

December 25, 2011
Jesus Came To Tell Us The Truth
John 4:1-42
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Why did Jesus come into the world? We all know He came to "save His people from their sins." He did much more, though that would be enough. He also came to tell us the truth. We are living in a time when it is very difficult to tell fact from fiction, truth from a lie, right from wrong. We don't always know what to believe. It's not so clear any more. The standards for decency have eroded away. The truth seems to be up for grabs. Many people today think absolute truth simply does not exist.

In Jesus' own words, He says, "***This is why I came into the world, to tell people the truth.***" (John 18:37) Jesus also said, "***I am the way, the truth and the life.***" (John 14:16) He came to reveal to us the truth.

One time Jesus had a conversation with a woman who came to draw water from a well. She came at noon when all the other women have already come and gone. Why? - Because she was a bad woman. She was a social outcast, shunned by the people of her village. Jesus sees her there, drawing water. It was His opportunity to have an honest conversation with her because no one else was around. Jesus had intentionally arranged for this private meeting by sending his disciples into town to buy food. He begins to talk to her, which is really quite amazing since she was a Samaritan, a half breed, half Jewish and half Gentile. Jews considered Gentiles unclean and they were forbidden to go near them or they too would be unclean. An unclean Jew was denied the right to worship in the temple until they went through an elaborate cleansing ritual. Not only was she an outcast, but she was a woman. No Jewish man talked to a woman in public, not even his own wife. It was taboo. It just wasn't done. But there he was, talking to this Samaritan woman. He was breaking with tradition. He was breaking down the walls that divide and He was reaching out to this woman so she could know the truth.

Jesus says to her, "***If you knew who I was you would ask Me for water and I would give you living water.***" (John 4:10) And then he added, "***Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, [pointing to the well] but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.***" (John 4:13)

The woman is a little confused by this. She's thinking about physical water, but Jesus is talking about something much deeper, something spiritual. She's interested in the water He's talking about, because she doesn't want to have to come out to the well every day to get her water. She's tired of the condemning stares and cruel comments from the people she runs into along the way.

At this point in the conversation Jesus tells her ***the truth*** about her life. He lets her know what he knows about her. He knows where she's been and what she's done. And he knows how she's living in the present. We know this because he says, "***Go and tell your husband.***" She says, "***I have no husband.***" He says, "***This is true, and the man you are now with is not your husband either.***" This must have shocked her. It also must have been very painful for her to hear him say all this. She changes the subject rather quickly, because she's so

uncomfortable. She senses the man talking to her has some special power to see the past and the present. So she changes the subject to an argument over where the proper place is to worship God. Jesus cuts through all the debating and gets to the truth. He says, "**God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.**" (John 4:24) This is a little too confusing to her so she says, "**I know the Messiah, the one called the Christ, is coming soon. He will explain everything to us.**" And Jesus declares to her, "**I'm the one.**" (John 4:25 & 26)

There's a clear progression here. At first the woman is indifferent to Jesus. Then she's somewhat interested in what He has to offer - this living water. Then she becomes impressed by him because he clearly knows her life of sin and yet he doesn't condemn her. Then He reveals to her his true identity - He is the Christ, the long awaited Messiah. She gets so excited, she runs back into the village shouting, "**Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?**" (John 4:29) Her eyes were opened. She got a glimpse of the truth, and she couldn't help but share that truth with others. And because of her witness many people came to believe in Jesus and follow Him.

Jesus came into the world to reveal the truth. From His conversation with the Samaritan woman we learn four of those truths.

THE FIRST TRUTH JESUS CAME TO REVEAL IS THIS: YOU CANNOT HIDE WHO YOU ARE FROM GOD. God knows everything about us. He knows our past and all the bad decisions we made and the things we did to break God's laws. We can't hide who we are or what we've done from Him. He knows it all.

What makes us think we can smuggle our sins past God? What makes us think we can sneak something past the all-seeing eyes of God, the all-hearing ears of God, the all-knowing mind of God? Why do we do that? The source of our folly goes all the way back to the first man and the first woman. They decided to disobey God and they sinned against God. Their sin left them with a sense of shame and guilt. Their shame led them to have secrets. Their secrets made them feel like they needed to cover up so they made for themselves coverings to hide their shame. But God could see right through their efforts to cover up what they had done. And God sees right through our attempts to hide our sin, too.

How do we do that? How do we try to cover up our sin? **First, we try to ignore it.** That's called living in denial. The Bible clearly tells us, "**All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**" (Romans 3:23) Instead of trying to ignoring our sin, we need to confess our sin to God and receive His forgiveness.

Second, we try to avoid thinking about it through sheer determination. Countless people make New Year resolutions. They last a few days before caving in to their old ways. Like Paul, we are powerless to completely rid our lives of sin. If we're honest we'll admit like Paul, "**The good that I would I do not do and that very thing [that sin] I do not want to do, I end up doing.**" (Romans 7:19) Some of our sins are bigger than we can handle. We need to turn to God for strength to over come sin.

Third, we deal with sin by giving in to it. We indulge in it. We revel in it. Then we get stuck in a vicious cycle of sin and guilt, leaving us feeling like failures. We all have places in

our lives we don't want anyone else to go. We all have habits we don't want anyone to know about. Martin Luther said, *"Temptations fly all about our heads like sparrows, but we don't have to let them nest in our hair."* We don't have to give in to them. God has promised, there is no temptation too great that he will not give you the strength to overcome and provide you with a way out. (1st Cor. 10:13) We need to ask God to keep us from sinning, to deliver us from evil.

THE SECOND TRUTH JESUS CAME TO REVEAL IS THIS: HE KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOU AND STILL LOVES YOU. Think of the woman at the well. Jesus knew all about her. He knew her failures and the ways she indulged herself. When Jesus spoke to her, he used a tender, gentle, loving address, showing his compassion for her. While He didn't approve of her sin, He did accept her. Jesus came to tell us we can find acceptance through a relationship with Him. He has taken our sins upon Himself and suffered the punishment for us. Through Christ we find forgiveness.

THE THIRD TRUTH JESUS CAME TO REVEAL IS THIS: SIN HAS ITS CONSEQUENCES. Sin is like going out and having fun and paying for it with your credit card. You have fun now and pay later. The problem is you don't know what it's going to cost. You don't know if you'll ever be able to pay it off. The Bible says, *"What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others - ignoring God - will harvest a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life."* (Galatians 6:7-8)

THE FOURTH TRUTH JESUS CAME TO REVEAL IS THIS: HE ALONE IS THE ONE WHO CAN SATISFY YOUR DEEPEST NEEDS. He tells the woman at the well, *"If you knew who I was you would ask Me and I would give you living water"* (John 18:10). Then He adds in verse 14, *"Whoever drinks of the water that I give will never thirst again. For the water I give will become inside a well of water springing up to eternal life."* (John 4:14)

Prayer: Gracious and eternal God, fill our hearts with the very presence of Christ and our minds with the truth He came to tell us. Help us to surrender more and more of ourselves to Him so that our lives may be a wellspring of living water, welling up inside us, satisfying our deepest needs. Thank you for sending Jesus into the world to reveal to us the truth about who we are and who you are. Thank you for sending Jesus into the world, making this new life you call us to possible. Seal the truth within our hearts and minds, by the power of your Holy Spirit. Send us out to proclaim the truth and lead others to Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen