

If You Knew the Gift of God

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Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0 : 0 0] continue their dialogue from here. But it's helpful to stop here for now for our purposes. I want to draw our attention to the kind of person that Jesus of Nazareth is. Jesus, he's no Ebenezer Scrooge, right? He's no George Bailey and he's no Santa Claus either.

I want you to see tonight that Jesus is so much better than any of these men. And what makes Jesus so much better? First, Jesus brings the gift of God with an unconventional love. Jesus brings the gift of God with an unconventional love. Now, I know that many of you are spending time with family this Christmas and honestly, maybe you've already reached your limit for unconventional people right about now. But hang in there with me. Jesus is unconventional in four ways that demonstrate a humble love.

First, Jesus moves toward the woman. Jesus moves toward the woman. Now, he doesn't have to do this. Jesus, he could have just kept quietly to himself like a good Canadian boy would do. Jesus could sit down next to the well, put in his earbuds, start playing on his phone. But Jesus decides that he's going to bother this woman. Now, maybe some of you have the gift of gab.

[1 : 3 0] You do this almost instinctively. Bothering strangers is like oxygen to you. But Jesus, he doesn't approach people out of self-interest or to fulfill some inner compulsion or to get something out of the other person. Jesus approaches people for a specific purpose.

He approaches people to help them. That's why Jesus moves toward the woman in an act of unconventional love. Now, you know that Jesus isn't doing this for self-interest. For one thing, Jesus pushes through barriers. Jesus pushes through barriers. He pushes through the practical and social obstacles that would get in the way of a relationship with this woman. That's the second way Jesus is unconventional.

Put yourself in Jesus' shoes here. What reasons, stop and think for a moment, put yourself in Jesus' shoes. You're sitting at this well. What reasons might you give to keep to yourself? What reasons might you give to keep to yourself? In fact, there are so many reasons, so many barriers that everyone in this story except Jesus, everyone except Jesus is shocked that there is a conversation happening at all.

We read back in verse 6 that Jesus is, he's wearied from his journey. He arrives at the well around noon in the middle of summer under a scorching sun.

[3 : 0 1] I don't think we could really describe Jesus' mood right now as chipper. On top of that, Jesus is a man. She is a woman. A public conversation like this, in that culture, this would be really weird. And especially since Jesus is a rabbi or a teacher. That just wasn't something that a rabbi did. And above all, Jesus is a Jew. She is a Samaritan.

John helpfully reminds us in verse 9 that Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Imagine all the conflict that's taking place in our culture right now.

Conflict over politics, conflict over ethnic differences, over race, over religion, and so on. Try taking all of that, bundling all that toxic mix together, add it to a pot, cook and stir for 700 years of bad blood and back and forth, and voila, you have the Jewish-Samaritan conflict.

But Jesus pushes through all these barriers in an act of unconventional love. Now, how does he do it? How does Jesus break through all of these barriers in what's really seeming to be an impossible situation? The third way that Jesus is unconventional is that Jesus leads with weakness. Jesus leads with weakness. What are the first words out of Jesus' mouth?

Jesus, give me a drink. Give me a drink. Now, I know all you parents, you're cringing right now. Jesus didn't say the magic word. But if we set aside those little cultural differences and nuances, what do we have here? We have a man asking for help. He's asking for help. Jesus is telling the woman that he needs her help. This also reveals, once again, that Jesus is not speaking out of

self-interest.

[5 : 15] After all, we read in verse 8, his disciples, they are already out there getting provisions for him. Yet Jesus decides that his weakness, his weariness, his thirst, that is actually the way of approaching this Samaritan woman. That is his in. Isn't that a funny way to introduce yourself?

It would be like me coming up to you and saying, hi, I'm Dave. I'm worn out from a difficult week. I'm a below average athlete and even worse cook. Pleased to meet you. Help me, you know.

That's not the way we usually lead a conversation. We tend to draw attention to our strengths, don't we, right? You know, you want to show that you can tell a good joke.

You can drop a hint about something that's really good about yourself. Maybe your career or maybe your family. Something you're proud of. You hope maybe they'll ask some more about it. You adopt a thoughtful posture.

You try to win over the other person by impressing them, proving you are worth their time. Jesus does the exact opposite of that. Jesus disarms the woman by leading with weakness.

[6 : 31] He is tired. He is thirsty. He needs water. Jesus leads with weakness in an act of unconventional love. Then there's a fourth way that he is unconventional.

Jesus exposes himself to humiliation. Jesus exposes himself to humiliation. And this whole conversation, everything that's happening here, this is a huge social faux pas.

Jesus is not supposed to be talking with a Samaritan and a woman. In that culture, what he is doing that is utterly beneath him. Men had a status that women did not.

Jews had a status that Samaritans did not. By moving toward this woman, Jesus is taking a risk.

Jesus risks being shamed by someone of a lower status.

It's like trying out. It's like in gym class. You know, you don't want to get picked last for the team. But imagine if you were the best athlete and the nerd was the one picking and he didn't even bother to pick you until the end.

[7 : 41] He didn't think you'd be useful. You don't want to be shamed by someone of a lower status. And you know what? That is actually exactly how things play out.

