

Title: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MEET GOD? JOHN 4:5-42
(Chatham, NJ; 03/27/11, AM) [E – Homiletical Plot with Comments]

Theme: Jesus meets a woman at a well in Samaria, and from this we learn what happens when a person meets God.

Purpose: To see ourselves in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman.

Introduction:

1. What happens when an ordinary day becomes an extraordinary one?
2. What is it like when a person confronts spiritual issues?
3. What does it look or feel like when you meet God?
4. Like most people the Samaritan woman is changed by the encounter with Jesus, and she becomes an example of the change that can occur when God comes into someone's life.

I. No Ordinary Day – a woman meets Jesus. (Either Jesus told the disciples about the dialogue later since at this point only he and the woman are present, or she repeated it to them. Imagine how she might have related the incident later, perhaps over and over.)

- A. A trip to the well turns into an event: her world is put in turmoil.
 1. Jews and Samaritans don't mix; in fact, they hate each other.
 2. She encounters a Jew who not only speaks but speaks in riddles or mysteries.
 3. He offers her living water.
 4. He exposes her lifestyle. *How did he know I've been married five times and that I am not married to the man I am living with?*
- B. In this world she has created she encounters a disturbance, something out of the ordinary.
 1. She perceives something different about him: he is a prophet.
 2. She seeks an answer for a long-standing religious feud, verse 20.
 3. She thinks the answer to this religious dilemma will help her. **She needs more.**
- C. A clue to resolving this strange encounter.
 1. Jesus answers her question: salvation belongs to the Jews, 21-22.
 2. He offers further insight: God wants worship in spirit and truth, 23-24.
 3. When she persists that an answer will come when the Messiah arrives (she probably didn't like how he resolved the dispute), he reveals his identity.
- D. The consequences of this extraordinary encounter.
 1. She runs back to town and spreads the word about him.
 2. Because he knew of her life, she cannot help but react to his remarkable and perplexing knowledge; "He told me all I ever did," she says to them.

II. Jesus turns an ordinary day into an extraordinary one.

- A. Magic water.
 1. After he asks for a drink, he offers a drink.
 2. His living water quenches a different thirst.
 3. She doesn't quite get it because she thinks he will solve the problem of coming to the well every day, 15.
 4. She of physical water; Jesus offers spiritual water.
 5. He opens the door to something transcendent, beyond mere physical experience. (John's Gospel does this often.)
- B. She is forced to admit the truth about her life.
 1. Jeremiah 5:1-3 examined the state of Israel's spiritual life and found it wanting.

2. C. S. Lewis describes the truth we must face: "These, then, are the two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in." *Mere Christianity*.
 3. Paul makes the same case in Romans 1-3.
 4. Had she ever come to grips with the second truth? (Five husbands?!)
 5. To paraphrase Jesus, "Your life is a disaster!"
- C. A time is coming!
1. He settles this religious question in favor of the Jews which probably does not sit well with her.
 2. Yet he keeps her hopes alive by speaking of a new epoch..
 3. True worship of God will characterize this new age.
 4. Jesus re-fashions her hope from one that is earth-bound into one that is God-centered.
 5. He moves her from the earthly to the spiritual.
- D. "I am what you are looking for."
1. She hoped a messiah would settle the religious dispute.
 2. Jesus reveals himself to be what she has waited for, 26.
 3. That Jesus ends the discussion here with being so transparent is remarkable.
 4. But the ball is back in her court. The encounter has been openly revealed.

III. Others meeting with God's messiah

- A. The disciples.
1. They become part of the encounter.
 2. Their world is also turned upside down: he talks with a woman, a Samaritan, and then stays with the Samaritan town for two days.
 3. Physical hunger becomes the deeper issue; he has spiritual food that they know nothing about, 32.
 4. "Open your eyes" to the plan of God (35): is this their first clue that Jesus wants them to expand the mission of the Kingdom beyond their parochial view of who are legitimate candidates for entry?
- B. The Samaritans
1. They believed the woman and came out to meet this man, 28-30.
 2. They believed after they hear for themselves as well, 39-42.
 3. He was the "savior of the world."
 4. What made them believe? Did he perform miracles? Did he get such reactions from his own people?

Conclusions:

1. A person's first encounter with the truth about themselves can be disconcerting. It creates internal chaos.
2. To meet God in this chaos is liberating, opening a person up to the new epoch of worship and entirely new way of life.
3. It is the way of salvation.
4. Jesus is the one who opens that door for us. He is the "savior of the world."
5. Have you had your encounter yet?
6. If you see your own life as the sinful one that it truly is, you have opened the door to worship in spirit and truth and to the new life that awaits.
7. You only need to believe, repent, and be baptized (born again) for the remission of sins.