

“The Weary Man at the Well”

June 2, 2013

Text: John 4:1-6

Speaking about Jesus, Heb 4:15 says=> *“We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”*

Every difficulty you ever face, Jesus too faced as a human being, & can show you/me how to deal w/ it more effectively.

E.g. you wake up in the morning, begin to think about the responsibilities you face this day, and are tempted to push the snooze button, roll over, & go back to sleep.

Jesus would wake up every day, knowing that millions of souls would depend on what He said/did that day, & knowing that in His humanity He didn't have the strength to take on such enormous responsibility.

So he prayed, strengthening Himself by drawing near to His Heavenly Father, for an hour or so.

Someone: That's not a fair comparison—Jesus was God.

That's true, He was fully God.

But He was/is also fully man, and His deity in no way cancelled out the totality of His humanity.

He became hungry/thirsty just like we do.

His body suffered injury, & no doubt sickness as well.

He even wept when His emotions got the better of Him.

One of the ways we see Jesus' humanness most clearly, is the fact that at times He got extremely tired—bone tired.

Take e.g. Mk 4:37=> *“There arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. / Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion”* (37-38).

Here was Jesus, in a boat that was rocking violently because of a storm at sea, w/ waves crashing over its bow.

The winds were howling, and the disciples may have had to shout at each other just to be heard.

The boat was beginning to fill up w/ water, and some of the fishermen who made their living in boats were convinced it was going to sink, & they would perish.

But Jesus was so weary from having taught crowds of people all day, He didn't even wake up, but lay sound asleep on a cushion in the boat's stern.

Instead of letting Him rest in peace when He had taken His leave of the crowd, some of them had continued to follow Him out onto the lake in their own boats.

It was as if they couldn't get enough of Jesus.

Exhaustion had set in & left Him in a deep sleep.

The moment He woke up, new demands were going to be placed on Him by His own disciples.

If you've ever felt like there just wasn't enough of you to go around, X has been there, & can empathize w/ your feeling.

In John 4:1-26, we again see the weariness of Jesus, as He sits at a well in Sychar, talking w/ a Samaritan woman.

This woman was nobody important, & she had lived a notoriously sinful life.

And yet Jesus would reveal to her that He was the Messiah.

In verse 25, she will say=> *“I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.”*

Jesus will answer (26)=> *“I who speak to you **am He.**”*

That was very significant because it was 1 of only 2 occasions on which Jesus directly revealed Himself to be the Messiah.

This woman was an inveterate sinner—married 5 times, & was now living w/ a man she wasn't even married to. She was the target of gossiping tongues thru-out this little village of Sychar, & she had earned her infamous reputation, by her lawlessness.

Yet Jesus honored her by revealing His Messiahship to her.

* Jesus hadn't told Nicodemus that He was Messiah, and Nicodemus was a well-placed, somewhat sincere, influential religious leader & member of the Sanhedrin.

* Peter would declare Jesus to be Messiah, saying=>

*“You are the **Christ**, the Son of the living God.”*

But Jesus Himself hadn't revealed that to Peter.

God the Father had (Mt 16:16-17).

* When demons shouted that Jesus was the Son of God, Lk 4 says X actually stopped them from speaking,

*“because they knew Him to be the **Christ** [Messiah]”*
(Lk 4:41).

He wanted to keep that quiet until He was publicly revealed to Israel at His Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday.

Besides this woman, Jesus would tell only 1 other person directly that He was the Messiah.

That other person was the high priest of Israel.

When he asked Jesus at X's trial, "*Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?*" our Lord responded directly=> "*I am*" (Mk 14: 61f).

But that was the only time, other than His conversation w/ the Samaritan woman at the well here in John 4, that Jesus directly declared Himself to be Messiah.

Why would Jesus choose this sin-laden woman who was a social outcast as 1 of only 2 people, to whom He ever revealed such a wonderful truth?

