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Eyes Wide Open  
John 4:1-42  
July 17, 2016, Jeff Germo  
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**John 4:1–42 (NLT)**

**<sup>1</sup> Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). <sup>3</sup> So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. <sup>4</sup> He had to go through Samaria on the way. <sup>5</sup> Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.**

[3]

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

[4]

**<sup>9</sup> 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?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."**

[5]

**<sup>11</sup> "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? <sup>12</sup> And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"**

[6]

**<sup>13</sup> Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. <sup>14</sup> But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." <sup>15</sup> "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."**

[7]

**<sup>16</sup> "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. <sup>17</sup> "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—<sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!" <sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet."**

[8]

**<sup>20</sup> 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?"**

**<sup>21</sup> 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."**

[9]

**<sup>22</sup> You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."**

[10]

***25 The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Then Jesus told her, “I Am the Messiah!” 27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?”***

[11]

***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. 31 Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.” 32 But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.”***

[12]

***33 “Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples asked each other. 34 Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. 35 You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest.***

[13]

***36 The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! 37 You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. 38 I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”***

[14]

***39 Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!” 40 When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, 41 long enough for many more to hear his message and believe.***

[15]

***42 Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.”***

This is our final sermon in our *Encounters with Jesus* series. We are ending on one of my favourites.

[16]

It’s an encounter that is fleshed out much more than most of the other encounters Jesus had in the Gospels, and this one is with a very unlikely person. Jesus has an encounter with someone that most “decent” people would not give the time of day to. He zeroes in on the heart of this person who is, according to society, not worth spending any time with.

I love watching Jesus in action. When someone asks him a question he never gives a pat answer. As a matter of fact, he usually throws a curve ball and asks another question to find out what was really behind their question.

Throughout this series we have seen Jesus do a lot of things that made the religious people of his day cringe and squirm. Over and over again he challenged their preconceived assumptions about what is really important, and what God wants from them.

At times he seemed to go out of his way to create a showdown with his religious accusers who were more concerned about their tradition and their misunderstood ideas of God than they were about the heart and lives of the people God loves. Many times he purposefully healed people on the Sabbath just to stir up the misguided sense of justice in the hearts of the religious Pharisees and theological teachers of religious law, so he could show them the condition of their hearts.

The interesting thing is that he didn't have to heal on the Sabbath. He could have avoided conflict and waited just a few hours until after the Sabbath. That would have saved him a lot of conflict in his ministry. But, he seemed to have a higher purpose in mind, so conflict was not something he shied away from. He was very purposeful in doing things that would bring out what was really in the heart of people, and that meant he was okay making people feel uncomfortable.

Jesus had such a strong sense of who he was that he did not care what anyone thought of him. He always did the right thing no matter what the consequences, and **the right thing was to move towards, and love, those who knew they were needy.**

Today we are going to see Jesus do something similar, except this time none of his religious accusers are nearby because they would not dare to go into the place Jesus went or be seen with the kind of person he was going to interact with.

Let's turn in our Bibles to **John 4.**

Let me set this up for you as a reminder of what was read earlier. I'll summarize the first 26 verses and then we'll pick it up at verse 27.

**[17]**

We read at the beginning of the chapter that Jesus left Judea because the Pharisees were trying to create a rivalry between him and John the Baptist. So, rather than stepping on John's toes Jesus decided to head back to the region of Galilee in the north.

**[18]**

Verse 4 says he had to pass through Samaria. There were actually two other routes Jesus could have taken from Judea to Galilee. As you can see in the map of Palestine, there are three main regions to the west of the Jordan. In the south there is Judea. Samaria is in the middle. And then Galilee is to the north.

Now, this is quite interesting because the Jews would usually go out of their way to avoid going through Samaria. They despised the Samaritans. The Samaritans were half Jew and half Gentile, left over from the Assyrian captivity of 722 BC. They were rejected by the Jews because they couldn't prove a pure Jewish genealogy. As a matter of fact, the Samaritans were so hated by the Jews that if the Jews wanted to curse someone they would call them a Samaritan.

