

“Jesus Is The Same From Throne To Throne/From Glory To Glory”

John 4:1-30

I want to note a few things before we actually begin with our study. We will cover the text I've read though it covers 30 verses and touches several very sweet gospel truths. We cannot address all that warrants our attention this morning because it would take too long. I will layer our study of this chapter over the course of this week and next – taking in the rest of this narrative through 4:42. Today I have chosen just three major points of emphasis – each of which, have in themselves, depth and scope enough to have inspired multiple books, papers and sermons. Nonetheless, I believe, with the help of the Spirit of God, we can enter into this account and follow along with Jesus in a transforming way.

There are three key truths I want us to take away from our study this morning.

First, I want us to understand that human history exists as continuum which stretches from eternity past with its beginning in the heart of the Triune God to eternity future. Our history is the history of God sovereignly working in perfect love, from creation's conception through redemption's completion when the creation and rescue of the “new humanity” (cf. Ephesians 2:14-18), will be fully realized in the New Heavens and the New Earth where He lives in our midst, in intimacy with us as our God and our Father.

- Another way to frame this is to say - *This continuum stretches from throne to throne or glory to glory* (cf. John 1:1-4, 14-18; 3:13, 31, 35). As we saw last week – John makes clear that Jesus is the Divine Son of God sent from the heart of the Father to enter into solidarity with humanity so that He might suffer what we suffer, die our death, all to conquer our sin. In His resurrection He achieves life for us so that all who believe in Him will be raised with Him (cf. Ephesians 2:5-7; Colossians 3:1-4; Romans 8:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:19-28). It is in His ascension that Jesus is exalted to “the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” where He sits today as the exalted and glorified man, the second Adam (cf. 1 Corinthians 15: ; Romans 5:12-21). We, as those rescued from among fallen humanity, are taken up into the life and love of the Triune God in Jesus, our now exalted head (cf. Hebrews 2:5-18). Last week I cited a passage from Dawson's book on the ascension of Jesus;

the incarnation represents a coming of God from the place where God is to the place where humanity is. The ascension, then, marks the return of the incarnate Son from 'our place' to 'God's place'.... God in Christ crosses the divide to enter our existence, our way of being. Then through this union, Jesus returns, still bearing his humanity, to the place of relation described as the Father's right hand, the 'place' of honour, glory, power and dominion. Thus, heaven as a relational place is where God has 'room' for His divine life and activity in ever-deepening communion with humanity. And humanity (now

present in Jesus our ascended head, but one day as His whole ascended body) has ‘room’ in heaven for an eternal life of relational union with the Triune God.”¹

- This continuum of which the Bible speaks finds its origin in the council of the Triune God before He expressed His “Intra-Trinitarian” love in creation and ultimately in salvation. Jesus is sent from the heart of God to save individuals whom God love and called by name before creation – (cf. Ephesians 1:3-14; Romans 8:28-30).

Note: What that means is that this perfect plan is an expression of the perfect and fully, perpetually active love of God (within the Godhead and poured out in creation/redemption). It by necessity includes the sovereign work of God’s holy love seen in the big movements of history which impact the rise and fall of governments, leaders, and economies – until all rule and power and authority is brought under the headship Jesus (cf. Ephesians 1:8-11). However, it is also made of moments in the lives of individuals and the people they love – to include the events recorded in John 4.

Second, I want us to understand Jesus, in His interaction with this unnamed woman, is leading her from death to life – life where she may know God, and His love, as her fullness - This culminates with the soul’s highest expression of worship (cf. John 4:7-30, esp. 23-24; Ephesians 3:14-16).

