and brings conviction in her life and what is the statement she he says this go call your husband and come here now question was Jesus uncertain about her marital status and what's the answer no we know in fact all you would have to do is kind of look back to John chapter 2 verse 25 where it says this that he knew the hearts of all men he knew exactly what her condition was he knew the sordid details of all that had taken place in her life and so when he asked her this question he knew exactly what she was going to do next it's very

[20 : 51] interesting if you kind of read between the lines here this woman who prior to this moment had been quite chatty now what do we mean by chatty you know Jesus said give me a drink and she kind of launched off on hey yeah what are you doing smacking on me and do you know how deep the well is blah blah blah and when he says go call your husband she's right to the point I have none I don't have one I'm done let's step away from this how many of you ever found that to happen when you're witnessing somebody and you're just kind of carrying on a conversation and lo and behold something related to the subject of sin comes to the table and by accident you stumble into something they're struggling with and it's like oop let's not talk about that I'll never forget the moment I was out here on the south on the west side helping a guy unload lumber for a project we were going to be involved in here at the church and as you can imagine a pastor I was there in blue jeans and that kind of thing and helping this guy and we were unloading the lumber and stuff like that and we get in conversation and I ended up talking about you know what I talk about right gospel opportunity and we're talking about so what's going on in your life and he was telling me he was a pretty good person and he went so far as to tell me that he kept the ten commandments

I mean he figured that anybody that was helping at a church probably had some relationship with it and so he you know smack talk with me and we're doing pretty good and as this thing kind of plays out I kind of let it pass and we're going on about lumber and other things like that and I said so what's really happening and he said well my girlfriend and I we're living together and we're having trouble and that just dawned on me they told me they kept the ten commandments and he was living with this girl suddenly there here's Jesus he says to this woman hey go call your husband I don't have one so in directing this woman to call her husband what Jesus did was actually put her on the spot with her sin and I want you to recognize that as you look at Jesus' ministry what you understand is this is before we see our need of salvation we have to see our need of sin we have to understand that sin is the problem in our life you see the reality of the matter was in this particular case with this

Samaritan woman she had a long history of trading her sexuality for security that's what she'd been doing the sin of sexual relationships apart from that monogamous relationship in marriage between a man and a woman a covenant something that God had clearly defined as an offense against his holiness and here was this woman who by virtue of whatever the circumstances were had decided that it was appropriate for her to play the situation to her own advantage and so here she was middle of the day when most other women did not come down to draw water and she showed up to draw water to kind of avoid the crowd probably the rest of the girls didn't like her and so there she was now we find out and look at verse 17 the woman answered him and said

I have no husband Jesus said to her you are right in saying I have no husband now I bet you she'd wish that he'd left it at that but he does for you've had five husbands and the one you now have is not your husband I want you to recognize that what Jesus did at this point was draw her attention to what God's view of her behavior was you see I want you to understand that marriage is not just a social convention or something that culture stumbled upon and decided that it might not be a bad idea to try this kind of relationship no the fact of the matter is that marriage is something God had ordained and she had violated God's plan and God's law God ordained marriage to be the union between one man and one woman for life I want you to see this actually in the Bible so that you don't take it on hearsay evidence but you can kind of put your finger on it and say that's what

God has decided turn in your Bible if you would keep your finger there in John because we're coming back but go to Matthew chapter 19 Matthew chapter 19 verse 4 through 6 let me give you the background a large crowd had been following Jesus because he was doing these miracles and healing people and the Pharisees came up to him and tested him now what they were trying to do was kind of drive a wedge between Jesus and the crowd that was paying attention to him and was interested in his ministry they they hoped that they would catch Jesus on the horns of a dilemma so to speak and they came to him and say is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause and that statement any cause kind of played into one of the kind of the flavors of Jewish thinking at that time where a man could divorce his wife for really any reason that he found and women in that culture were not given the prerogative of divorce more or less the man decided well tired with this one

