



June 22: Curtis R Rieck

There are just moments in life that just shock you, ya know, like out of nowhere BOOM...well I never expected that to happen! You know, something like this!

We have these moments in life that just happen, and they change the direction of our day, sometimes week or months sometimes even years. I even think that sometimes the whole direction of your life is altered by one event.

Bob Thompson. My Birthday at Linda's house.

Today I want to talk about a story in the Bible where this woman met Jesus and it just altered her life forever. She was changed, life, for her was never the same.

Middle of the day, He's hot, hadn't had any water and He's standing by this well. Disciples are gone into town to get some food at the local Aldi's. And along comes this woman.

Then 5 times in 4 verses they mentioned that the lady was a Samaritan. The Samaritans were a group of people who were involved in a lot of "Different things." Historically the Samaritans are described doing lots of things that we would find as shocking, some even terrible.

So, we're probably talking about some fairly flawed people when we talk about the Samaritans. And Jesus is sitting at the well, in a village full of Samaritans, and He has a couple of choices. Do I tell them all off, you know, let them know how totally messed up they are or...and instead He says, "Hey, can I have a drink of water?" And it freaks her out and she's like "He's not like us. Why is he talking to me?"

1. Please leave your preconceptions by the wayside this morning and realize the fact that Jesus welcomes all people. Remember that Sunday school song, Red and Yellow Black and White. They are precious in His site Jesus loves the little children of the world. In fact, if we were each honest about our own lives, you know, what's on the inside and the things and thoughts we hide from others, we might be pretty surprised that he wants to be our friend too. Cause I think a lot of people are a bit shocked that He would want to be friends with them.

They think, This is my life, this is what I struggle with, this is my past... and it's so frustrating to me when I think about how many times I've invited students and adults to think about faith and God and Church and they say stuff like, "Well, I can't go you church I'd burn up if I went there."

2. No you'd be welcomed there! Jesus isn't out to get this girl He wants to connect with her, He wants a relationship with her

Think about the lunchroom when you were growing up. You walk in and the tables are all divided up by groups. The jocks sit here and the nerds are over there. The smarties are at this table the druggies are over there and there's the loners sitting over there by themselves. And you had to try and figure out where you fit in best. Now, Jesus was the guy who would walk in and say I want to sit with that group, and that group, and that group and that...He doesn't see groups like we do (there's good groups and bad groups). He just sees people

How many of you like westerns? You know John Wayne and Sam Elliot, Lone Ranger, all good guys. In the old movies there were two groups, one wore white hats and they were the _____, and the other wore black hats and they were the _____. So that way you always knew who the good guys and the bad guys were. Well, Jesus doesn't see you with a black or white cap. We all get black hats. The only guy with a white hat is Jesus and He goes, your all really equally bad, I'll just love you all. He knows the fact that all of us have stuff, no one in here is perfect, nobody always says the right thing, I mean were all dysfunctional in our own way, right? Watch, if your messed up I want you to say "That's me" when I count to 3. See, all of us!

He doesn't look at a group and say there's good guys and bad guys, good girls and bad girls. There's just people and I want to be in relationship with all of them.

Here's how it says it in Rev. 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock, anyone hears my voice and opens the door...I will proceed to tell them how messed up they are. Is that what it says? No, I just want to come and hang out with them. He just wants to share life with you, He wants to do life with you.

I remember the first time I heard that, God's not a God of rules He's of God of relationship. I'd never heard it like that before. And when I understood that, it became the moment that altered my life forever. I was never the same.

But back to the story. Jesus is at the well asking her for a drink and then he starts talking about this living water that He can give to her if she wants.

And ya get the feeling He's not really talking about water at all? No, He's talking about her, and our spiritual health, our internal spiritual well being. She's like, YES, give me water, I don't ever want to get water again.

He's like No, No, No I can give you something better than water. I can give you contentment, I can give you satisfaction. I can take away the needs and the stresses and the worry if you just trust me.

What are using to find those things? One of the most famous songs by the Rolling Stones is what? Can't get no satisfaction. But Jesus would say "yes you can, there's a way to get that, there's a place where your heart and soul can get filled up. The French Philosopher Pascal said, "There is a God-shaped hole in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made know through Jesus Christ."

There's this thing inside of us that is empty so we try and fill it up with all kinds of stuff..we stuff, stuff, stuff to try and become satisfied but nothing ever seems to really work, sure sometimes it works for a few days or weeks, but then we're left just trying to find the next thing. What are some things we use to try and fill up that hole, to try and become satisfied on the inside? (we drink, we find a new spouse, we go on vacation)

It's all stuff that we try to fill our insides, to get to the place where we can stop and say, Finally, I'm satisfied. We buy and use and change and we try and stuff stuff inside of there to try and feel satisfied, and Jesus is right there saying HEY! I can help! You trust me, you follow me and I will fill that empty space in your life. He reminds us of what matters most. That He's the only one who can who can give us water so we never thirst again.