- 1) Because, praise God, God's choice of His elect is utterly inscrutable, which is why He saved many of us.
- 2) Because God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

His saving love doesn't discriminate against anyone because of race, gender or religious background.

The conversation between Jesus and the woman at Sychar fills up the first 26 verses of John 4, which we will study over the next few weeks.

Today in John 4:1-6 we will only examine why this unlikely conversation between Jesus & the Samaritan woman ever took place, by asking 3 questions=>

- 1) Why had Jesus left Judea where His ministry was growing?
- 2) Why had He come to Samaria (a region the Jews despised)?
- 3) Why was He sitting alone at the well in Sychar the very moment this woman came to draw water there?

*** Question 1—Why had Jesus left Judea?**

The 1st word in Jn 4:1 (“*therefore*”) tells us this verse is going to answer our question, by connecting it back to chapter 3.

[John 4:1-3]=> “*Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John / (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), / He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.*”

Jesus left Judea for 2 reasons=>

the Pharisees, & John the Baptist’s disciples.

As we’ve seen, John’s disciples had become jealous on his behalf, because Jesus was now getting bigger crowds & baptizing more people in Judea, than John was, in nearby Samaria.

John has just spent 10 verses, explaining to his disciples why Jesus must increase, and he must decrease.

He told them Jesus was superior to himself/all-men

because Jesus has supremacy over all mankind.

John himself had no jealousy whatsoever towards Jesus, knowing that the role God had assigned to him

personally was simply to serve as X's herald,
publicly introducing him to Israel.

Having done that, John was ready/willing to fade into the
background, & he wanted his disciples to accept it.

But Jesus knew that, as long as His ministry was located so
close to John's ministry in Samaria, at least some of
them would continue to resent what they viewed as
an encroachment by Jesus' into John's ministry.

The 2nd reason for Jesus' leaving Judea was even more important.

The Pharisees had begun to zero in on Him, & if He had
stayed much longer, they would have tried to kill
Him before the hour appointed by God for His death.

To prevent that from happening, Jesus simply removed
Himself from the scene, to avoid such a crisis.

The Pharisees hadn't liked John the Baptist, due to the public
attention paid to him, & because he had called them a
brood of vipers, openly deriding them by asking (Mt 3:7),

"Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

The Pharisees also took exception to John's baptizing
people w/o their authorization, & baptizing them as a
sign of repentance to boot, as if their own legalistic
brand of Judaism left a Jew still needing to repent.

Mt 21:32 says the Pharisees never believed John, but
there's no doubt that he made them feel apprehensive.

John had declared that One greater than Himself was coming, & that made the Pharisees nervous, but then John had introduced Jesus to Israel as that One. They rejected out of hand any possibility that Jesus was Messiah, but if there was any suspicion in the back of their minds that He might indeed be, they knew He wasn't the kind of Messiah they wanted, or had ever anticipated.

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus was attracting larger crowds than John, & that He too was baptizing Jews & preaching repentance, a/w/a proclaiming the arrival of the Kingdom—they became very concerned.

How Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard about it, John doesn't tell us.

Verse 2 is a parenthetical note, by which the Apostle John informs us that Jesus Himself wasn't actually baptizing anyone, but that His disciples were doing so on His behalf. John doesn't explain why Jesus didn't baptize, but only that the Pharisees' information about it was faulty.

Jesus had also received both notoriety/animosity among the religious leaders because of His cleansing the Temple. Although the Temple was the Sadducees' domain, the Pharisees viewed X's action there as a threat to their power/popularity among the people as well.

When Jesus became aware of the Pharisees' concern over His own ministry's growth, He determined it was time for Him to leave the Judean region, and go back to Galilee, where He had performed His 1st miracle at a wedding, changing water into wine.

There these religious leaders had less influence, giving Jesus the greater freedom He needed for His ministry as the Messiah.

It would be a 3-day walk from Judea to Galilee, but all along the way, Jesus would be able to spend time alone with His disciples, teaching/training them.

Question #2—Why had Jesus come to Samaria?

