



RESOLUTIONS 1

RESOLVED: TO BRING PEOPLE TO JESUS

Resolutions are made by people at the start of every new year and there are many common resolutions that we see year after year. For the year 2023: to exercise more (52%), to eat healthier (50%), to lose weight (40%), to save money (39%), and to spend more time with family/friends (37%) to name a few.

However, many of these resolutions never stick. Very easy is it for someone to declare a change but not to act on it in the long run. A month or two goes by and the resolution that seemed so clear is dropped to the wayside. This year, this church would like to encourage our congregation to renew the ultimate resolution: to bring people to Jesus. The Great Commission is for all believers and this first session will look at the story of the woman at the well and the implications it has for sharing the Gospel.

BELONG

Start the group with an opportunity for community. We want this to be a place where the body of Christ can **belong** by sharing their lives with one another in genuine fellowship.

- Are you a fan of making New Year's resolutions? Why or why not?
- Have you personally made any New Year's resolutions? What resolutions have you made?
- Why do you think New Year's resolutions are so difficult to maintain? Why do most people not keep to their resolutions?
- Does the church have a tendency in your view to see the Great Commission as relegated to the Pastor and/or missionaries to fulfill rather than regular congregants?

BELIEVE

Move into the relevant Bible passages and read along together. This is where the body of Christ can learn together to **believe** in Jesus more and love Him better.

John 4:1-26

¹ Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— ² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. ⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ When 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.) ⁹ The 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.)

¹⁰ Jesus 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?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The 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." ¹⁶ He 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. ¹⁸ The 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. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." ²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

What we find in this passage is a divine appointment. That Jesus ‘needed’ to pass through Samaria seems to indicate that Jesus’ itinerary was set by the sovereign plan of God. It was no accident that Jesus would meet this woman and bring her to salvation.

If we were to look at a map of Israel, we would find that Samaria sits between Judea and Galilee, where the text tells us Jesus is traveling. Samaria is actually the shortest route between the two, but strict Jews never cross foot into this territory because the Samaritans are seen as unclean. Rather, Jews would take a longer route around Samaria to avoid defilement, but Jesus feared not the Samaritans. He saw that they two were in need of salvation just as the Jews were.

This dislike of the Samaritans is made clear in the disciples’ reaction to Jesus speaking with the woman.

John 4:27-29 (NIV)

²⁷ Just 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?” ²⁸ Then, 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 Messiah?”

There are a couple things to note here. That the woman was a Samaritan disqualified her even in the disciples’ minds from Jesus speaking to her at all. Women in Jewish society were already seen as near second class citizens, but being a Samaritan, for the reasons already mentioned, made her even less approachable.

John thought it important enough to mention the disciples’ amazement that Jesus was speaking with this particular woman. In general men, and rabbis in particular, did not publicly talk to women for they were distrusted and disliked. When the true word of the Gospel has sway, however, men treat women with the respect deserved and take humble, courageous initiatives to protect them. This story shows us that Jesus came for all people, but it is especially radical in how it would have challenged views on women at the time.

The location of their meeting is significant. The mountain on which they stood was called Gerizim, the Old Testament setting for the pronouncement of blessings for keeping the covenant, and the same mountain on which Moses commanded an altar to be built to the Lord. From this same mountain, Jesus now pronounced the coming of the Living Water: the Messiah Himself, the ultimate blessing. That Jesus knew her story without her saying proved his authority to the woman as the Christ.

The Living Water ties back to salvific imagery in the Old Testament. For one, the Psalmist spoke about thirsting for God, alluding to the water metaphor. More directly it is spoken of in the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 12:3 (NIV)

³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Isaiah 55:1 (NIV)

¹ “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters...”

Remember that in the Exodus story, Moses struck the rock and water flowed from the rock for the Israelites to drink. God was a source of life in the Old Testament in quite literal ways, but here Jesus speaks to the greater need of mankind. It is important for our physical needs to be met, but our spiritual need is far more important. In the same way that water is necessary for life, so is spiritual water.

Jacob’s well, the well from which the Samaritan woman drew from, is more than 100 feet deep today and was likely even deeper in Jesus’ day. To draw from it would certainly take time, but Jesus offered water that could be instantly taken. The power of the Gospel message is immediate in its effect.

Not only this, but a person truly affected by the Gospel and transformed by it will lead to a transferred Gospel. The only ones with no excuse not to tell are the ones who do not have the message. Members of the church are not so. If we have truly been changed by the life-changing message of the Gospel, we have a responsibility to share it. The Samaritan woman acts as a great picture for what Gospel transformation looks like.

1. Her Priorities Changed

Experiencing the Gospel changes how you act. While she went to the well considering her own personal needs, Jesus fulfilled that and gave her a mission.

When we understand and have experienced the weight of the Gospel, we will have a passion to share it. When we lose the greatness of the Gospel, our enthusiasm wanes.

The woman was not motivated by fear or ignorance. Sometimes these are our biggest reasons to be disobedient to the Great Commission. However, the Bible is clear that God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us carry out this mission. For instance, it says in Acts:

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The Great Commission should be a joy to share, not a burden to carry. It’s not our job to save people. It’s our privilege to share! That’s why it must be our priority.

2. Her Past Didn't Disqualify Her

The Samaritan woman easily could have felt like she wasn't good enough, but Jesus still offered her forgiveness. God didn't send Jesus to the well to show the woman how horrible she was, but to help her discover what a wonderful Savior Jesus is.

Jesus knew about her five husbands (or what could be translated 'five men'), but the purpose of this reveal was not to shame her. Rather, Jesus made clear and open her sin so that she could repent and receive Living Water. It demonstrated Jesus' truly knowing who this woman was and wanting to have a relationship with her. Interestingly, the woman doesn't respond as though ashamed as being caught, but amazed that the Savior knows her.

When God is at work, you will be amazed at what happens. No one has ever been so bad that they are beyond the saving arms of Jesus, nor has ever there been one so good that they don't need Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

We all must come to grips with our sin and see that we can never handle it on our own. There is a myth that God could never send someone to Hell because He is all-loving. However, God doesn't simply send someone to Hell. Our own sin condemns us and makes us justifiably an occupant of Hell for eternity, but Jesus frees us of that condemnation.

3. Her People Were Her Audience

The first thing the woman did was tell her town about the man she suspects to be the Messiah. Her words led to faith and then Jesus' words led to more faith.

John 4:39-42 (NIV)

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

It's no longer the woman's testimony that draws people, but rather the testimony of Jesus. To spread the Gospel does not require all of us to become full-time missionaries going overseas. The spiritual battleground is right here in our own backyard, and Jesus tells us that the harvest

is ripe for picking. The woman was able to influence an entire town through her testimony and it did not require her to go far.

There is this notion among some that God is hiding from us. While Romans 1 tells us that God's existence is testified by Creation itself, this story makes clear that God is a God who seeks out the lost.

Since God is a seeking and saving God, those who are God's children should be about the business of seeking too. (Alistair Begg)

BECOME

Wrap up the discussion by asking some closing questions. We can **become** more like the people God is calling us to be by reflecting on what we've learned and applying it.

- Having read the story of the woman at the well, what strikes you the most about it?
 - Why do we overcomplicate sharing the Gospel? What is your greatest fear when it comes to the Great Commission?
 - Have you ever shared the Gospel with someone before? What did it look like?
 - What are some practical ways that you can be more intentional this year about spreading the Gospel to others?
 - What more can you learn about the Gospel this year so that you can share it?
 - If you had to condense the Gospel down into its simplest form, what would you say?
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