**[19]**

In John 8:48 the religious Pharisees angrily called Jesus a Samaritan. ***"You Samaritan devil! Didn't we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?"***

They knew he was a Jew. They were just trying to insult him. In Calgary if we wanted to insult someone we would say that they were from Edmonton. To a Calgarian there is nothing worse than being from Edmonton. And to an Edmontonian there was nothing worse than being from Calgary. That was just a friendly rivalry.

In the culture of Jesus' day, it was not so friendly. The Jews would do anything they could to avoid going through Samaria, even if it took a few days longer. Jesus could have avoided Samaria and gone up the coast, or he could have crossed over the Jordan River and traveled through the region of Perea and the Decapolis, but instead he chose to put aside the cultural mores that he grew up with and went straight through Samaria.

**[20]**

Why did he do this? He did it because **he had a divine appointment** with a Samaritan woman. She didn't know it, but she would meet the one who would satisfy her deepest longings.

Jesus had his eyes wide open to what his Father was doing and **he wasn't going to let some cultural taboos or tradition stand in the way of doing the right thing.**

So, they arrive in the village of Sychar. The disciples head into town to buy food, and Jesus goes to the town watering hole called Jacob's Well.

Jesus gets to the village centre at the sixth hour, which is twelve noon according to our time schedule. It is the heat of the day, the hour when most people are trying to keep cool inside. Why did this woman go out at the time of day when others were inside having a siesta to protect themselves from the heat? I think it was very obviously because she did not want to meet anyone. The other women would have gone out in the morning or the evening when it was cooler. And they likely would have used that time to connect with each other and get caught up on the village news.

This woman didn't want to meet anyone because she felt ashamed of her life. She had lived an immoral life and she knew it and she was ashamed to meet the other people in the village who knew what she was like. She was in hiding because of her checkered past. She was trapped by shame.

So, Jesus arrives in this little village, sits down by the well because he is weary from his long journey, and very soon along comes this Samaritan woman. Jesus asks her for a drink from the well.

Now, there are a couple of unusual things about this because Jesus is, again, going against all the tradition he grew up with. He is setting aside all his cultural mores for the sake of a heart-to-heart conversation with this woman. Jews did not talk to Samaritans, at least not in a congenial manner. Men did not talk to strange women in public, and especially rabbis did not lower themselves to such depths.

And not only that, as Jesus would shortly point out to her, and as she knew quite well, she was an immoral woman, not the kind of woman that a man of high moral integrity would want to be seen with.

Another oddity is that Jesus did not have his own container to drink out of, which meant that he would have had to risk drinking from her container and getting sleazy, Samaritan woman cooties, a risk that others would certainly not have taken. But, Jesus set all of these things aside. He set aside his tradition, his cultural mores, the normal way of doing things. Why?

**He did it because the eternal destiny of this woman was at stake.** He had a divine appointment with her that his heavenly Father had set up. She didn't know it, but because Jesus was so in tune with his Father he knew this would be no ordinary encounter.

[21]

Well, the woman is very obviously taken aback by his request for water and asks him how he, a Jew could ask her, a Samaritan *woman* for water. This was highly unusual. And so a conversation ensues about water, not the liquid stuff, but living water that refreshes for eternity. She discovers from the insight of Jesus that he is no ordinary man, and is in fact the Messiah who has come to give life.

Well, about that time the disciples return from what they were doing....and we will pick it up there.

[22]

**John 4:27-42 (NLT)**

***27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do you want with her?" or "Why are you talking to her?"***

What Jesus was doing was quite unthinkable to the disciples, or to any other well respected dignified Jew for that matter.

[23]

**But, Jesus was modelling for them what the heart of God is toward all people no matter what their race, gender, religion, or history.**

[24]

***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. 31 Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about." 33 "Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other.***

The people were clamouring to meet Jesus, and the disciples were more concerned about food. It's sort of like the sermon from a couple weeks ago where the disciples were trying to dissuade children from bothering Jesus. They missed the point. They obviously didn't get what Jesus was talking about.

I want you to notice something here. Let's go back to the beginning of the chapter, there is a parenthetical statement inserted in verse 8 that John thought important enough to include. Let's start from verse 7.

