

Opening

- John 4:3-10; 19-24//

So he [Jesus] left Judea and returned to Galilee.

4 He had to go through Samaria on the way. 5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

*9 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?**"*

...

*20 So 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?**"*

21 Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem.

22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

[Pray]

Intro

Many of us are familiar with this story. We know it as a story about repentance and confession (Jesus exposes the woman's sin), we know it as a story about the gospel and salvation (Jesus exposes Himself as the Messiah), we know it as a story about evangelism (the woman brings revival to her whole town). But this is also a story about worship. And it's also a story about politics. It's a story about what these two things (worship & everyday, real life) have to do with each other.

On the surface, there isn't much for us to relate to in this story. I've never drawn water from a well. And I can't imagine a conversation at Starbucks going so well that a woman would bring a whole city to salvation just moments afterwards... But below the surface, I think this story, specifically where Jesus stood in relation to this woman, is exactly where we stand with each other today.

The terminology has changed but the division is still the same. It was Jew/ Samaritan then, but now it's Black/ White, Republican/ Democrat... Apple/ Android, "Alexa"/ "Ok, Google." We're all so attached to our echo chambers... And it even affects how we worship. "Sunday is the most segregated day of the week."

Instead of the white/ black church, the liberal/ conservative church, it was the Jewish/ Samaritan temple of worship.

- Samaritans were originally a Jewish people who were overtaken by the Assyrian empire. They absorbed pagan culture into their worship.
- Jews, on the other hand, didn't have idols in their worship. But they did idolize their worship. They made their culture and their "religion" more important than God.
- They had the "sacred mountains" of Jerusalem & Gerizim... **But our sacred mountains are the political, cultural, or personal preferences that dictate our relationship with God.**

Superbowl Commercials

- Did anyone notice a theme in the Super Bowl commercials this year? AI devices & robots taking over the world...
- The commercials are funny, but they bring to our awareness a terrifying reality... **The things we create to serve us have the potential to become the very things we serve.**
 - It's not just technology... It's our media (social media & newsfeeds manipulating everything from our next vote for president to our next purchase at Target), our music (lyrics shaping definitions of sexuality in our young people), it's in our churches & Christian context (the things we label "Christian").
 - Like PF said a few weeks ago, we were made in the image of God with the ability to create. Part of what we create is culture. And we've been given that ability to create culture so that it will serve us and glorify God... **Yet, we continuously make the mistake of serving our culture and elevating it to the place of glory that should only be reserved for God.**
 - This isn't new... **The technology has changed, but the tendency to worship culture instead of using culture to worship is as ancient as humanity itself.**

I don't believe it's an accident that Jesus finds himself in such a culturally charged moment. In fact, Jesus goes out of his way (this route to Galilee was not typical), so that his teaching on worship would be forever embedded in Scripture within the context of political debate with a Samaritan woman. There are many morals to pull from this story... It's a story about confession, about salvation, about evangelism... **But it's also a story about worship, and how worship is unavoidably connected to our politics, our culture, our everyday life.**

So, Jesus' lesson about worship starts this way...

- v. 21 *“The time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship on this mountain or that mountain.”*
 - Jesus’ death on the cross would eliminate the cultural boundaries that limited access to God’s presence for some.
 - Galatians 3:28// *There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

True worship transcends cultural division.

But if you read the story too quickly and walk away thinking that means our worship has no cultural consequence, then you’d be walking away with only half of a definition.

True worship transcends cultural division, but it can’t transcend culture.

- v. 24// *“For God is Spirit.”*
 - We worship a God who does not belong to any one race, tribe, or political party. But it continues...
- *“...so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”*
- See, there’s a problem. While our God is Spirit, we are not. To walk away from this text thinking that we are to abandon our culture, our politics, our practical, every day life is to abandon reality. Participation in culture is a part of what it means to be human, to be both spirit and flesh.

So, Jesus teaches that in order for worship to be true, it cannot just be spiritual. It must also be truthful... **In other words, it must also have some sort of impact on your life.**

One of the reasons why this story is so popular is because of what happens next...

28 The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, 29 “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” 30 So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

- I believe part of the reason Jesus plants this teaching about true worship in this particular story is to help us understand that **True worship not only transcends cultural divisions... It translates to practical effectiveness.**
 - The woman’s experience is spiritual, for sure... Jesus’ prophetic insight.
 - But it’s also effectual...

- Personally effectual (it changes the woman first)... “He told me everything I ever did.”
- And culturally effectual (it impacted her village)... The message continued to spread, beyond herself...

- True worship is meant to affect how we live... and to define WHY we live...

