

## **Jesus Told a Woman about Living Water**

A clear reality that echoes throughout the New Testament is that God sends those He saves. Jesus commanded His disciples to go and tell others about Him. (Matt. 28:18-20) The story of Jesus and a Samaritan woman in John 4 also provides reminders of this idea.

Upon the Samaritan woman's hearing that God Himself was standing before her, she left her water—the very thing she had come to the well for—and returned quickly to her town to tell of this man.

Her response was not to run from Jesus but to expend her energy bringing others to Him: “Come, see.” At the very least, she concluded that He was the Messiah. At the very most, she had surrendered to His authority over her life and was now trusting in His power to forgive. Either way, she was moved to go and tell.

Immediately following this, Jesus used the question of His need for food to exhort the disciples to go and tell as well. After telling the disciples that He is fulfilled by doing the work of God, Jesus shared with His friends that they too were created to participate in the work of God—sowing and reaping by bringing men, women, boys, and girls to Jesus.

Ultimately, Jesus called these men to follow Him so they would experience joy in His presence forever, glorify Him, and invite others to do the same. He saved them to participate in the mission of God to make known the hope found only in Him.

And the same is true of us as well. Those whom God has saved are also sent by Him so that people in their communities and all over the world can receive the invitation to come and see the Savior—Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls us to Himself and then He sends us to go. When we take part in the mission of God, we are demonstrating that we love Jesus more than anything. Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus also promised that we don't take on this mission alone. He will surely be with us—by the gift of the Spirit.

The Lord saves us and commands us to share the hope of the gospel. As we participate in His mission, He promises to be with us and produces joy within us as others come to faith in Him. Jesus is worthy.

## God Loves All People

God is loving. God is love. What's the difference between these two statements? If God is simply loving, then He fits a particular definition of love; however, if God is love, then He Himself is the definition. For God to be loving does not necessitate that He is love, but if God is love, then He most certainly is loving.

Why does this matter? Well, a simple observation of culture demonstrates that there are multiple definitions of love. Some may suggest that love is a feeling or an action. Some may suggest that love is a noun or a verb. But if God is love, then we ought to look no further than Him and His Word to discover what love truly is.

In light of this, where Scripture describes God, we find imagery of what love is. And when Scripture describes love, we discover more of who God is. First Corinthians 13 utilizes a litany of adjectives to describe love, ultimately describing God Himself.

In this text, we find how God loves and, in particular, how He loves us. God loves us with patience, kindness, satisfaction, humility, thoughtfulness, sacrifice, truthfulness, and hope. This description ought to stir our hearts toward the worship of the God of love and move us in the direction of this type of love toward others.

The ultimate example of God's love is Jesus, who said, "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another" (John 13:34). First John 4:16 says, "And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him."

God is love and God is loving; therefore, to know God is to know love. As we grow in this understanding, we can begin to demonstrate the type of love that we see in Him. And, Lord willing, others will see Him through our reflection of His love.

## People Rejected Jesus

Some have described the journey of walking with Jesus as one of highs and lows, mountain tops and valleys. Even as a believer, there are good days and bad days. There are times when remaining faithful comes easy. There are days when doors open for sharing the gospel and other days when a door is slammed shut.

Two truths remain in every moment of every day for the believer: God remains faithful, and Jesus has been there.

In the highs and the lows, God is faithful. He is present and active in all circumstances. He is involved and working out His plans in all things. There is not a moment of past, present, or future that God is not intricately involved in. And in addition to this, He is working for our good and His glory in all things. He has promised to not leave or forsake those who trust in Him.

The believer can also find great hope in knowing that when we are tempted, rejected, or discouraged, Jesus Himself has been there. In Luke 4, we find Jesus experiencing the high of widescale praise and affirmation at His teaching followed immediately by a gut-wrenching dismissal by those in His own hometown.

After Jesus taught in the synagogues of Galilee, news of His teaching spread and people gathered to hear from Him. They praised Him as He read from the Scriptures. But the response He found upon entering Nazareth was quite different.

Jesus stood up to read from the scroll of Isaiah and teach how the Scriptures pointed to Himself. Rather than being received with praise, He was questioned. Though they were amazed at the power of Jesus' words, they doubted that Jesus—the son of Joseph who had grown up among them—could be the Savior of the world. They became even more enraged by His claims as Jesus confronted their unbelief with His unwillingness to perform signs, and His desire to take the good news to all people. Jesus' next stop? Capernaum to share the same message.

Some people will accept Jesus, but many will reject Him. Regardless of how people respond to the gospel, believers can find encouragement in knowing Jesus remains faithful to His purpose and plan. In our highs and in our lows, we can find comfort in the Lord's presence with us.