The woman, she scolds Jesus for his behavior in verse 9. How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

You know, if you had a thermometer that was designed to measure awkwardness, then this conversation just heated up about 10 degrees. Jesus exposes himself to humiliation in an act of unconventional love.

Could you imagine yourself in this situation? Could you imagine being in Jesus' shoes? How would you respond to being scolded like that?

How would you respond to putting yourself out there and then getting scolded? Would you avoid bringing the gift of God if it meant you might be humiliated?

[8 : 42] Would you risk your status for a conversation like this one? Where would you turn to for unshakable life and glory that would free you up to take a risk like this?

No longer controlled by what other people think and how they react to you. Well, Jesus is going to begin showing where his life, where his glory, where his honor comes from.

Jesus reveals the gift of God with an unconventional boldness. Jesus reveals the gift of God with an unconventional boldness. Because he's approached the woman with a humble, unconventional love, now Jesus can say to her some things which otherwise may have offended or upset her.

Jesus approaches her gently, but fearlessly. He is unafraid that she may reject him. Jesus is unconventional in two ways that demonstrate a gentle boldness.

The first way is this. Jesus reveals that she is the one in need of understanding. Jesus reveals that she is the one in need of understanding.

[9 : 56] He begins in verse 10 by saying, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink. He's gently telling her that she doesn't know.

She doesn't understand what God has done for her. She doesn't understand who Jesus is. She doesn't know the truth, and he does. Now in our culture, that's a pretty arrogant claim.

Jesus is claiming to have a corner on the truth. This could be viewed as a power play. A way for Jesus to control this woman.

There's a thousand scholars right now shaking their heads at Jesus for doing this. But the woman stays in there with him. And why does she do that? She does it because she already knows this isn't a power play.

Jesus has approached her in weakness, in gentleness. Jesus has short-circuited any criticism by approaching her in humble love. And so she listens to him when he tells her that she lacks understanding.

[11:07] So what about you? Do you know the gift of God? Do you know what God has done for you? Do you know enough to marvel at the kindness that God has shown you in giving his son Jesus Christ?

Or do you demonstrate a lack of knowledge by taking this gift for granted, by pushing Jesus aside for other priorities? Will you be like a child who demands a gift from his parents as his due, and then refuses to open the gift that he's given?

Will you accept that you don't understand the gift of God? You don't understand Jesus as you ought. And that you need God and his family to help you understand, to open your eyes to see the beauty of Jesus Christ.

That's what this woman will eventually do. Jesus reveals that she is the one in need of understanding in an act of gentle boldness. And then there's a second way in which he is unconventional.

Jesus reveals that he is the one who can provide for her need. He is the one who can provide for her need. Jesus tells her in verse 10, If you knew, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

[12:30] As with truth, so with life. Jesus is claiming that she is actually the one who is thirsty. She is the one who is weak. She is the one who lacks glory and life.

And you know what? Jesus claims to be the one who can provide for her need. It is already considered arrogant to tell someone that you have glory and life that they don't have.

But Jesus goes one step further. Jesus claims to be the one who can give her life and glory. He is the source of it. If Jesus is not the son of God, if Jesus is not truly Lord, then he is a manipulative and controlling man here.

But we've already seen that Jesus cannot be such a man. Jesus is a man who is gentle and compassionate, humble and kind. He is absolutely trustworthy.

And he is king of kings and Lord of lords. He is the only one who can bring you eternal life. That good life of reconciliation with God.

[13:42] Of peace with God. Jesus is the only one whose death has paid the penalty for our sin. Our wrongdoing against God and one another. Jesus is the only one who rose from the dead, who pioneered a new way, the only way to resurrection life.

Jesus is the only one who can provide for these needs for every one of you who turns from your sin and believes in Jesus Christ and follows in his footsteps. Jesus reveals that he is the one who can provide for your need in an act of gentle boldness.

Now before we read John chapter 4, I promised you that I would be introducing you to another Christmas story. Now maybe you're wondering when I'm finally going to get around to it. When are we going to hear that Christmas story, Dave?

Here's the truth about this conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. This is a Christmas story. This is a Christmas story.

In this story, Jesus moves toward the woman just as he moved toward us at his birth, sent by his father into the world. In this story, Jesus pushes through the barriers between them just as he pushed through the barriers of our humanity and of our sin and of our foolishness.

[15:09] In this story, Jesus leads with weakness just as he grew a small and helpless child in his mother's womb and was born as a helpless baby in a manger.

In this story, Jesus exposes himself to humiliation just as he entered our world in a lowly manner, lived as a servant and slave of all, facing the cross where he was humiliated, shamed, and hanged until dead as a public spectacle.

This is a Christmas story because Jesus brings truth and life to a woman in need just as he has done for us.

The reason I'm telling you this story from John chapter 4 is that by doing so, we discover that Christmas is not a one-time thing. It's not a coincidence.

It's part of the very character and person of Jesus. The humble love, the gentle boldness of the Christmas story, it flows from the very heart of Jesus Christ.

[16:16] Do you know this Jesus? Do you know his personality? Do you know his character? Do you know his wisdom?

Do you know him as God and as man? Do you know him as servant and as your king? Do you seek honor only in being called by his name?

Do you find life in knowing him and pleasing him alone? If you knew the gift of God, then you would ask him and he would give you living water.

Our Father, we're grateful that we have that we have that we have