

THE JESUS WAY – It's all in the Approach **John 4:1-30,39-42**

It doesn't take much to see that:

- We live in a divided country...
- We are part of a divided Church...
- We even face division from within ourselves...

There is a "Jesus Way"... And we may say that we want to walk in His footsteps... But to actually live "the Jesus Way" is far easier said than done!

Romans 7:15-20 – We do what we don't want to do, and don't do what we know we should do... And often times our desires are not even that noble!

I want us to think about examples in our lives where we know what Jesus would most likely do, & have us do, but where we just don't want to do it...

- Engaging with that "homeless" man, in a golf cart, asking for money...
- Sitting next to that trans-gender man, in a dress, on a plane...
- Choosing to forgive that person who twists the truth & slanders our name...
- Giving that person a 2nd, 3rd, 4th chance, when it seems pointless to do so...
- Praying for that church with a full parking lot, that we disagree with...

These are all real-life examples from my life from just this past week... I was faced with the conflicting desires within myself... My way or the Jesus Way?

Let's turn to our Scripture for today - **John 4. Jesus & the woman of Samaria.** Jesus shows us His way so clearly with this interaction at the well.

There are so many principles found here in Jesus' approach! If we might only model our interactions with others around Jesus' encounter here, what might happen in our divided world... in our divided churches... w/ our divided selves?

Let's look again at **Vs. 1-2**... Don't miss the importance of this critical detail... How often is our understanding shaped by the voices we choose to listen to?

We must be careful where we get our information, & what we do with it! Our actions flow out of our convictions, & our convictions are shaped by what we believe! And what we believe comes from where???

Vs. 4 is also easily passed over, but incredibly important... "And he had to pass through Samaria." Jesus could have done what most other Jews did and went around and avoided Samaria! But because of who He was, and what He was here to do, Jesus "had to" go through Samaria!

What are the "Samaria's" that we need to face to live into the "Jesus Way"?

What did Jesus "not do" in His interaction with this woman of Samaria:

- He didn't let false information determine his actions – Vs. 1-2
- He didn't avoid hard places, people, conversations – Vs. 3-4
- He didn't use numbers as a weapon – Vs. 7-8
- He didn't take the bait of escalation – Vs. 9
- He didn't let what was in the way keep him from engaging – Vs. 11-12
- He didn't ignore sin, but he also didn't lead with it either – Vs. 16-18
- He didn't allow minor differences to divide – Vs. 19-20
- He didn't stop at "you" & "we"... He pointed to the hope of a shared future – Vs. 21-23
- He did not hide who He really was, nor compromise His identity – Vs. 25-26

How might we approach others, who think, believe, act, & look differently than we do, in the same way that Jesus did? He avoided many of the traps we often fall into! What are some things we need to "not do" going forward?

What were the things that Jesus "did do" in this interaction in John 4:

- He stepped towards the conflict – Vs. 4
- He took the first step, spoke the first word... He initiated – Vs. 7
- He invited deeper reflection and dialogue – Vs. 10
- He offered something attractive – Vs. 13-14
- He exposed her sin, but not removed from showing compassion – Vs. 16-18
- He allowed for "Rabbit hole" conversations – Vs. 20
- He identified differences, but pointed to that which unites – Vs. 21-24
- He revealed His true identity without reservation – Vs. 25-26
- He responded to her in such a way that this encounter opened doors for future encounters... with her... and with others... - Vs. 28-30, 39-41

Of all the things that Jesus "did do" here in John 4, which one(s) do you/I/we need to learn from and apply to our approach towards others?

"If we are the body, why aren't His arms reaching? Why aren't His hands healing? Why aren't His words teaching? If we are the body, why aren't His feet going? Why is His love not showing them there is a way? Jesus is the way!"

It is "Sanctity of Life" Sunday... How can we apply the Jesus way towards pregnant teens, women who've had an abortion, or who are considering it?

Tomorrow is MLK day... How can we live the Jesus way with those who look different, believe different, & whose story/experience is different than ours?

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