

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The State of Our Unions John 4:15-19

This Mother's Day weekend we will continue our study of the Gospel of John. And it just so happens that this study will touch on a theme that is near and dear to the hearts of most mothers. And what is that theme? Marriage! Why would marriage be near and dear to the hearts of most mothers? Most mothers I believe understand that their children will be best served in the context of a solid marriage. And I also believe that most mothers understand that without the benefit of a solid marriage the nurture and training of children becomes extremely challenging.

So what is the biblical definition of marriage? Let us read **Genesis 2:24, "And for this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."** At the time of creation God forever defined marriage as a lifelong exclusive commitment between a man and woman (Genesis 2:24). Unfortunately God's basic definition of what constitutes a marriage is now being challenged.

There is a group of people within the United States who are presently seeking to expand the definition of marriage beyond the parameters established by God's Word. They are seeking to expand the definition so that in the eyes of governing authorities same sex couples can be recognized as legally married. I am sure many of you have become aware of this. And certainly within Christian circles it has created a great deal of alarm. So much so that George W. Bush in his state of the union address raised the possibility of a constitutional amendment in order, as he said, to "protect the sanctity of marriage".

Will such an amendment ever become a reality? It would appear from everything that I have read that the possibility of a constitutional amendment actually becoming law would be extremely unlikely. And of course I also believe it is all too obvious that without a constitutional amendment it is only a matter of time before states, perhaps many states will in fact recognize same-sex marriages as legal and will begin to issue licenses.

But no matter how alarming this might be there is a far greater and growing threat to the sanctity of marriage than same-sex marriages. And where is that threat coming from? It is not coming from the gay community but rather from the heterosexual community.

And this leads us back to the passage that we began to examine several weeks ago. The passage that we began to examine several weeks ago records for us Christ's interaction with a Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26). Let us for a moment quickly review what we have already covered.

We have examined the request that Christ made of this Samaritan woman in John 4:1-9. Let me read these verses for you. **"When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (2) although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), (3) He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. (4) And He had to pass through Samaria. (5) So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to His son Joseph; (6) and Jacob's well was there, Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth**

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hour. (7) There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ (8) For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. (9) The Samaritan woman therefore 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.)”

The reason why He asked her for a drink was not simply because He was a Jew who happened to be thirsty but rather because He was the light of the world. And even though He was bone weary tired as He sat beside this particular well He had chosen to shine His light upon her. Hopefully each of us will remember this story when we are given, though physically tired, the opportunity to minister to someone in need. Hopefully this story will be used by God’s Spirit to help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

What else have we examined? We have examined the offer that Christ made to this Samaritan woman in John 4:10-14. Let me read for you **John 4:10-14** “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. (12) 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?’ (13) Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; (14) but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’”

If the Samaritan woman had known the gift of God that was so readily available to her and if she knew that this gift was available through the one that had asked her for a drink she would not have responded quizzically to His earlier request for a drink she would have rather fallen down before Him and asked Him for the gift that God was so freely prepared to give her.

If she by faith had taken the gift that Christ was offering she would have received, according to Christ, the gift of living water. And this gift of living water would have become within her a well of water springing up to eternal life forever satisfying the needs of her soul.

If you are here this weekend and you have received this gift then at this moment in time there is within you a well of water or in other words the indwelling Holy Spirit. And because of this, no matter what your situation or circumstances might be, you can now through prayer take a drink and receive whatever refreshment you need so that you might not only live a good life but a like that is truly abundant.

Unfortunately though we might understand what Christ offered the Samaritan woman during His encounter with her at the well obviously she did not understand and this leads us to another portion of Christ’s interaction with this woman; This weekend we will be examining Christ’s insight into the Samaritan’s woman’s encounters with various men (John 4:15-19).

