

The Less Traveled Road (Sharing the Gospel)

Date 2/6/11 WBCFWB

Text: John 4:1-42 (Read v.4)

INTRODUCTION:

- What kind of church that is needed in this world... (Reaching / Preaching / Teaching) [like Jesus by following in His steps]
- What the world needs is a church that is willing to take ***the less traveled road***; **(Matthew 7:13-14)** "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

There is a narrow way, and only a few find it.

It is the road less traveled. (Are we willing to travail with Jesus down that road?)

1. Does anyone care?

- There are a lot of people that feel lost in today's world.
- They **wander about looking for meaning.**

2. GET THE GOOD NEWS OUT!

- We have good news to tell of the gospel of Jesus Christ!
- There are a lot of churches that believe in the gospel, and ***yet, they don't act on it.***
- For interestingly, the church that shares the gospel has become the road less traveled.

This is a challenge to us as a church.

- Are we going to be a church that actually gets the good news of Jesus out?
- **Jesus is a great example to us in this,** and in this story of the woman at the well, we learn how to get the good news of the gospel out.

John 4, shows *Four Examples* that Jesus used to get the good news of the Gospel out.

I. The First Example that Jesus used to get the gospel out is to be GOING, NOT WAITING (1-6).

A. Jesus took the road less traveled...Samaria - (v.4).

- He did not choose a popular, easy path. **But He had to go through Samaria.**

The culture and religion of Samaria were distinct from the rest of Israel because the relationship between Jews and Samaritans was definitely strained.

The religious barriers had been erected for 400 years and only worsened through the centuries. So much so that the Jews would not pass through Samaria on the path between Judea and Galilee.

They would go east, cross the Jordan River, go north or south, bypass Samaria, and then cross the Jordan again when they neared their destination.

That's how bad it was.

- Yet Jesus had to go through Samaria - **a lesson here,** that is...

1. We should be on the move. (carrying the gospel to the lost - **EVERYWHERE**)

- When the Lord told us how to make disciples, He described how it is to be done.
- He said literally, "**Going, make disciples.**" (Mark 16:15)
- This means **we don't do it by sitting still.** (**On the Move with the Gospel**)
- This **means we are going to have to leave our comfort zone and move out.**

2. Often, we become **stagnant or complacent** when it comes to our testimony/witness.

- We have good intentions but lack discipline to witness and share the gospel.
- We stop looking for or seeking opportunities to share Jesus to the lost. (sidetracked)
- We want the Lost to come to us / instead of Going to them – (“He must needs go”)
- We are told to go...even to Samaria. (Acts1:8)

II. The Second Example that Jesus used to get the gospel out is to be **ENGAGING, NOT FORCING (7-26)**.

A. The Engaging of the Lost – (v.7) (not forcing, but opening conversation / w/question)

Two things need to learn here:

1. We need to **guide our conversations** toward the **truth (concerning salvation)**.

- When you look at the, notice how Jesus moves from superficial concerns and eventually gets to the heart of the problem. (v.9-14)
- With each interchange, **Jesus brings this woman at the well closer to faith**. (v.15)
- He just keeps moving to the deepest level of this woman’s need—her need to be cleansed from sin. (v.16-19)

2. Sometimes, **we lack the patience to go through the process**.

(Luke 21:19) “In your patience possess ye your souls.”

- **Would we** have been so patient and so gentle with this woman?
- We **need the Holy Spirit’s leading** – power to wait and be patient with the lost.
- We **need to be ready and willing** – see the opportunities God gives us to witness. (1Peter 3:15) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Q. Do we Engage the Lost with Grace and understanding or with the enforcement of the law?

In 1992, a Los Angeles county parking control officer came upon a brown Cadillac El Dorado illegally parked next to the curb on street sweeping day. The officer dutifully wrote out a ticket. The officer completely ignored the man seated behind the wheel of the car, as he reached in and placed the thirty-dollar ticket on the dashboard.

The man in the car made no excuses. He didn’t argue or try to stop the officer and for good reason. For you see, unfortunately, the driver was dead. He had been shot in the head ten to twelve hours earlier but was sitting up, stiff as a board, slumped slightly forward with blood on his face.

The officer, preoccupied with ticket writing, said he was unaware of anything out of the ordinary. He got back in his car and drove off to the next illegally parked car.

