

"I am the Messiah"

John 4:1-42

The word "Messiah" is unfamiliar to us. As church people we associate it with Jesus, of course, but probably don't understand what it means.

Messiah means HOPE. Not literally ... but "Messiah" means "the anointed one," which refers to the person God would bring that would fix this messed up world we live in. Think of it this way ... your fridge is on the blink, messed up. The freezer is warm and the refrigerator part is freezing everything. It's backwards. You need help to get it fixed. All sorts of people stop by ...

- UPS driver.
- Neighbor.
- Door-to-door salesman.
- None of these can help, none of these bring you HOPE for a fix. You need someone who is prepared, trained, experienced, and endorsed as a professional 'fridge repairman. You need a 'fridge messiah.

Jesus meets a woman in today's Bible passage that sorely needs hope. Her life is a wreck. Life sucks for her. Her relationships are broken, she's argumentative, her faith in God has been polluted by personal crisis. She needs the Messiah ... the person chosen by God to fix our planet. And so, we meet her as she goes to gather water for her daily chores.

Jesus is HOPE for a Hurting World

A. Jesus overcomes our differences.

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?"

Their differences:

- Male and female. This made all the difference in that day.
- Jew and Gentile. Religious "have" and "have not."
- Galilean and Samaritan. Political and cultural distaste.

In spite of their differences, here they were, at a "divine appointment." Jesus engaged the woman in conversation by asking for a drink of water.

TAKE HOME: Learning how to engage people in conversation is important:

- Smile.
- Do you see anything this person likes that you also like? [Are they wearing a "Gators" t-shirt?]
- Say something related to being together, preferably a question. [At the gas pump, "Did prices jump 3 cents from yesterday?"]
- If the person looks upset ask, "Is there anything I can pray about for you?"
- Always compliment their kids, dog, car, or anything that's important to them.
- Ask them for help, that's what Jesus did here. [Would you mind helping me decide which cake mix is best? I'm not sure which to use.]

When you talk to people, the differences between you can melt away.

B. Jesus moves me toward life's solutions.

¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ "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? ¹² 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?"

¹³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴ 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."

¹⁵ "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."

I love how Jesus takes their current situation [at a well, gathering water] and uses that as a launching point to going deeper.

Is it possible, in your opinion, to "never thirst" again? ILLY: What if Gatorade produced a "Never Thirst" product ... would you buy it? Of course the "thirst" Jesus speaks of here has nothing at all to do with water, does it?

C. Jesus is the only answer to relational thirst.

¹⁶ "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

¹⁷ "I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— ¹⁸ 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!"

-- Faith in Jesus fills our deepest thirst ... "priming" us for meaningful relationships.

-- ILLY: Soil can get so parched it resists water, even pushes water away. Jesus "pre-soaks" us so we can enjoy human relationships.

-- What is it about Jesus that penetrates us so? "You certainly spoke the truth!" Jesus speaks truth because He IS truth.

D. We tend to distract ourselves away from hope.

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. 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,^[c] 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."

-- She gets sidetracked on an old religious argument about where the temple should be built, on THIS mountain, or THAT mountain.

-- There were honest disagreements between the Jews and Samaritans over religious matters ... and Jesus said, "but right now TRUE WORSHIPERS focus on the Spirit," and not on geography.

-- ILLY: Fill in the blank ... "In order to get more Spirit-focused, I need to stop being sidetracked by _____."

E. Now is the best time for hope.

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!"

In verse 23 Jesus said "the time is coming, and in fact, it's here RIGHT NOW ..." She didn't hear that well. She knows hope is coming with the Messiah, "one day" she dreams, one day I'll have hope.

Jesus said it plainly, "I AM the Messiah!" Literally, "The I AM is speaking to you." Hope had asked her for a drink of water. Hope had taken the time to sit and chat with her. Hope was being honest with her. Hope said, "right now, it's up to you."

Is today your "now"? What if you took the claim of Jesus here, "I am the Messiah" and believed it?

-- More truth in your life?

-- More relational satisfaction?

-- More "now" and less "later" for what really matters in life?

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, Your 'promised one' has come. He's spoken to us today and we've heard His claim. We want to believe that Hope is for us and it's for us right now. Help us believe. In Jesus' name, amen."

PROLOGUE. What happened to that lady at the well? John 4:27 ff says she went into town and told everyone to come see Jesus for themselves, they did, and many in that town became believers. Church tradition names this woman as "Photina" (meaning, "gives light") as says she was a fervent evangelist in the city of Carthage. Nero the emperor terribly cracked down on Christ-followers. Her entire family became martyrs for the LORD.

Photina was thrown into a well as her punishment for preaching the gospel. Photina was removed from the well and locked up in prison for twenty days.

After this Nero had her brought to him and asked if she would now relent and offer sacrifice to the idols. Photina spit in the face of the emperor, and laughing at him, said,

“O most impious of the blind, you profligate and stupid man! Do you think me so deluded that I would consent to renounce my Lord Christ and instead offer sacrifice to idols as blind as you?”

How do you think the Emperor Nero responded to that? Threw her back in the well, where we died. Many Eastern Orthodox believers consider Photina to be a Saint, and place her on the same level as the Apostles.

All of this because someone asked her for a drink of water.

Amen.