Esp. in view of the fact that Jews despised Samaritans, and usually sought to avoid them.

There was a whole history of tension/conflict between the 2 ethnic groups.

The Samaritans were mixed-breed descendants of the Northern Israelite tribes, who had split off from Jews in the South, in a rebellion against King Rehoboam (the son of Solomon), many centuries earlier.

In 722 B.C., these Northerners were invaded/defeated by the Assyrians, who then seeded the land w/ foreigners they transplanted into Northern Israel, so the Hebrews would intermarry w/ them, & lose their distinctive Israelite identity.

About 400 B.C. the Samaritans had built a temple to rival God's true Temple in Jerusalem, & had adopted a modified religious form that wasn't true Judaism in almost any sense.

3 centuries later, a Jew named John Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritans' temple, further aggravating tensions between the two peoples.

For all these reasons, Southern Israelites (the Jews) viewed Northern Israelites w/ suspicion, & considered them rebels, half-breeds, & religious heretics.

Politically, the Roman Empire had indiscriminately combined them, making them part of the province of Syria, but their own mutual hatred/suspicion of each other continued.

This, then is the background behind Jesus' journey from Judea, through Samaria, & into Galilee.

[Verse 4]=> *"And He **had to** pass through Samaria."*

What does John mean that Jesus "*had to*" pass thru Samaria?

Wasn't there any other way from Judea to Galilee?

Yes, a traveler could go east from Judea, cross the Jordan River, turn north & continue through Perea, turn west, cross back over the river, and proceed from there into Galilee.

But that would add an additional half day or so of travel.

If a person wanted to get from Judea to Galilee in 3 days on foot, he had to use the more direct route thru Samaria.

That may be what John means, when he says Jesus=>

“had to pass through Samaria.”

But a number of commentators see something else in these words.

They believe John is saying Jesus had to pass thru Samaria because He was compelled to do so by H.S., either by providential circumstances, or by direct revelation.

That God had ordained for Him to meet w/ the Samaritan woman at Sychar, & to proclaim the gospel to her, so He directed X to go through Samaria.

John often uses this term “*had to*” (*dei*) to speak of Jesus’ fulfilling some aspect of His divine mission on earth.

E.g. Jn 3:14=> “*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so **must** (dei) the Son of Man be lifted up*” (has “had to” be lifted up).

You see this same word used that way again/again in John’s Gospel=> 9:4 / 10:16 / 12:34 / 20:9.

We ourselves can attest to the fact that God has also directed our lives through seemingly coincidental circumstances, opening/closing doors.

John D. Rockefeller was a professed Xn who fervently believed in God’s sovereign control over every circumstance in his life.

Once, when he was supposed to travel to NY for an important business meeting w/ Cornelius Vanderbilt, he missed his train due to uncontrollable/unavoidable circumstances.

That train was destroyed in a bridge collapse, & many people were killed.

Rockefeller viewed that as God's providentially protecting him, & he gained new confidence in his business affairs because of that incident, convinced that God's hand was on his life.

In Jesus' journey north from Judea, the Father not only wanted Him to travel through Samaria, but specifically to stop in the village of Sychar, w/i the region of Samaria.

That's where the Samaritan woman lived.

[Verse 5]=> *“So He came to a city of **Samaria** called **Sychar**, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph;”*

The Apostle John locates the small town of Sychar for his readers, by telling them it was near the historic/well-known site Jacob had given to Joseph, and where Joseph had later been buried.

That was an important/familiar place for both Jews/Samaritans.

Jacob had dug a well there, the very one where Jesus would meet this woman God had directed Him to, in Sychar.

So this is why Jesus had come to Samaria, and more importantly, to the village of Sychar w/i the region called Samaria.

*** Question #3—Why was Jesus sitting alone at the well when the Samaritan woman came there?**

How was it, that He was going to have a private conversation w/ her, w/o His disciples interrupting?

The answer=> fatigue.