- The narrative begins with a couple of important editorial notes from John – cf. 4:1-4

1. First he notes that the Pharisees had heard about Jesus growing popularity while He was in Judea baptizing with His disciples (cf. 4:1-3). Jesus’ choice to leave Judea is tied to the Pharisees learning that He had grown more popular than John. There is are two conclusions I would like to draw from this – **First**, John is clearly making a connection between the previous passage (cf. 3:22-36) and Jesus departure to Galilee through Samaria. What is about to take place is in application of the truths just taught. **Second**, Jesus is leaving because the Pharisees are antagonistic to His claims and teaching (cf. John 1:24; 3:1; 4:1; 7:32-48; 12:19, 42; etc.).

2. John speaks of the “need” or necessity that Jesus travel through Samaria on His way to Galilee. Again there are two things I would say about this note. **First**, the Samaritans were despised, as a people, by the Jews. This goes to the history of the divided kingdom of Israel (cf. 1 & 2 Kings). What came to be called the Northern Kingdom had as its capital the city of Samaria – which often referred to the entire kingdom. When the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom/Samaria they deported all of the Jews of substance and settled the land with foreigners who then intermarried with the Jews. When the Jews of the Southern Kingdom returned from exile to Babylon, in which they remained racially, ethnically and religiously pure, they saw the Samaritans as despicable because they were corrupt in both race and religion. This accounts for the woman’s surprise (cf. 4:9). **Second**, I would like to propose that the “necessity” for Jesus

¹ Dawson, page 49

travel through Samaria (cf. 4:4) is not simply a reference to a geographical necessity but more a reference to a Divine necessity. Jesus departed – leaving behind the “clean” and culturally honored Pharisees to go to a despised Samaritan woman – an adulterer no less – and to carry out the mission of love in a single life. Jesus was going to rescue one whose name was called in the council of God before the foundations of the world (cf. Ephesians 1:3-14; **2:1-5**; John 10:1-4, 27-30). He was going to save one who belonged to the Father and was given into Jesus’ hands, by the Father, to save (cf. John 17: 1-2, 6-10ff).

- The conversation begins with Jesus, having sent His disciples (all of them) to town for food, sitting at the well exhausted from the journey and thirsty. The woman, *whom Jesus came to rescue*, came to the well in the heat of the day – ostensibly to avoid the crowd of “respectable people” who would come at a cooler time. He asked her for a drink to which she responds with surprise (cf. 4:7-9).

- Jesus then begins to lead her from the drudgeries of life (truly felt needs) to the deepest need of her soul – worship (cf. 4:10-15).

1. Jesus initial response is a veiled reference to who He is and what He offers (cf. 4:10).

2. The woman’s response reveals that she understands Jesus statement at a human level and at the very least she is skeptical. She asks Jesus a question in return which affords Jesus the opportunity to carry the conversation deeper – “Are you greater than our father Jacob?” (cf. 4:11-12).

3. She was stuck in the daily mundane burdens of life. Jesus offered her “water” that not only quenched her thirst but which promised to be inexhaustible – This is the promise of the Spirit which He would pour out on us from His exalted position at the right hand of the Father – (cf. John 15:15-23; Romans 8:1-16). The Jesus who walked among us spatially – as a man – *would now live in us always by His Spirit* – we can never be separated from the love of God which is ours in Jesus (cf. John 17:1-3, 20-26; Romans 8:31-39). - The unfolding of the dialogue reveals the purposes of redemption and rescue in the heart of God/Jesus and the fundamental transformation which takes place in the heart of the woman – from the drudgery and bondage of living for the temporary to the fullness and freedom of knowing God as our fullness (cf. 4:5-15). She wanted to have relief from the drudgery and the bondage of desires never satisfied and promises of fulfillment never met (cf. 1:15). Yes Jesus is superior to Jacob!!

Transition: Some say that Jesus’ strategy has been frustrated so He is now changing His strategy to corner the woman so she can’t escape. I believe that Jesus is on point and is now leading the woman into the depth of her need for Him. This leads into my third key truth from today’s text.

