

16. THE FIRST EVANGELIST (JOHN 4:27-30; 39-42) 05/13/12
 FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

A MAN WENT TO A BARBER SHOP TO HAVE HIS HAIR & BEARD CUT. HE & HIS BARBER GOT INTO A DEEP DISCUSSION ABOUT MANY THINGS. THEN THEY TOUCHED ON THE SUBJECT OF GOD. THE BARBER SAID, "LOOK MAN, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS."

"WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?" ASKED THE CLIENT.

"WELL, IT'S SO OBVIOUS. YOU JUST HAVE TO GO OUT IN THE STREET TO REALIZE THAT GOD DOES NOT EXIST. IF GOD EXISTED WOULD THERE BE SO MANY SICK & DYING PEOPLE? WOULD THERE BE ABANDONED & STARVING CHILDREN? IF GOD EXISTED THERE WOULD BE NO SUFFERING OR PAIN. I CAN'T IMAGINE A GOD WHO WOULD PERMIT ALL THESE THINGS TO HAPPEN."

THE CLIENT STOPPED BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO START AN ARGUMENT. THE BARBER FINISHED & THE CLIENT LEFT THE SHOP. JUST AS HE LEFT HE SAW A MAN IN THE STREET WITH LONG MATTED HAIR & UNTIDY BEARD. SO THE CLIENT SPUN AROUND TO REENTER THE BARBER SHOP & SAID TO THE BARBER, "KNOW WHAT? BARBERS DO NOT EXIST!"

STARTLED THE BARBER RESPONDED, "HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT THEY DON'T EXIST? HERE I AM RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU."

"NO!" THE CLIENT EXCLAIMED. "THEY DON'T EXIST BECAUSE IF THEY DID THERE WOULD BE NO PEOPLE WITH LONG HAIR & SCRAGGLY BEARDS LIKE THAT MAN WALKING DOWN THE STREET."

"AH, BARBERS DO EXIST, WHAT HAPPENS IS THAT PEOPLE DO NOT COME IN TO ME," SAID THE BARBER.

"EXACTLY!" AFFIRMED THE CLIENT. "THAT IS THE POINT. GOD DOES EXIST - WHAT HAPPENS IS PEOPLE DO NOT GO TO HIM & DO NOT LOOK FOR HIM. THAT IS WHY THERE IS SO MUCH PAIN & SUFFERING IN THE WORLD. GOD DOES EXIST!"

WHAT MUST JESUS DO TO GET YOUR ATTENTION? HE CERTAINLY GOT THE ATTENTION OF THE WOMAN AT THE WELL. SHE WAS STOPPED IN HER TRACKS & SO CAPTURED BY JESUS THAT SHE LEFT HER WATER JAR BEHIND & RUSHED INTO THE CITY TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT HER ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS. **THE MESSIAH DOES EXIST** & HE WAS AT JACOB'S WELL - RIGHT NOW! JESUS HAD

THE MIRACULOUS ABILITY TO REVEAL ALL HER DARK, DEEP SECRETS TO HER - HE MUST BE THE MESSIAH! SHE BECAME THE FIRST EVAN-GELIST. HOW HAS JESUS RATTLED YOUR CAGE, RANG YOUR BELL, GOT YOUR ATTENTION? WE EACH HAVE A STORY TO SHARE WITH OTHERS! ME THINKS WE HAVE BECOME TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE STORY LINE & FALSELY PRESUME EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT JESUS. PEOPLE ARE DYING IN SIN, ALL AROUND US, BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT TOLD OUR PERSONAL STORIES ABOUT JESUS.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL AFFIRMS THAT NO ONE IS TOO SMALL OR INSIGNIFICANT TO WITNESS & SHARE JESUS WITH OTHERS. SHE WAS SO UNIMPORTANT THAT SHE GOES UNNAMED - A WOMAN OF LOOSE LIVING & ILL REPUTE - SUBJECTED TO THE SCORN & FINGER POINTING OF THE TOWNS PEOPLE. YET, LOOK AT THE HUGE IMPORTANCE OF HER WITNESS, "MANY SAMARITANS FROM THAT CITY BELIEVED IN JESUS BEC OF HER TESTIMONY."

THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE IN YOUR CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE WHO WILL NOT HEAR ABOUT JESUS UNLESS YOU TAKE THE TIME & THE RISK TO SHARE HIM WITH THEM. GOD HAS PREPARED THE WAY THRU YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM TO OPEN THE DOOR TO JESUS. WHEN WE GO WITHOUT SAYING, THEIR PRESUMPTION MIGHT WELL BE THAT JESUS DOES NOT MATTER SO MUCH TO US OR THAT JESUS DOES NOT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IN OUR LIVES AT ALL. I MEAN, WE GET ALL EXCITED ABOUT THE WEATHER - OUR SPORTS TEAMS - ATHLETES - MOVIE STARS & SITCOMS - LIKE THEY REALLY MATTER - ONLY TO STAY MUTE ABOUT THE ONE WHO REALLY MAKES A DIFFERENCE - **JESUS**. WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES HE MAKE IN YOUR LIVES?