## People Were Amazed by Jesus

“I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene, and wonder how he could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.” These words from Charles Hutchinson Gabriel’s classic hymn “My Savior’s Love” have been sung and treasured for more than a century. When Gabriel first released this song in a 1905 hymnbook, it served as a reminder to the church of the deep love of God, His work through Christ, His presence in all circumstances, and their cause for celebration and amazement.

In all the rich truths of the five stanzas of this great hymn, the first line may be most striking: “I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.” Why? Because it reminds us of the unfathomable reality that we are able to stand in the presence of God by no other means than God’s gracious work through Jesus. Paul reinforced this idea in his Acts 17 address at the Areopagus: “For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also his offspring.’” (Acts 17:28)

What causes you amazement? What brings a sense of awe? Are you guilty of being captivated by a sunset but being indifferent to the Savior? Are you left breathless by the miracle of new life, only to be largely unaware of the miracle of sustained life?

We rightly experience moments of wonder as we witness some of the incredible ways that God works in our lives; however, we often miss the everyday opportunities for amazement of the same degree.

This week, set your mind to remember that gift of God’s grace found in being able to stand in the presence of God because of the work of Christ applied to you. Take time to remember the gracious gift of God’s sustaining power in your life—keeping breath in your lungs, relationships in your life, and function to every other part of your being. Stand amazed in the presence of Jesus, who sustains your very life and has cast such incredible love on an undeserving sinner.

## **Peter Worshiped Jesus**

The Gospels record dozens of descriptions of the works that Jesus did. We learn about how He served, saved, and showed His power in miraculous ways for the sake of revealing His divine authority to His disciples and others.

Yet even with all the astounding works of Jesus that are described through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Gospels still don't contain the whole of all that Jesus did. In fact, John concludes his Gospel by declaring, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one of them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

However, in several moments throughout the Gospels, we find Jesus' works stacked on top of one another in such a way that we can see the magnitude of His miraculous works and powerful teachings. One of those chapters is Luke 5. In just 39 verses, we see how Jesus provided, healed, forgave, called, and taught. This account ought to stir our hearts toward a deeper love and worship of Jesus.

When reading a chapter like Luke 5, two types of questions may come to mind. First, when you think about Jesus, what do you believe about what He has done and how He continues to work? Do you find yourself only convinced of what you have experienced Him doing in your own life? Do you limit yourself to believing only what you can imagine is possible? Or do you trust with confidence all that the Bible describes of Jesus' works?

Second, does reading about these works of Jesus cause your heart to swell with worship? Do you respond to reading these accounts or seeing Jesus' work with mild acknowledgement or with grand astonishment that leads your heart to love and worship Jesus more?

What is it that causes your heart to be drawn to God? What is it that causes you to worship? The discovery of the amazing works of Jesus ought to lead us to the answers for these questions. And if it does not, spend time praying and asking God to change your perspective, soften your heart, and draw you to Himself.

## **We Are Saved by Faith in Jesus**

Faith is a common theme throughout the Bible. We may not find the word *faith* on every page; however, in nearly every description of what God expects of His people, there is at least an indication of faith. Throughout Scripture, we read that faith is the means by which God is pleased with His people as they chose to trust Him.

Hebrews 11 emphasizes the significance of faith by unpacking how God has been saving His people through faith from the beginning. From creation to the first family and on and on throughout the lives of individuals, tribes, and nations God uses faith as the evidence of who belongs to His kingdom and the means by which He gives hope.

So, what exactly is faith? According to the author of Hebrews, “Faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

To be clear, this does mean that it is possible to have faith in something other than the truths of the Bible, the work of Christ, and the promises of God. We may place our faith in a future spouse, job, experience, or accomplishment; however, according to the Bible, only one object of faith is truly saving before God, and that is Jesus.

What is the object of your faith? Do you have hope in the unseen promises of God? Does the object of your faith look more like a whimsical desire for your own good, or is it confidence in the wonderful work of a life-giving Savior? In the grand picture of life, there is no more important question than this because the object of your faith will most certainly determine the direction of your eternity.

The individuals described in Hebrews 11 put their faith in God’s promise of a coming Christ; therefore, their actions revealed their trust and dependence on the Lord. Ultimately, this produced faithfulness in their lives and blessing from God.

Hundreds of years from now, will your life be associated with this type of faith? Let the faith of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and others inspire you to take risks in obedience to following Christ. Pray for a faith that actively trusts that God is who He says He is and holds tight to the confidence that God keeps His promises.