[25]

***<sup>7</sup> Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.”***

Here’s the parenthetical statement. The NLT doesn’t make this clear but many of the other translations actually have this statement in brackets. ***<sup>8</sup> He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.***

This whole chapter seems to be about food and water. At the beginning of the chapter is this statement about the disciples going away to the city to buy food while **Jesus went to his divine appointment.**

And then from verse 31 on is the conversation between Jesus and the disciples about food. And “sandwiched” in between these parts is this divine appointment and the conversation Jesus has with this Samaritan woman about water. So, what’s going on here?

I don’t think it’s an accident that John includes this information that the disciples were buying food. I think the main point in the interaction Jesus had with his disciples is found in the verse 34.

**[26]**

***<sup>34</sup> Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.***

Was Jesus reprimanding the disciples for buying food? No, of course he wasn’t. They had to eat, and so did he.

But, what he was telling them was that **in their concern for taking care of business they had gotten distracted from their mission.** Their mission was to do the will of God and accomplish his work. This is the the thing that would truly satisfy them. All those other things, even though they might be good things, are distractions if they take them away from the mission of Jesus. The disciples had gotten distracted from their mission, or their reason for living, by the business of survival.

What is the mission of Campbell River Baptist Church? Why do we exist? We need to constantly remind ourselves what our business is, and evaluate whether or not it is being fulfilled. We are not in the business of making a monetary profit. We have a much greater business than that. We are not in the business of making our members comfortable and meeting all their needs. We have a much greater mission than that.

**[27]**

**We have a mission to cooperate with the Almighty Creator God of the universe in what he is doing on earth.**

Our mission comes from Matthew 28:19-20 where Jesus told us that we are to make disciples by teaching them to obey what he commands us to do. Let’s say our mission statement together.

**[28]**

***The mission of CRBC is to lead people to become committed followers of Jesus Christ.***

This is God’s call on our lives. This should be the mission of every Jesus follower on the face of the earth, including you. When we get to heaven we are going to love each other perfectly. We

will also love God perfectly. We will happily worship and serve God together, and we will serve each other. The same things God calls us to do down here *imperfectly* we will do in heaven *perfectly*.

However, there is one thing that is an important part of our life now as followers of Jesus we will not be able to do in heaven. Do you know what that is? When we have left this earth and gone to be with the Lord we have lost our chance to bring more people into the kingdom.

It stands to reason then that this is why Jesus has left us on this earth. Otherwise he would just end it all now.

He has a job for us to do. **We are to be all about making disciples and teaching them to obey everything that he commanded us.**

**[29]**

***<sup>35</sup> You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. <sup>36</sup> The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! <sup>37</sup> You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. <sup>38</sup> I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.***

The disciples, in their haste to take care of business, forgot their mission. They got distracted. Jesus was not saying they were wrong for buying food. He was saying they were wrong for letting the buying of food distract from their main reason for existing — the mission of Jesus.

Are there things in your life that distract you from living the life Jesus has called you to? The things that distracted Jesus' apprentices weren't necessarily bad things.

**[30]**

**But, if the good things distract us from the important things we are still being distracted from doing the right things.**

Jesus went against everything the religious culture he and his disciples were immersed in would have told him not to do. Tradition and religion would have dictated that they *not* go through Samaria, and that he should *not* talk to a Samaritan, or a *woman*, and definitely *not* a Samaritan woman with her history. He went against all of these traditions because he saw that she was much more important than their tradition. She was someone he was going to soon die for. She was worth it, no matter her history, gender, or race, religion.

So, the disciples had gotten distracted from what was important, by food... and Jesus gently brought them back.

**[31]**

***<sup>35</sup> ...But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest.***

The harvest is ready. There are people all around us that God's Spirit is calling to himself. They are in your workplace, and at your schools, and in your neighbourhoods, and even in your homes, and in the pews of this church and other churches in Campbell River.

**[32]**

So, the question to all of us is obvious. **Do we keep our mission in mind as we go through the busyness of our day? Are your eyes wide open for the divine appointments God is preparing for you?** Or, do you let the busyness of life distract you from what you are called to do? Do you let your tradition dictate the way forward, or do you submit to the mission of Jesus?

