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In the Right Place at the Right Time

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In the Right Place at the Right Time

“But he had to pass through Samaria. Now he came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, so Jesus, since he was tired from the journey, sat right down beside the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me some water to drink.’

“(For his disciples had gone off into the town to buy supplies.) So the Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How can you—a Jew—ask me, a Samaritan woman, for water to drink?’ (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.)”—John 4:4-9

While the shortest route from Judea to Galilee was through Samaria, it was not the only way. Many Jews would never have thought of entering into Samaritan territory.

The relationship between the Jews and Samaritans was one of great hostility. The Jews hated the Samaritans who were only half Jew by blood and didn’t worship God in the same way. Indeed, the Jews forbade the Samaritan from the services in the temple and considered their food unclean. Enter Jesus. John says, “He had to go through Samaria. *Had to?* Jesus had an appointment that he was not about to miss. An appointment that gives us a wonderful example of offering freedom to those in bondage.

Weary from the walk it took to get to the city, Jesus sits down by the well and waits. Ever been weary in the center of God’s will? There is so much kingdom work to be done on this side of heaven and oftentimes we feel overwhelmed. This is nothing new! From the Old Testament to the New, there is a tendency for those serving God to become weary. However, oftentimes we simply keep moving on. Jesus demonstrates for us an important principle. Rather than run ahead with His disciples as they go about the necessary task of gathering food for them to eat, Jesus shows us discernment by waiting at the well for His next divine appointment.

I wonder how many golden opportunities I have forgone in order to quench my earthly appetite.

In this passage, we find Jesus breaking the social norms of His day. He was a Jewish Rabbi speaking to a Samaritan woman, who was also a stranger. This totally caught her off guard, as a rabbi would never have spoken to a Samaritan woman.

Taking the time to teach a single person, and a woman at that, Jesus opens the conversation with an everyday request. Amazed at His willingness to cross religious boundaries, Jesus captures her attention and eventually her heart. Are you open to the divine appointments God gives you each day?

Become More

What might you accomplish for God's kingdom if you open your life to His appointments?

"We see here how divine Providence brings about glorious purposes by events which seem to us fortuitous and accidental." —Matthew Henry

Further Reflections

"O My child, do not be overcharged with the cares of everyday living, and do not let your energies be consumed by humdrum tasks. What is needed, must be done; but if you put the ministry of the Kingdom in first place, My strength will be yours for other tasks, and time will be given to you for both. You do not need to respond to every call. Learn to discern when I would use you, and when I would have the other individual lean wholly upon Me. Otherwise, you may restrict the development of the other person's spiritual ministry, and rather than helping, you may become an actual hindrance. I will not overtax you. I will use you, but I will not destroy you in the using. But you may destroy yourself if you lack this discernment and fail to know when to direct others to look to Me." —Frances J. Roberts

"Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for the work of another believer—to pour out your life sacrificially for the ministry and faith of others? Or do you say, 'I am not willing to be poured out right now, and I don't want God to tell me how to serve Him. I want to choose the place of my own sacrifice. And I want to have certain people watching me and saying, 'Well done.'" It is one thing to follow God's way of service if you are regarded as a hero, but quite another thing if the road marked out for you by God requires becoming a 'doormat' under people's feet. God's purpose may be to teach you to say, 'I know how to be abased ...' (Philippians 4:12) ... Are you willing to give and be poured out until you are used up and exhausted—not seeking to be ministered to, but to minister?" —Oswald Chambers