Again, we see here the weakness of Jesus' humanity in His becoming so extremely tired due to strenuous work.

And we see God using that to orchestrate events, creating the situation in which X and this woman will be able to talk privately.

[Verse 6]=> *“and Jacob’s well was there. So Jesus, being wearied [due to labor] from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.”*

John says Jesus was *“sitting thus,”* meaning that in His wearied condition, He had virtually collapsed on the stones that surrounded the well, in a state of exhaustion.

It was the 6th hour—noon by the Jewish system of reckoning time.

It may have been a hot day, Jesus had been walking all morning, and He was prob. both tired/thirsty.

When He & His disciples arrived at this famous well, Jesus sat down there, & He didn't feel like moving another muscle.

If you're wondering where His disciples were, verse 8 says they had gone into the village to buy food.

Q: Why was Jesus so tired, but they (who had walked the same distance as He) still had energy to walk on into the city?

Because He had been teaching them w/ every step of the way,
whereas they had merely been following Him.

If you don't think the physical/mental energy/strain that
goes into teaching can leave a person feeling
extremely tired, try it.

Every time I come down from the pulpit, I'm hoping that
Pastor Dean will take his time getting up to the pulpit,
so I'll have a moment/two to sit & catch my breath
before we all stand, to sing our songs of response.

Anyone who thinks Jesus was tired because He was a weakling
compared to outdoorsmen/fishermen like Peter/James/John,
should remember that Jesus too was an outdoorsman—a
carpenter, who prob. built houses.

Nor was He tired because He was older than they were.

He was about 30, & they prob. were too.

He was simply worn out from walking/talking/teaching all
morning.

**The eternal Word of God, who had flung stars/galaxies into
motion at the creation, had now become flesh, & in
doing so, He had taken upon Himself our weakness.**

He had taken a body/nature just like ours, in all things except sin.

* When He cried from the cross, "*I thirst*" (Jn 19:28), it
was the cry of a man feeling the same thirst you feel.

* When He died, He died as a true man, who could truly
serve as your Substitute, paying the price for your sin.

* When He ascended into heaven, it was as a man, so that you can pray to a great H.P. who is touched by all your human infirmities, because he remembers having experienced all those same feelings Himself. Anyone who prays to Mary, believing she is more sensitive to our needs than X, is wrong-headed, and is committing a blasphemous error against the God-man Jesus X.

Now I would hold up, for you to gaze at, a portrait of X's fatigue—this weary Man, slumped beside an ancient well.

I would ask you to contemplate the fact that He is there, in that condition, as a sacrifice for you.

Jesus was, after all, God, and could have refreshed Himself by a miraculous act, if it had been right for Him to do so.

He didn't need to ask the woman at the well for a drink simply because He lacked any implement for drawing water from the well.

He could have created His own bucket, or caused the well itself to spout water in His direction like a fountain, even causing it to spray a mist just for His refreshment/amusement.

For the Creator of the universe, a little creative replumbing of a well would be no problem at all.

Or He could have directly dispelled/dispensed-with His
fatigue/thirst by some miraculous act, w/i His own
body.

But any/all of that would have been wrong, in Jesus' case, just as
it would have been wrong for Him to turn stones into bread
after His 40 days of fasting in the wilderness.

Satan tempted Him to do exactly that, because he knew it
would have been wrong, since Jesus had come to
suffer as a man the same
difficulties/temptations/limitations we all suffer.

So He never performed a miracle for His own
comfort/benefit.

When blisters formed on His feet from walking all morning,
He didn't heal them w/ a touch, or a healing thought.

He had come to earth to represent you/me on a cross, so He came
as bone of our bone, & flesh of our flesh, subjecting
Himself fully to our human condition w/ all its difficulties.

And He couldn't/wouldn't cut any corners in the process.

That meant He had to suffer fatigue/deprivation at times,
because it's our lot to suffer like that, due to Adam's
sin.