Start with Why, Simon Sinek

- Ever wonder why people stand in long lines every time a new iPhone comes out? Or why people get symbols (like the Harley Davidson logo) tattooed to their body? Or why Martin Luther King Jr. was so influential that he changed an entire nation? Or why John F. Kennedy inspired us to put a man on the moon even after he died?
 - It's because all of these organizations & leaders answered the question WHY?
- The Golden Circle - a model of human thought and communication that helps us understand why we do what we do.
 - WHAT? - The product - What do you do? Products or services you provide.
 - HOW? - The process - How are you different from the competition? Values or principles.
 - WHY? - The purpose - Why do you exist? Purpose, vision, cause, or belief.
- Most organizations and leaders try to convince us to buy their products or to follow their movements from the outside of the circle in... They tell us WHAT they're selling, but don't tell us WHY they're selling it. They tell us WHAT to do, but don't tell us WHY we should do it.
- On the contrary, companies like Apple start with WHY...
 - “Everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently.”
- We're persuaded by WHY before WHAT, because that's how we're designed. The Golden Circle mimics the biology of our brain:
 - The Neocortex (outer regions of our brain) - rational; controls analytical thought & language
 - Limbic brain (inner region) - feelings, trust & loyalty; decision making
 - Most of the decisions we make, we make from the part of the brain that isn't rational. Anytime you've ever made a “gut decision” or “followed your heart,” you were using your limbic brain.

- What master communicators (like King) and culture-changing companies (like Apple) know is that inspiring action requires moving hearts. They know that in order to gain our loyalty, they have to capture our affection.

Starting with Worship

- **Human behavior (our WHAT) is ultimately motivated by WHY... Our heart trumps our head almost every time...**
- Romans 7:15// *I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate...*
 - There's a war for our affection. Not just technology companies, but things like money, sex, materialism, etc. And the question is whether we will reserve the seat of affection on our hearts for God, or something else.
 - **You will constantly do what you hate until you define what you love.**
- This is why we worship... **Worship is where we align our heart's affections to the person of God. When we worship we are defining what we love.**
 - It's not enough to come to church or read your Bible and hear the WHAT of the gospel... To learn about the behavior, actions, and outcomes of faith if we don't do the work of preserving the love, devotion, and affection for Jesus that drives those actions in the first place.
 - Moments before the woman runs to the city, she has a vulnerable moment with Jesus that changed everything from the inside out. **This woman, who was known to have a wandering heart chasing after sexual relationships, swapped those affections for an affection for Jesus.**
 - It's for this reason that she was able to go back into her everyday reality and make an impact on her world.
 - **The WHAT of your life will never line up with the WHY of the gospel if you keep trying to do it from the outside in... You've got to start with Worship.**

Starting with WHAT

- In direct contrast to this story of the woman at the well in John 4 is the story of Nicodemus in John 3. John 3 holds the most popular verse in the whole Bible (John 3:16) but the story that surrounds it is less so... That's because it's not very much of a story... It has a beginning, it has a middle, but it doesn't have an ending...
- The stories start the same... a stranger approaches Jesus with some questions.

- This time a Jewish man named Nicodemus, who was a prestigious politician of the Pharisee party.
- The Pharisees... highly ritualistic and legalistic, relied upon moral codes and religious rituals.
- Like in John 4, Jesus has a conversation with the stranger.
 - Except this conversation is in the cover of the night rather than in broad daylight.
- And like in John 4, Jesus talks about some of the same subjects: confession, sin, and salvation...
- But unlike John 4, we have no idea how this story ends. **Whereas, the story of the Samaritan woman crescendo's with the salvation of an entire village, we are left to wonder about Nicodemus' response to Jesus.**
 - John 3:22// Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside...
- **Why doesn't his story result in the same impact as the woman's? I think it's because unlike this woman, who grapples with Jesus about the affections of her heart, Nicodemus only allows Jesus into the periphery of his mind.**
 - John 3:2// *"Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to **teach** us. Your miraculous signs are **evidence** that God is with you."*
 - Nicodemus comes to Jesus with the desire to be taught and to reproduce the evidence (the WHAT) of Jesus' ministry without any intention of changing his own WHY.
- **Whereas the woman, in her intensely vulnerable moment with Jesus, surrendered the cultural divisions that defined her worship for years. Nicodemus' cultural definitions of worship dictated how far he was willing to allow Jesus to change his heart.**
- It starts with Worship...
 - If you want your personal life to change... it starts with worship!
 - If you want your family/ work/ community to change... it starts with worship!
 - If you want your city/ nation/ world to change... it starts with worship!

Close

Although I grew up in a Christian home, I didn't really start following Jesus on my own until I learned how to worship Him.

I remember one Wednesday night at a youth group service in 6th or 7th grade... I looked around the room and saw all my friends raising their hands and jumping up and

down. It looked unnatural to me, but I wanted to understand why... So, I asked God what the point was? Did he really consider this worship? If so, why?

In response, He showed me a picture. It was a little boy, about 2 years old, jumping up and down at the feet of His father. His arms were lifted above his head and he was asking for his dad to pick him up. That image changed the course of my life forever.

At that time in my life, I was angry with God about growing up without a dad in my home. I never had a real relationship with my biological father and it made me angry, confused, frustrated about my own identity. Why didn't I have a father in my life to help me understand what it meant to be a man?

In that moment, God answered all my why's.... He wanted to show me who He was, and who I was in his eyes. He was my father, I was his son. From that moment on, my WHY was solidified. I could follow Jesus because I knew who he was, and I knew who I was to Him... And the act of worship that had seemed so unnatural to me just moments before, became the most natural thing. It was an outward expression of the affection for my father that I felt on the inside.