Third, I want us to see how Jesus interaction with a single, unnamed woman, reflects/reveals the very heart of God. - To know the Jesus at the well speaking with the Samaritan woman is to

know the Jesus enthroned in glory, on the throne - right now! What is more – to know the heart of Jesus at the well in Sychar is to know the heart of God from glory to glory (cf. John 1:14-18; 14:9-12, 30-31; 17:1-26; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:1-7; 3:14-19).

- Jesus' response to her request for the thirst quenching water He promised seemed completely out of context/out of left field. He told her to go and bring her husband to Him (cf. 4:16).

- She simply said "I have no husband" (cf. 4:17). I am speculating but it seems that in that short response all of the accumulated shame and disgrace of her entire life rushed in. All of a sudden her hopes to continue this conversation with Jesus – let alone to receive some of this "living water" were dashed in a single sentence which laid her life bare before Him.

- Jesus doesn't send her away but in a moment He reveals that He knows her in every detail of her life (cf. 4:17b-18). This one who sat on this well, hot, sweaty, exhausted and thirsty – He was not just a simple Jew – He was a prophet. Certainly He could answer her bigger questions!

- What about God – worship – Where is He? Where has He been all of my life? Who can give me the answer and could I still find hope in Him after this life of shame and disappointment? (cf. 4:19-20).

- Jesus' response to her question about right or pure worship did not begin with a rejection of an adulteress woman whose very life was a disgrace within her culture (cf. 4:21-24). Jesus declared that God "seeks" true worshippers. Is she excluded? As hope rose in her, she began to wonder if this One could possibly be Messiah – He speaks like no other! I don't hear condemnation in His voice – rather I hear invitation.

- She dare not ask Him – so she simply gives Him the opportunity (4:25-26). Now she is exactly where Jesus intended to lead her. This One who sat on that well bearing all of the weakness of humanity – He was not simply a wise prophet. He was the One who descended into humanity in order to take believing humanity up with Him into the life and love of the family of God. It was for this woman He came.

Note: We not what she didn't – the One who sat across from her was her God. He came as a man to not only shared in the fatigue and thirst of humanity – the sweat of labor – in order to sympathize. He came to bear her sin, shame/suffering and death – **this moment cost Him everything but He would claim her for the joy and glory of His Father's love (cf. John 17; Hebrews 12:1-2).**

- He came to declare that she has always been near to God's heart – Not only did He call her by name – but He was not silent or callous toward her growing despair. Who knows what brought her from the dreams of a little girl to know the beauty and security of being cherished by a husband who would be her true lover. What abuses or heartaches/disappointments led to her going from one husband to another – each time expecting less and feeling less value – only to go

even deeper with each rejection or loss – only to end with a man who wouldn't even give her the respect of being his wife (Hosea – Gomer). God was in those dark moments loving her – when no one else knew her name – He heard her cries of despair – from the times when her heart was soft enough to be hurt and grieve until – by sheer volume of painful rejection and for the sake of self-protection she grew calloused. Jesus was sent from the council of God – from the heart of God. He spoke her name before the foundations of the world and came to breathe life and love once again into her soul – to declare that the perfect lover of her soul had not forgotten her.

- It never says that she worshipped Him but I'm convinced that she did (cf. 4:27-30). God sent His Son to seek and save this woman who was dead in her soul – to give to her the glory of His love so that He can make her alive and able to know His love and to experience the fullness of that love by returning it in worship (cf. Ephesians 3:14-21). When you read this narrative and seek to place yourself in the narrative – don't reduce it to evangelistic strategy – we are not Jesus in the narrative. We are the nameless Samaritan women whose name was called in heaven – whose was in the heart of God before the foundations of the world. Only then will you and I know the joy multiplying pleasure of worship.

Worship is the ultimate entry into and sharing in the joy of the experience of the Intra-Trinitarian love. C.S. Lewis helps us to understand this in his book on the Psalms. He writes;

“I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete until it is expressed.”²

² C.S. Lewis, “Reflections of the Psalms,” page 95