- What should catch our attention most about people is their need, not their offenses.
- **What they need most is not our judgments**; what they **need most is our Savior**.
- We need to find common ground with the people God has put into our path.
- **We don’t force the issue improperly**, or **bang them over the head**, but **instead exercise patience and let the relationship develop**.

III. The Third Example that Jesus used to get the gospel out is to be LOVING, NOT PREJUDGING (27-30, 39-42).

A. The Disciples were Prejudging the Witnessing to the Woman – (v27) [the scene].

- The disciples had gone, now come back and find Jesus breaking all the rules.
- And they are so shocked, they just stand there in silence.
- For the strictest rabbis of that day forbade other rabbis to greet women in public.
- But it was more than that, because *it is obvious that she was immoral as well.*
- The evidence is the time of day that she comes because it is not the normal time that the women came.
- ***She was obviously avoiding contact with others.***

Note that there are three strikes against her.

1. She was a Samaritan.
 2. She was sexually immoral.
 3. And (no offense intended) she was a woman.
- For Jesus to even talk to her ***was a radical gesture.***
 - **But here is what we learn from Jesus...it is...**

1. We need to see the person as God does.

- Her life was **full of heartache** and she was **never fully satisfied.**
- She was **still searching**, but **never finding what could really meet her need.**
- She illustrates the longing of mankind and our thirst for something more fulfilling in life.

2. People are needy. (A matter of fact We ALL are!)

- Those that are without Christ, ***live without meaning.***
- But God has a passion for people. (John 3:16)
- That's real passion. **Do We have that kind of passion?**

3. Sometimes, we avoid those that are not like us.

- **We like living the Pharisee theory of holiness.**
- They stayed away from those that were sinners so to not get defiled.
 - We are to give hope to those that are hurting, not judgment.
 - We need to set aside our prejudices and **rearrange our priorities.**
 - We are to remove our bias, and indifference.
 - When we do, we will begin to see people just like us that ***desperately need the truth.***

IV. The Forth Example that Jesus used to get the gospel out is to be SERVING, NOT SELF-SERVING (31-38).

A. Jesus had a work to do and to finish – (v.34).

- Jesus says this because the disciples were preoccupied with lunch.
- Jesus was occupied with the Father's work He had sent Him to do – (Opportunities abound)

Once there was a bounty of \$5,000 being offered for each wolf captured alive. It turned Sam and Jed into fortune hunters. Day and night they scoured the mountains and forests looking for their valuable prey. Exhausted one night, they fell asleep dreaming of their potential fortune. Suddenly, Sam awoke to see that they were surrounded by about fifty wolves with flaming eyes and bared teeth. He nudged his friend and said, “Jed, wake up! We’re rich!”

- Jesus was rich too. **(He so loved the world! All the people!)**
- He had opportunity. **(Every person is an Opportunity to share the gospel again)**
- He had a whole town to win to the truth. **(Why is our town not hearing the gospel?)**

In the same way...

1. We need to take advantage of the **opportunities God gives us.**

- Jesus is so committed to completing His work that He refused to eat a meal when it interfered.

2. Sometimes, **we are more interested in meeting our own needs.**

- We need to **set aside self-interest and get our priorities right**
- We need to **see that just as Jesus came to serve, so are we to serve.**

Jesus calls us to serve by engaging others with the truth of the gospel!

- He came so that lost people would get saved.
- You see, Jesus did not come for the religious or the respectable.
- He is the Savior of the world. (All have sinned)
- So why would we hold back the truth of Jesus and His Saving Grace?

Close:

- Getting the good news out **is not a one-time event.**
- Letting our light shine is **a lifestyle and lip witness.** (both) **[HOW]**
 1. We need to bathe our unsaved friends in prayer.
 2. We need to demonstrate care as an example of God’s love.
 3. We need to share the good news (gospel)—God has made a difference in us...

So we must engage the people God has given us today.

Inv.

1. Will You take “**The Road Less Traveled**”? Walking where Jesus has walked?
(Relative / Friend / Co-worker / Neighbor / School friends / Stores / Recreation)
2. Will You (Go and Not Wait) (Engage but Not Force) (Love and Not Prejudice) (Serve Others)?
3. Has Jesus spoken to You on Your Life’s Road? Has He sent someone to tell You of His Love and Grace? Will You Respond to Him today? Will You Receive Him Today?