[26 : 35] I'm moving on and they came and it was very popular it happened a lot they come to Jesus and say hey is this appropriate very interesting how Jesus responded instead of getting into the nitty gritty of what their answer was he drew their attention back to what God's plan was where did this start what was God's plan he answered have you not read that's kind of like a slap in the face to the Pharisees have you not read he who created them from male and female what was God saying at that point marriage is something between a man and what a woman that's God's that's God's word that's not mine that's his plan he says man God made them this way and he says he made them male and female therefore a man should leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall be one flesh so let no man separate and so here as we go back to

John we find that Jesus in his ministry to this woman when he calls her to bring her husband his purpose in doing that was to draw attention to the sin that was part of her heart and her life and that was the thing that she needed to be saved from you see I want you to even in the midst of calling this woman to come to grips with her sin Jesus displayed a tenderness that I think should characterize all of our lives and our ministry I want you to look if you will again at the verse where he says to her in verse 16 go call your husband and the last little thing that he says and come here come here go call your husband but come here you see his ministry to her was not just the matter of indicting her and helping her recognize the sin of her heart the very purpose of his being was to draw sinners to himself that he might redeem them and he might bring everlasting life into their lives and so it wasn't just hey

I want to embarrass you and drive you away I want you to see your need that only I can answer and I want you to recognize as we look at the statement that Jesus made call your husband we see sin in the light of God's law and its truth let me tell you something a culture that removes God's light and God's truth and I say this carefully I want you to recognize it because it's what's going on in our culture when you turn down God's light and you resist God's law you also strip away the opportunity people have of recognizing their sin and coming to grips with their need for a savior you see God's holy law which ordained the blessing of sexual union to be something that happened only within the covenant bonds of marriage between a man and a woman was what this Samaritan woman had violated willfully and while her sin of fornication should not really be thought in any way to be more offensive than any other sin that an individual would commit against

God I want you to understand that what every sin is is an offense against the holiness and the authority of God it's saying God I don't care who you are I want to do it my way thank you leave me alone and here was Jesus stepping into the middle of the situation and saying listen you've got a need and you can't solve it yourself and I am the one who can answer that need and help it I want you to understand in bringing the law into the picture and that's what Jesus did in this case he didn't bring it in just to crush this woman but to help her understand the need that her heart had for the savior apart from coming to grips with the reality of our brokenness there is no hope in salvation there's none and in every case the purpose of the law is not to give God a set of standards that he can beat us down with but to allow us to come to grips with the reality of the bankruptcy of our soul and our desperate need for

Christ I want you to turn your Bible if you will to Romans chapter 7 as we see the apostle there kind of play out what the value of the law is in convicting us of our sin Romans chapter 7 verse 7 through 9 what shall we say that the law is sin in other words hey is it a bad thing that the law exists!

[31 : 26] that people remind you of the law no by no means yet if it had not been for the law I would not have known sin for I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said you shall not covet and here's Paul putting it this way he says hey I was just sailing along really loving stuff that's what he was say it the ancient equivalent of Pinterest Amazon browsing on the internet spending all kinds of time looking at catalogs and there was Saul just kind of eating this up and he was covetous and he enjoyed things and along comes the law and says don't covet and suddenly he's convicted that's wrong you see what God wants is to be loved in place of things isn't that right and he says I want you to love me and not the things and Paul says man the law came along and let me know that all this stuff that I was all wrapped up in was an offense to

God and as a result Saul came to grips with his desperate need for salvation and his recognition that he couldn't save himself so I want you to know that it's the law that helps us understand that we need the Savior it's the we have and recognize that apart from grace we have no ability to rescue or ransom ourselves and so when Jesus relied upon the law to touch this woman's heart and he instructed her to call her husband his intention was to help her see her sin so that she would be drawn to him in whom alone is salvation and the only remedy for the condition that she had and so in a word let's put it this way there are three kinds of people sitting here this morning there are those of you that are sitting here this morning that the fact of the matter is is that you've never really come to grips with the darkness of your heart and the moral bankruptcy of your soul oh you're kind of playing through a little bit like remember