John 10:10 I have come so that you may have life and have it to the full. Satisfied. Not in need any longer. See, what Jesus has been trying to give to every life is not a list of rules, but the single secret to how to find fulfillment.

Matthew 11:28-29 Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you _____."

It's what we all long for...if I could just figure out. It's why people become addicts, and I don't mean just drugs and alcohol. It's people trying to fill something that can't be filled, except by Christ.

Back to the story, He said to her, "Go call your husband and come back here." The woman replied, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "Right you are when you said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the man you are living with now is not your husband.

And she's like, HOLY CRAA.

Can I tell you something. Jesus knows your whole story already. Soooo, what if you just got honest with Him?

I think it's human nature to hide. What did Adam and eve do? What did your kids do when they were little and knew they did something wrong. What does a teenager do when they get home late. What does the lady in the story do, Oh, well I'm not married. And Jesus goes geez, you've been married 5 times... But here's the cool part, He never condemns her for any of it. He just wants her to be honest with Him because isn't it true that when your honest with someone that's when relationships are built. If she will be honest with him he can help her.

Can I just tell you that Jesus isn't interested in pointing out your flaws. He already knows! If He already knows He's just waiting for you to be honest and say HEY, I got some things I could use some help with over here. God's not mad at you for your past, your baggage, your stuff. He's just waiting to help

The first step in a 12 step program is what? The first step toward freedom, is to admit you have an issue. That's just you being honest with your AA group so they can come in and help you.

He can take anyone's mistakes and anybody's baggage and anybody's polluted past and make it like it never happened. You don't have to be the person you used to be, God can transform you and change you as you walk with Him.

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." The woman then left her water pot, went her way. Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the words of the woman.

She had this jar, and she came to the well to fill it up, she had her list of plans and dreams and goals. I would wager that each of us has a jar, a list, an agenda, the things we pursue because we believe they will give us meaning and happiness.

Did you know that if you have just \$5,000 to your name, you're already wealthier than half of the world's population. Even a modest net worth like that puts you ahead of billions of people globally.

There are two things to finding peace in this life. 1. Following God and not the world and 2. Appreciating what you have.

He's got a plan, He's got a way so that when we make it to the end we'll be happy and content and at peace and find rest. The lady showed up at the well and she met Jesus and He's like hey, what if you just stop with your plans and your dreams and your goals...what if you just said, ya know what, no more of this (set down). Like it becomes His kingdom come, His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

What if you got rid of your attempts and your list and just decided to let Him give you a new one. That was my most recent life altering moment. Most of our life was spent on building success and our kids. Our big questions were what do we get next and what's next up for the kids. Then the kids left and it was all about how long do we keep working and what are we gonna do, and when we can afford to retire. The big questions were when can we afford to stop and what do we want to do next. Then Linda left and nothing mattered to me anymore.

I felt like life was like the Wizard of Oz, just backwards. Our life was the part that was in color and from Dec. 7 on it became black and white. Meaning seems to be elusive. I go through all the talks and classes I taught on staying on the path but my own advice seems to fail me. Pastor's often used that scripture from Ecclesiastes and I always thought it was poetic, but during this season of my life I came to understand, even live it. Meaningless, meaningless...the sun rises, the sun sets and repeat. Things have lost their meaning and for many things that have true meaning

it is too late to get them back. It's so sad that it takes calamity or old age or loneliness to understand the teaching of Solomon. God, family, friends. The only things that have meaning.

So, this talk is to you, but it's all about me I think, and I share it because I feel like some of you might be in, or one day find yourself in this same spot.

Do you know what the third step is in a recovery program? Make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him.

This is my boy Christian, one of my twins, with his own set of twins, Frankie and Otto when they were born. Here's their family now, and that's them right over there....

So, here's what I know, I need to stop trying to figure out and directing my own life and going my own way and follow the example of my grandchildren. I need someone else to direct my steps. I need somebody for guidance, I need somebody to encourage me I need someone to be with me in my struggle, I need someone to tell me about my future, I need someone to take care of my past...I can not do this on my own and I don't want to do it alone. I set my water bucket down and am slowly getting a list that is empowering, rather than a struggle. I'm starting to find satisfaction and grace and hope.

What if today was the end and the beginning for you? What if you decided that I AM NOT WALKING OUT OF HERE THIS MORNING CARRYING THIS WATER BUCKET ANY LONGER! I don't want this, it's too heavy and really kind of empty. Today I'm leaving it and walking out and following Jesus. He's my leader, He's my Lord and He's the one I'm following.

WHY? Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you says the lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a bright future and fill you with hope.

A future and hope, that's what I want. What if you said like Jesus said at the Cross, Not my will but yours be done. What if you prayed Your kingdom come Your will be done, in my life,

not my kingdom, Not my future, Your kingdom. You give me the plan you give me the direction you give me the purpose, I set aside my way and I follow your way.

Remember God's not mad at you, He just wants to help you. He's saying to you, c'mon, just put the bucket down. I hope we have the courage, and faith to set it down and get back on track. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. He wants to help you so much. He loves you so much. Let's do this together.