So let us pick up this story in **verse 15** as the Samaritan woman responds to Christ’s comments about the living water. What does she say? “**The woman said to Him, ‘Sir give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.’ (16) He said to her, ‘Go, call your husband and come here.’ (17) The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, “I have no husband;” (18) for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.’**

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(19) The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.’” What an interesting passage.

My hope as we examine this particular passage is that we will see that the sanctity of marriage is not only being threatened by the possibility of same-sex marriages but even more so by couples in the sight of God choosing to live together in an intimate relationship without the benefit of marriage. I would hope in giving this message that all of us might be strengthened in our resolve not to become intimately involved with anyone other than our marriage partner or if we are single that we will resolve not to become intimately with another individual until we are married. My hope in our consideration of this message that we would be led to pray that every word we speak and every action we take would elevate the honorable and holy estate of marriage.

We are now ready to examine **John 4:15-19**. Jesus had just told the Samaritan that the water that He was prepared to give would make it possible for her to never thirst again. How will she respond to what Christ has said?

Let me read **John 4:15** for you "**The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.’**” Did she really think that He could produce this water that would forever satisfy her thirst? Did she really think that He could produce this water that would forever make it unnecessary for her to return to Jacob’s well. In light of her very strong statement in **John 4:11,12** I believe that we would have to conclude she did not.

If she did not expect him to be able to make good on His offer why would she say, "**give me this water, so I will not be thirsty.**" I believe that the skepticism she had expressed toward Christ in **John 4:11-12** is surfacing once again in a form of teasing. When the Samaritan woman asked Christ to give her the water so that she would not ever have to come to the well again I believe she was humoring Christ. Certainly there was nothing in the text prior up to this point that indicated that she was taking what He had said seriously in fact quite the opposite is true. But things were about to change.

Let us now go to **John 4:16** and see how Christ’s responds to her. He says, "**Go call your husband, and come here.**" Why would Christ tell her to do this? It has no apparent connection with what had come before. But it is a very strategic request. Jesus in John 4:16 asks the woman to call her husband so that He might have the opportunity to later expose her *sin* and thus change her attitude toward Him.

Let us now look at **John 4:17**. "**The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’**" Her answer is very abrupt. This is very much in contrast to her earlier responses. When you count the number of Greek words she used to respond to Christ in **verse 9** we count eleven words. When we count the number of Greek words she used to respond to Christ in **verses 11-12** we count forty-two words. When we count the number of Greek words she used to respond to Christ in **verse 15** we count thirteen words. But when we come to her response to Christ in **verse 17** in the English she uses only four words "**I have no husband.**" What she said in the Greek needed only three words.

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Does this mean that she had never married or that she was divorced or perhaps a widow? She obviously had chosen not to provide a great deal of information. The only thing that we know by what she says is that she had no husband.

But as we will soon find out there was much more to this story than she divulged. She obviously wants her life in this area to remain hidden! The opportunity Christ had anticipated when He asked her to call her husband so that He could expose her sin and change her attitude toward Him has now presented itself and He is going to seize it.

So let us read that last part of **verse 17** and into **verse 18** saying, "**You have well said, 'I have no husband' (18) for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.**" Since the Samaritan woman was purposely vague when she responded, "I have no husband" Christ surprised her with the specifics that she had conveniently left out.

What did he tell her? He told her that in her past she had had five husbands, presumably each had died or had divorced her, and the man she was now living with was not her husband. What did Christ accomplish by sharing these specifics with this Samaritan woman? First of all, the specifics that He shared exposed her as a fornicator. What exactly does this mean?

"Fornication" (PORNEIA) in it's more narrow sense is used to describe the sexual intercourse of an unmarried person. How did Christ's remark expose her as a fornicator?

He first of all told her that she had had five husbands. In other words, God established authorities had at one time recognized her marital commitment to five different men. But each time that marital commitment had apparently ended either through death or divorce. Then after sharing this very impressive detail He then drops a bombshell. What did He then say to her? "**And the one whom you now have is not your husband.**"

Some people might think because two people say that they are committed to each other and are willing to live with each other that this would constitute marriage. But this is flat out wrong. Certainly the Samaritan woman understood this otherwise she would not have purposely been so vague. She obviously knew that having a live-in boyfriend was immoral. Hopefully we from the words of Christ would understand this as well.