Josh I like that you know done good things and you think well I hope my good outweighs my bad the reality of it is the scripture says very clearly all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and you may be sitting here this morning and you still remain at this point a little indifferent to the reality that God's law makes sin clear and yet this morning the spirit of God is tapping!

the blackness of your heart has no remedy apart from Christ and Jesus this morning is calling you to safety he is saying hey listen you can't solve this problem but I can I came into the world to be the savior of lost mankind and the beginning point of coming to grips with the condition that you have is to recognize I am a sinner who justly stand justly condemned before God there are some of you that are here this morning who have come to Christ but the reality of it is that over the last year or two maybe there's a secret sin that has crept into your life and you have allowed that old life to snare you again and you find yourself burdened and guilty and ashamed and God's word is here to help you understand that that sin offensive as it is to him is something that he can care for by bringing forgiveness into your life and I would plead with you if you're sitting here this morning and you are snared by

Satan as a child of God you need to rescue yourself this morning by humbling yourself and saying I have sin that has bound me there are others of you here this morning that know the complete forgiveness the freedom that you have in Christ you know what it is to say to people listen I want to take you to the one person I know that can help you have complete forgiveness and can completely turn your life around and that's to Jesus let me tell you something when we who have been redeemed are reminded of the blessing of our salvation and what it means to have complete forgiveness guess what the natural outcome of that is we like to talk about it wouldn't you agree about that we like to remind ourselves I sat down here I was thinking about probably the two most important moments in my life were number one when I came to know Christ as my personal Savior I can remember that today the second one was when the doors of the church opened up and

[36:10] I saw Judith at the far end that was good I wonder about you how precious and how fresh is the thought of your salvation today if Christ is your Savior and he has redeemed you from the fallen broken condition that you were once in then that is something that should light the fire in your life and give you reason to be joyful and happy in the midst of the messiness we live in amen and when we step out and leave this place other people ought to look at us and say what's the deal with you what's going on what do you have and it's not essential oils the thing is it's

Jesus that makes a difference wouldn't you agree with that and should we display that I can't guilt you into that I can't cajole you into that but I can lift up the beauty of Christ who is the only one who can redeem you from the fall and I can let you know this that the one who saved you intends for you to spend the rest of your life making him look good I live in a neighborhood where everybody I know needs Jesus I actually like living there by the way the last neighborhood I lived in everybody needed Jesus too I usually don't let them know I'm a Baptist pastor until after they know I'm a good neighbor and

I want to encourage you this morning you who know Christ I want the gospel sweetness to radiate from your life so that the woman at the well and the people that you live around the people that work next to you would have a reason to ask you what's the difference what do you have how is it that you can get along with other people and are not a sour unhappy individual well I used to be there until I met Jesus and he's made a difference you think about where you are in that business of being his example his representative and you get things right with him so you can do the job he's called you to do would you agree with that let's close in prayer our father God this morning as we think about the woman at the well and we think about the sweetness!

of our savior we recognize their savior today they sit here and they are under the cloud and the burden of their sin and they know in their heart that there's no remedy apart from Christ draw them to the cross help them understand that you have regard to the broken and the humble and you will certainly hear their plea for salvation and respond and grant them everlasting life I pray also for those who are here today that are believers whose lives are snared by secret practices and attitudes that are so ill fitted to the ministry that we have of reconciliation that this morning as they consider the joy of their salvation that you would rekindle in their heart a love for the Lord Jesus Christ and a willingness to be contrite and broken and allow you to use them as an instrument of righteousness to draw sinners to the cross and we who know

Christ that as we leave this place we would leave with a clear understanding of the fact that you have saved us for your glory and we step out into a broken world to let them know that there is hope and that's our job that's our calling we ask this in your precious name amen as John leads us in our closing song let me have you