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL HAD A SIMPLE TASK AT HAND - GO TO THE WELL - DRAW WATER - TAKE THE WATER HOME. JESUS CONNECTED WITH HER SO DEEPLY THAT SHE DROPPED WHAT SHE WAS DOING TO TELL OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT HIM. WE MUST ALLOW JESUS TO MAKE THAT CONNECTION WITH US AS WELL - TO NOT KEEP THE LORD AT ARMS LENGTH SO AS TO NOT CHANGE US & CHANGE OUR LIFE-STORIES.

USE THIS AS A **PRACTICE LESSON**: HOW WOULD YOU INTRO-DUCE JESUS TO AN ALIEN? TO SOMEONE FROM ANOTHER PLANET. THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MOMENT - FOR A LIFETIME -

THEN START TELLING YOUR STORY. HOW HAS JESUS ENCOUNTERED YOU? WOULD YOU TELL ABOUT HIS MIRACLES? HIS TEACHINGS? HIS BIRTH, DEATH & RESURRECTION? TELL ABOUT HOW JESUS HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOU IN YOUR LIFE!

THERE IS A POPULAR COUNTRY TOP 10 SONG OUT NOW ABOUT THE "RED SOLO CUP" BY TOBY KEITH. IT GOES: RED SOLO CUP, YOU'RE MORE THAN JUST PLASTIC, YOU'RE MORE THAN AMAZING, YOU'RE MORE THAN FANTASTIC AND BELIEVE ME THAT I'M NOT THE LEAST BIT SARCASTIC WHEN I LOOK AT YOU AND SAY: "RED SOLO CUP, YOU'RE NOT JUST A CUP. (NO, NO, GOD NO!) YOU'RE MY, YOU'RE MY (FRIEND?) FRIEND. (LIFE LONG!) THANK YOU FOR BEING MY FRIEND."

YES, THE SONG IS TONGUE IN CHEEK FUNNY BUT COME ON, PEOPLE, IT IS JUST A CUP - RED - YELLOW - OR BLUE. A PLASTIC CUP! IN CONTRAST, WE CAN STAY SO MUTE ABOUT JESUS - WHO REALLY MAKES A DIFFERENCE! JESUS HAS CHANGED THE WORLD - BEEN THE DIVIDING WALL INFLUENCE IN ALL TIME & SPACE FOR ALL HISTORY! **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD!**

JESUS USED THE WOMAN AT THE WELL'S STORY TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE IN THAT SAMARITAN TOWN OF SYCHAR. THEY RUSHED OUT TO MEET HIM - STILL AT THE WELL. JESUS DUG DEEPER INTO THEIR LIVES OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS. WE ARE NOT TO GET DEFENSIVE OR ARGUMENTATIVE ABOUT THE CHURCH, THE PREACHER, SOME CHURCH LEADER OR MEMBER, OR CHURCH DECISIONS - LET US GET RIGHT TO THE POINT - LET JESUS BE A LIVING, LIFE CHANGING REALITY FOR YOU, TO YOU, IN YOUR LIFE. JESUS MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN A PERSON'S LIFETIME!

THEY SAID TO THE WOMAN, "IT IS NO LONGER BECAUSE OF YOUR WORDS THAT WE BELIEVE FOR WE HAVE HEARD FOR OURSELVES & WE KNOW THAT THIS IS INDEED THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD." ONCE INTRODUCED, JESUS SPEAKS FOR HIMSELF - NEEDS NOT OUR DEFENSE & ARGUMENTS TO BECOME A LIVING REALITY & INFLUENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHER PEOPLE. IN FACT, OFTEN TIMES OUR ARGUMENTS GET IN THE WAY OF OTHERS SEEING & BELIEVING IN JESUS. WE CAN CLUTTER JESUS UP WITH SO MUCH BAGGAGE & INTERPRETATION THAT HE GETS LOST IN THE TELLING.

JESUS WILL SPEAK TO & ENTER INTO THE LIVES OF OTHER PEOPLE AT THEIR POINT OF NEED & ABILITY TO HEAR &

EXPERI-ENCE HIM - WE MUST SIMPLY TRUST JESUS - HIS PRESENCE
& POWER & THEN GET OUT OF THE WAY SO OTHER PEOPLE CAN SEE
HIM ALIVE IN US. THIS CAN BE SO REFRESHING & CONFIDENCE
BUILDING FOR OUR OWN FAITH - JESUS IS WHO JESUS CLAIMS TO BE
- **THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD!**

RED SOLO CUP INDEED!

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY FRIEND & SAVIOR, JESUS.....