Christ by His words in John 4:17 makes it very clear that if God ordained authorities do not acknowledge that a marriage exists there is *no* marriage in the sight of God.

Of course before God established human authority it would have been impossible for a man and woman, who had a lifelong exclusive commitment to have that commitment confirmed in this way but this is no longer true.

And of course this has far reaching ramifications. This means that if two people choose to live together without the benefit of a legal marriage license they are committing fornication.

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Is this a problem today? Are there people choosing to live together without the benefit of a marriage license issued by God ordained authorities verifying before God and before man that a marital commitment exists. Are there people today fornicating in this way? And of course the answer is yes. It is commonplace

Let me read for you an excerpt from March 1 issue of *Newsweek* magazine entitled “State of Our Unions” which happens to be the title of this week’s message.

Amber Settle, a 35 year-old associate professor of computer science at DePaul University in Chicago, is eight months pregnant and unmarried. Not so long ago, that would have been downright scandalous. But Settle and Andre Berthiaume, 35, also an associate professor at DePaul, feel no pressure to make their eight-year relationship official, despite the imminent arrival of their baby. Instead, they’ve drawn up powers of attorney and custody, and child-support agreements in case of a break-up. They also plan to update their wills. A marriage license? Not anytime soon. More important than that "piece of paper," says Settle, "is that we make sure our relationship is strong.... We will be Mom and Dad in every way that’s important.

This woman in her convoluted way of thinking is trying to minimize the importance of a legal marriage. But her thinking is flawed.

Consider this story of a Father talking to his son. The father had told his son that he was displeased that he was living with his girlfriend. His son said, "Dad, what difference does a marriage license make? It is just a piece of paper." His father went over to the filing cabinet and pulled out his will. He said, "Son, in my will I have left all my earthly possessions to you when I die." Then the father tore up the will. His son, watching in horror, said, "Dad, what are you doing? Are you leaving me out of your will just because I’m living with my girlfriend without getting married?" His father replied, "Don’t worry son. It’s just a piece of paper."

People who are living together without the benefit of a marriage license are simply acting like children playing house. But unlike children whose innocent play has no far reaching ramifications their attempt to play house does. There are very serious consequences for those who choose to live together without the benefit of *marriage* (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Hebrews 13:4).

Let me read for you **1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers shall inherit the kingdom of God."**

And if this is not clear enough for you let me read for you **Hebrews 13:4, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."**

Christ by sharing the specifics of her life exposed her sin. And this Samaritan woman clearly from a biblical standpoint was in a world of hurt. But it was not just her sin that had been exposed by His sharing.

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Christ's detailed sharing about the Samaritan's woman life changed her attitude toward Him. Let us now read **John 4:19**, "**The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.'**"

Jesus insight into the life of this Samaritan woman has forced her to conclude that he was not an ordinary individual. She gives expression to this conviction by calling Him a *prophet*.

This is a very interesting chose of words on the part of the Samaritan woman. Samaritans acknowledged *no* prophet after Moses other than "the prophet" spoken of in Dueteronomy 18:18 who they believed was the coming Messiah.

But clearly she has not yet begun to think of Christ as the Messiah. If she had she would have referred to him in **John 4:19** as "the prophet". But it would appear that when she referred to Jesus as a prophet she certainly was moving into the area of *messianic* speculation.

CONCLUSION

This morning we have examined Christ's insight into the Samaritan woman's various encounters with men and have seen how that impacted her.

Hopefully this examination has impacted us as well and would lead us to pray the following prayer: "Lord, I pray that you would pour out your grace upon me that every word I speak and every action I take would *elevate* the honorable and holy estate of marriage. Amen."