It is so easy to get distracted. There are so many things on our plates. We are busy. We get distracted, and sometimes by some very important things – like eating. Did you know that the very reason God has blessed us materially in Canada is so we can use these resources to extend God’s kingdom by introducing people to Jesus? God has not blessed us so we can build a comfortable life for ourselves on earth. Heaven on earth was never the goal. If he has blessed you financially it is for the purpose of being involved in his mission to bring others to himself. We are to be all about fulfilling the Great Commission, to make disciples by teaching them to live for Jesus, and spend eternity with him and us in heaven. It is too late after we have left this earth, friends. Now is the time.

**[33]**

***35...Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.***

**God is preparing divine appointments for each of us, now. And what he is telling us is “don’t miss those opportunities.” Keep your eyes wide open to what he is doing.** Don’t go through your life thinking that it’s just about the material things that are going on in your life, and your goal is to stockpile a huge amount of surplus by the time you die. There is so much more.

It’s not four months till harvest. It’s not tomorrow. It is today.

**[34]**

***39 Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!”***

Look what happened from this one woman. She met Jesus, experienced the living water he offered and then went into her community and told her story. And then many other Samaritans from that town believed...because of the story of this one woman.

I find this story quite fascinating for many reasons, one of them being that John is the one retelling the story, but he wasn’t there. None of the disciples were. Jesus was alone at Jacob’s Well in the tiny village of Sychar with a Samaritan woman with a checkered past and none of his apprentices witnessed this encounter. How did they know what happened? Well, obviously, the woman and Jesus told them. Jesus saw another teaching moment for his apprentices, and he took that opportunity to train his disciples how to talk to people about important things. Because of the story of this woman we are hearing about Jesus this morning in the year 2016.

**[35]**

Each of us in this room right now, who has trusted Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, has a story to tell. One day you met Jesus. He gave you living water so you never have to be spiritually thirsty again. That is worth sharing with those around you.

**[36]**

***40 When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, 41 long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. 42 Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.”***



Friends, Jesus has given you life. He has freed you from the bondage of sin. He has given you his Spirit's power to take what you have received, to transform you into the person he called you to be, and then, in return, for *you* to introduce others to him. That is what will satisfy. That is what will give you joy, not those other things we like to distract ourselves with.

I have the privilege of walking with many of you on your journey with Jesus and hearing your stories about how he has revealed himself to you in various ways. It is the most encouraging thing to listen to the stories of my brothers and sisters in Christ and get to know you in your journey and see what Jesus is doing for you.

It lifts my spirit in praise to God. That is what satisfies me and gives me joy. These stories are interwoven with God's story. This is what Jesus did for me. And it is this story that God wants us to take to our world. What an awesome privilege and responsibility we have.

**[37]**

Everyone in this room who has received Christ's forgiveness has met Jesus, and if that is true of you then **you have a story to tell**. The story of Jesus is interwoven through your story. And your job, as his disciple, is to keep your eyes wide open and look for those people who God is preparing for you to introduce to him. Let's not get distracted from our mission by the busyness of life.

And if you have not received the forgiveness of Christ then please come and talk to me, or another Jesus follower you trust, because God has a wonderfully exciting life waiting for you if you will receive his free gift.

The reason the story of this Samaritan woman is so powerful is because of the change Jesus makes in the heart and mind of this woman who didn't think very much of herself. She was someone who lived with so much shame. Jesus knew everything about her and still loved her. He came to her and offered her a life and lifted her shame. She ran back to the village and happily and unashamedly shared her story about her encounter with Jesus who knew everything about her and still loved her. This is the Jesus we follow. He wants to so change us so we see people through his eyes. Let's open our eyes to what he is doing around us and join him in loving others to Jesus.

We have a verse above the doors leaving the foyer.

**[38]**

***Psalm 107:1–2 (NIV)***

***1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story...***

Pay attention to that as you leave this morning. Let's go out this week and let our lives tell our story. Our lives should always be telling the story of Jesus. And, as St. Francis of Assisi said, "sometimes we will need to use words."