What we see in that picture of the weary Man at the well is an
ultimate expression of divine omnipotence, restraining the
use of His own omnipotent power to benefit Himself,

though He used that power daily to benefit/bless other people.

That meant He had to experience exhaustion/thirst.

He had to endure nights of sleeplessness because the Son of Man had nowhere to lay His head, & He refused to solve that problem too thru the use His miraculous power.

The next time you feel exhausted at the end of the day, think about your weary Lord slumped down at Sychar's well.

Say to yourself, "He once felt as I do now, so He can sympathize with my discomfort/pain."

When your work is finished, and you crawl into bed so tired that you fall asleep in the blink of an eye;

Or, as with some people, you're so tired you can't get to sleep;

Spend your last waking moments saying, "Jesus, You have felt as I feel now. Comfort/help me to bear it."

He is human like you, so He understands/cares.

When your weariness comes from lack of sleep because you're dealing w/ some spiritual issue in your life, confess it to Jesus & recite His words=> "*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest*" (Mt 11:28).

If you sit in your chair, so worn out, you can hardly breathe, & your legs don't want to lift you out of that chair, reflect on X's deep sympathy for you, who once "sat thus" at a well. If you belong to Him, having placed your faith in Him, then go to Him in prayer w/ childlike confidence when you've reached the end of your own strength.

Embrace your weariness as a point of identification w/ Him, your very human Redeemer and High Priest.

Patiently look to Him for the fulfillment of God's promise to His people=> *"Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary"* (Isa 40:31).

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Text: John 4:1-6

1. One of the ways we see Jesus' humanness most clearly is the fact that at times He got extremely [12 tired].
Heb 4:15; Mk 4:37-38
2. In John 4:1-26 we again see the weariness of Jesus as He sits at a well in Sychar talking with a Samaritan [12 woman].
Jn 4:25, 26; Mt 16:16-17; Lk 4:41
3. Besides this woman, Jesus told only one other person directly that He was the Messiah; that other person was the [10 high] priest of Israel.
Mk 14:61-62
4. Why would Jesus choose this sin-laden woman as one of only two people to whom He would reveal such a wonderful truth? Because God is no [20 respecter] of persons.
Acts 10:34

In John 4:1-6 we examine why this unlikely conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman ever took place, by asking three questions...

*** Question #1—Why had Jesus left Judea?**

[John 4:1-3]

5. Jesus left Judea for two reasons: the [20 Pharisees], and John the Baptist's disciples.

Mt 3:7; 21:32

6. John had declared that One greater than Himself was coming, and that made the Pharisees nervous; but then John had introduced [12 Jesus] to Israel as that One.

7. When Jesus became aware of the Pharisees' concern over His own ministry's growth, He determined it was time for Him to leave the Judean region and go back to [16 Galilee].

Question #2—Why had Jesus come to Samaria?

[Verse 4]

8. Jesus "had to" pass through Samaria because He was [20 compelled] to do so by the Holy Spirit, either by providential circumstances or by direct revelation.

Jn 3:14; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9

9. In Jesus' journey north from Judea, the Father not only wanted Him to travel through Samaria, but specifically to stop in the village of [14 Sychar] within the region of Samaria.

[Verse 5]

*** Question #3—Why was Jesus sitting alone at the well when the Samaritan woman came there?**

[Verse 6]

10. Jesus was "*sitting thus*," meaning that in His wearied condition, He had collapsed on the stones that surrounded the well, in a state of [24 exhaustion].

11. The eternal Word of God, who had flung stars and galaxies into motion at the creation, had now become flesh, and in doing so, He had taken upon Himself our [18 weakness].

Jn 19:28

12. Jesus was God and could have refreshed Himself by a [18 creative] act.

13. The next time you feel exhausted, think about your weary Lord at Sychar's well; say to yourself, He can [24 sympathize] with my discomfort and pain.

Mt 11:28

14. Embrace your weariness as a point of identification with Him, your very [12 human] Redeemer and High Priest.

Isa 40:31