



WHAT WOULD JESUS NOT DO?

IGNORE AN OPPORTUNITY

JOHN 4:4-42

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There is a church in the suburbs of Chicago whose sanctuary provides a breathtaking view. One entire wall is made of glass and it looks out over a large scenic pond with geese. On Sunday mornings when the sun is shining through the glass it gives a brilliant reminder of God's creating powers.

On one October morning, the preacher of that church handed out three post-it notes to every person who attended that day; one of them was red, one blue, and the other yellow.

The preacher then explained what they were to do with these notes. On the red paper they were to write the name of the person who was responsible in leading them to that church. On the blue paper they were to write their own name. On the yellow paper they were to write the name of a person they would like to see become a part of that church.

When this was done they actually took time to get out of their seats and go stick the post-it notes on the glass wall. With the light of the sun in the background the wall began to resemble a huge stained-glass window. The preacher then made his point. The red color is the church of the past. If not for the efforts of those people we would not be here today. The blue color is the church of the present. We are God's tools at this moment in time. The yellow color is the church of the future. They are the reason we exist!

That was such an impacting lesson for the people of that congregation that a few weeks later they committed to giving more than eighty million dollars to the construction of a new sanctuary that would hold all those people written on the yellow paper.

Although that is an inspiring story, I'm going to tell you two facts that have been proven throughout history. Number one, many names on yellow paper will never become names on blue paper. In other words, many people who are potentially the church of the future will never become the church of the present. The reason for that first fact is because of the second fact. Most names on the blue paper will never exert the effort to spiritually impact the names on yellow paper.

In other words, most people will never significantly reach the church of the future. For example, if this morning you were

handed a yellow paper and were asked to write down a name, we would come up with several. But, if you were then asked to identify specific things you had done to lead them toward a spiritual walk, I'm afraid that list would be slim. There will be some among us who have really tried, but for the most part, the vast majority of us hope for the church of the future; we don't do anything to bring it about.

John 4:4-18 "And He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?"

"You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw." He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly." (NASU)

Jesus would never ignore an opportunity to impact a person on yellow paper. Some of us today might say, "But I don't know

how.” So, let’s take a look at what Jesus did so that we may gain some insight to our situation.

I. He Observed People

In verse six, we find Jesus sitting at the well watching. He was watching and waiting for the right opportunity. I have wondered, why didn’t Jesus get his own drink? It’s obvious that He was thirsty. He had been walking in a dry region and it was about noon, so why? Many people have speculated the reason as to why He didn’t. Perhaps there wasn’t anything there for Him to use. Perhaps, it was because the well didn’t belong to Him, so He decided to wait.

Although those are valid reasons, I chose to believe it was because Jesus was always looking out for people who needed Him. He sat there waiting for someone to come by that He could make an impact in their life. Jesus was a people observer, always looking for someone who needed His touch.

One of the things that we can do to actually lead people spiritually is to observe those around us in order to identify their needs. There are four categories of people you should observe. They are your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Who in those four categories would you write on a yellow piece of paper?

Once you get into the habit of observing people in order to determine how you may help them, then you are ready to move on to the next method of Jesus, which is . . .

II. He Overcame Obstacles.

Jesus had the attitude of whatever it takes. In our text, John write that Jesus had to go through Samaria. Why did Jesus have to go through Samaria? First of all let me explain where these places are located. It’s kind of like, leaving the promise land, Kentucky, and heading to Michigan. As a matter of fact that is where Hoosiers come from. A Hoosier is a Kentuckian who ran out of gas on the way to Michigan.

The Jews saw the Samaritans as such fierce enemies that they would often go many miles around Samaria instead of going through it, but our text says Jesus had to go through Samaria. Jesus

chose to go right through Samaria because He was not going to allow any obstacle stop Him from reaching people.

What are some of the obstacles that prevents us from reaching other people? I mean, if we are truly serious about impacting people's lives with the message of the Gospel, then we must have the "whatever" it take attitude. However, I feel that so many times, we do allow obstacles to hinder us.

Let me share with you three things that I feel hinder us more than any other. The first is busyness. Something is wrong when we don't have time to reach out to people for the cause of Christ. Secondly, is embarrassment. Isn't it strange how we always try to keep the conversation with other people safe? I mean, we talk about the weather, the crops, kids or whatever, to avoid saying something about the church or God in order to keep from being embarrassed. The third thing is the fear of rejection. Sometimes it's the fear of rejection that completely closes us up. After you have observed someone, make it a priority that you are going to be determined to have that "whatever" it takes attitude to bust through those obstacles.

There is a third thing that we can learn from this passage about what Jesus did, and that was . . .

III. He Offered The Truth.

There are too many people today, including preachers who think it is their job to convict people. They have this, "I'm going to tell them the truth whether they like it or not," attitude. There was a guy I went to school with and for a while, we considered each other as a friend. One day after class, he informed me that he was going to visit a church that he knew of on Wednesday and when they come out from there, he was going to tell them they were all going to hell. I asked him why he thought about do that. His answer, "Well they need to hear the truth." I did agree with him they were following bad doctrine, but I also reminded him he was not the Holy Spirit and since then I haven't heard from him.

Yes, we should always tell people the truth, but it is the attitude that we must have that makes a different. Jesus confronted this lady at the well about her relationship with this

man she was living with, yet it was in a spirit of love. He simply ask her to go and call her husband. Jesus knew what was taking place. He didn't start off by telling her that she was living in sin. He simply said, "Go call your husband." And when she responded that she didn't have one, He simply said, you're right, and the one your living with now is not your husband. He didn't close the door. He wanted to keep the conversation going so that she would come to see who He is. The Bible say that we are to speak the truth in love.

Some people are heavy on truth and light on love and they think it is their job to condemn people. Then we have the other side that is heavy on love and light on truth. So much that truth doesn't really matter.

The fact of the matter is we must have a balance of both. We must share the truth because we have a genuine love for people. Dr. Jack Cottrell said, "You can't have biblical truth without biblical love and you can't have biblical love without biblical truth."

The right approach is to inform someone that you really care about them and their life could be so much better with Christ as their Lord. We must speak the truth in love. But I must also inform you that no matter how sincere you are in your love for them, so people will still get upset. I know there are some that will not come here because they think I am judgmental and mean. Most of them don't know me, and others are living a life that is contrary to God's Word and don't want to hear it. Yet that cannot hinder us from speaking the truth in love.

There is one more thing that I feel we must understand and that is. . .

IV Jesus Saw Potential.

In our text we read, *"So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" They went out of the city, and were coming to Him."*

Now jump on down to verse 39. *"From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."*

From the conversation that she had with Jesus, she left her water-pot and ran to tell other about this man Jesus. Jesus knew that if He could reach this one woman, she in turn would reach many more. From that city many believed in Him because of this one woman. Jesus knew that in reaching one, would set things in motion to reach many others.

Jesus sees potential in people. As a matter of fact, Jesus sees potential in every one of you here today. Each one of you have the opportunity to reach someone for Christ. You have co-workers, family and friends that no one could reach, but you.

Conclusion; Jesus never ignored an opportunity and neither should we! You and I need to observe people. We should strive to overcome the obstacles in our path. We need to put behind us this fear of being embarrassed or the fear of being rejected. We need to share the truth in love and we must see the potential in front of us. If thirty people could help lead one person to Christ this year, then next year we could have sixty people that could reach one hundred and twenty! The effect that we could have on our community would be astounding. God does not want us to ignore an opportunity.

AMEN!