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One Life

One

One person. Just one. What would we give for one heart? One life? How valuable is one? For Jesus, it was often about the encounter he would have with one. One life. One who needed freedom. One who needed healing. One who was hungry for something real.

It seems to me that if the son of God was walking on the earth, He should maximize his ministry by touching the multitudes. And he did that, too, but how often do we see Jesus planning his day around an encounter with one person? He went out of his normal routine to go through Samaria to meet the woman at the well. If we honestly evaluated Jesus' day planner, would we criticize the *waste* of time and energy he placed on encountering "one" when the needs around him were so overwhelming? So many needed healing. So many needed encouragement. So many needed what he had to give. So many. So many. So many. When the scripture talks about Jesus going to Samaria that day, it says he **needed** to go through Samaria.

John 4 records the story about Jesus and the Samaritan woman. It begins by describing the popularity of Jesus' ministry in Judea.

Successful ministry. Jesus was making more disciples than John. And then he leaves Judea. He walked away. He "**needed**" to go through Samaria. I wouldn't do that, would you? After all, if many are becoming disciples, isn't that where God must be working? Yet Jesus knew there was one who was desperate to encounter something real.

There was *one* there. *One* who needed what Jesus could give her. *One* who was broken and used up with nothing of value left to give. But her heart drew Jesus. Her emptiness pulled on him. He went way out of his way to meet her. Remember that in those days, the journey required a lot of effort. Jesus and his disciples didn't jump into their car and buzz onward to Samaria. Can you imagine the grumbling that might have occurred as the disciples thought, "Samaria. Great. I hate that place. The half-breeds live there. Can't we go around the city as we usually do?"

We find Jesus at Jacob's well. Tired. Weary. Hungry. Yet his physical needs didn't overtake his spiritual senses. And there he encountered one. One woman. One desperate woman. One of no apparent value. A woman. Strike one. A woman of Samaria. Half-breed. Strike two. A woman of bad character. Strike three. The world had declared she was "Out!" Yet Jesus "**needed**" to meet her. Her hunger pulled him out of the normal routine. Her hunger trumped everything else that day. All the important expectations that the Judeans were placing upon Jesus. Everything the disciples expected to happen.

Jesus asked her for a drink. She was used to being used by men. She immediately began to view Jesus through her lens. "You are a Jew. I am a Samaritan. I know that you reject me already. You are a man. I know you just want me for what I can do for you."

Yet Jesus draws her in. He began to tell her of a gift. "*What? A gift for me?*" He began to connect with her hunger. "*Living water?*" How she longed for something living. Something real. She didn't know how to describe the longing. It was buried deep, deep within her. Under the rejection. Under the woundedness. Under the pain. And Jesus began to touch the longing.

She immediately thought in the natural. "*You have no way to give me water.*" Then up comes her religious box. "*Jacob gave us this well...*"

Jesus offers to trade religion for relationship. "*You'll continue to thirst if you only drink from Jacob's well. Drink my water. It will quench your thirst forever. I will GIVE you something which will become within you not a well, but a fountain. It will spring up. A fountain of life. Refreshing. Something lasting and real.*"

"*Give me this water so I don't have to be thirsty anymore or have to come here – in the middle of the day – alone – despised – in the heat – and have to work to drink. Meet my physical needs.*"

The hunger within her is being stirred. Then Jesus goes inside her longing. "*Go get your husband.*"

"*Well, I don't have a husband.*"

"*Right, you've had five and the one you have now is not your husband.*"

Religious box again. "*I perceive that you are a prophet.*" She needed to change the subject. That subject was too painful. "*Let's talk religion. It's less personal. There must be an answer in religion.*"

Then Jesus challenges what she thinks she knows already and basically invites her into relationship with him.

The disciples return. They are amazed. "*Why in the world would Jesus do this? Why would he talk to a woman and a Samaritan at that?*" Can you imagine the thoughts in their minds? "*We shouldn't have left him alone. He is exercising bad judgment. He is breaking the rules.*"

And the woman left and began to speak to the men about Christ. The ones who had used her and then threw her away. She knew they were empty, too.

Then the disciples said, "*Jesus, you need to eat.*" I imagine they thought, "*My god, I'm glad that woman is gone. We've got to eat so we can get on our way to the important things God has given us to do.*"

And Jesus replies, "*I've been eating food.*"

How confusing was that? Who brought him food?

Yet, the food that was filling Jesus himself was the food of doing the Father's will. Encountering one. One hungry lost soul. One desperately hungry woman. One half-breed woman who was on her sixth man.

As we plan our days, we often think about how to maximize our efforts by "killing two birds with one stone" but how many times do we plan our days around an encounter with one? Our tired souls cry out, "*There is so much to do. So much to do. So much to do today, Lord. I'm so busy today. I'm already tired. Don't ask anymore of me today, Lord.*"

Yet, how wonderfully filled we are when we eat the food the Father gives us! There is something so intoxicating about connecting with the hunger deep within someone's soul. The marvel of it takes over the moment. Food and drink and life as we normally live it become so distant. The fragrance of Christ fills our being. And we realize there is nothing more satisfying to our hunger.

One.

One who would be filled. One who would be changed. One life. One destiny. One eternity.

One who would touch a village. One who would be spoken of throughout the generations.

Is there one on God's day planner today that he "needs" to purposely touch? Through you? Can you see today? Can you hear him today? Is there one who is empty and hungry in your path today? One who perhaps by all appearances is of no further value to the team? One who has been struck out?

Do you have any living water to give?

Time for one. Changing the world. Changing eternity. Taking time to encounter one. Ah, the offensive ways of our Savior.

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