

“Exposed”  
John 4:16-18  
(Preached at Trinity, March 21, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This was a day predestined by God from all eternity. Jesus had purposely made His way into Samaria and arrived at Jacob's well at precisely the right moment to intercept the adulterous Samaritan woman.
2. The Samaritan woman had begun her day like the hundreds of days that preceded it. She saw nothing unusual about it. After doing her morning activities, she took her water pot and made her way to the well. It was a chore she didn't enjoy but it was a first century necessity. She was surprised to find a Jewish man sitting at the well when she arrived and even more surprised when He asked her for a drink and engaged her in conversation.
3. There was something else that was an inseparable part of this woman's life. She had consistently followed the path of immorality. She had been with five different husbands and her current relationship was also an immoral affair.
4. She understood that such behavior was morally sinful and socially unacceptable which is most likely why she went to the well at noon rather than the normal time of going in the evening when the heat wasn't as intense. She most likely tried to avoid the condemning stares of the women of the town. Public scorn was not sufficient to deter her from the power of sin and the insatiable desires of the flesh.
5. On this day, however, she was about to be confronted by one who knew everything she had ever done. An outsider might read **Verses 16-18** and conclude that they are out of place. They seem to have little connection with this dialogue between a Jewish man who has paused to rest and a Samaritan woman who has come to draw water. In fact, they seem inappropriate and rude. But we know Jesus has come to expose this woman's sin that she might find forgiveness and eternal life.
6. Speaking to people about their sin is highly unpopular today. People feel justified in their actions and any suggestion that their behavior is sinful is condemned as hateful and intolerant. Jesus' words to this Samaritan woman are an essential element of the Gospel. From what does a person need to be saved? He must be saved from the wrath of God. What has brought him under the wrath of God? Sin.  
To be lost is to be forsaken and forever abandoned by God. But there is deliverance through Christ. A person must understand their lostness before they will seek to be saved. Their lostness is the result of their sin.
7. We can see in this woman the nature of all humanity and the only way to solve the problem of our sin.

- I. The human conscience is seared by sin
- A. With the fall of Adam, the heart of man has become corrupted
1. We have inherited a sinful nature.  
Paul described it:  
**Ephesians 2:1-3 NAU** - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. <sup>3</sup> Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."
  2. We are enslaved by sin. It is a slavery we cannot escape
- B. The Samaritan woman knew her behavior was unacceptable
1. It was contrary to the standards of social propriety, yet the shame was insufficient to curtail her lusts.
  2. For years she would have faced the scorn of the city—the stares and whispering tongues. She may have felt the shame but continued her sinful behavior.
- C. She also knew it was contrary to God’s law
1. The law has been written upon the hearts of all men. But this woman also knew the Law of God. She was a Samaritan. They were religious; they knew the Law. The conviction of her conscience was not sufficient to lead her away from sin. The lost man finds it easy to ignore his conscience. He convinces himself that he’s basically a good person.
  2. In our lost condition we hate God and His Law. We find it easy to ignore God’s law and justify our actions. She was moving towards husband number 6 with no intention of changing.
  3. Instead of fleeing from his sin the lost man pursues it all the more  
**Romans 1:24-26 NAU** - "Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. <sup>25</sup> For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. <sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions"
  4. The woman had gone from one sinful relationships to another with no apparent end in sight.

- II. The sinful deeds of men are stored within the infinite mind of God
- A. Fallen men pretend God does not give regard to their sin
1. They believe God approves of their actions  
They redefine their actions according to their own standard or the behavior of others. That's a major problem with a morally lax culture.
  2. The Samaritan woman gave little regard to the all-seeing eye of God. He knew her life from childhood. He knew every relationship, every failed marriage. Jesus was sharing what God knows.
- B. God knows every detail
- Psalm 94:9 NAU** - "He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see?"
1. Our Children's Catechism describes it simply and clearly  
*Q Does God know all things?*  
*A. Yes; nothing can be hid from God.*
  2. God knows what we are doing during every second of every day from the time we wake up to the time we return to bed and then while we sleep.  
**Psalm 139:2-4 NAU** - "You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. <sup>3</sup> You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. <sup>4</sup> Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all."  
    - a. God knows everything we do, every thought, every motive. He knows our scheming. He knows the self-talk you make regarding others—self-righteous condemning, private criticism.
    - b. Every sin is before the ever-present eye of God  
**Luke 12:2-3 NAU** - "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. <sup>3</sup> "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops."
  3. God tells us that He records even the words we speak and then forget – God doesn't forget.  
**Matthew 12:36-37 NAU** - "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup> "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."
  4. All will stand before Christ on the Day of Judgment to give account
- III. Jesus exposed the Samaritan woman's sin
- A. Jesus knew every hidden sin – He
1. As she pondered the meaning of the "Living Waters" Jesus began to describe her greatest need.
    - a. From her perspective, her greatest need was physical. She hated traveling daily in the heat to draw water.
    - b. This is the mindset of this world. We see our greatest need as being physical – our finances, our health, family issues.  
Can you see the perversion of the health/wealth Gospel that maintains this emphasis on our earthly needs and desires.

2. Jesus deflected her attention to her spiritual condition. He told her, "Go, call your husband and come here." – **verse 6**
    - a. This wasn't a statement lacking in significance. Jesus wasn't expressing a desire to meet her husband. He was dealing with her sin.
    - b. Her answer displays her avoidance of acknowledging her sinfulness – "I have no husband"
    - c. With our Lord's answer Jesus exposes her entire life of sin. No sin can be hidden from His sight.
    - d. Apparently, the woman had had a life of sinful relationships, going from one man to another. Her sin could not be hidden from Christ.
  3. This is the nature of the Gospel. It always begins with the nature of our true need. It brings us face to face with our sin. A Gospel that exposes sin might be unpopular, but it is the only Gospel there is. This is where Jesus directed the conversation.
  4. Many have defiled the Gospel by turning attention to our perceived needs—often referred to as our "felt needs" – the perceived deficiencies that prevent us from living a full life.
    - a. Such preaching maintains a focus upon these "felt-needs" rather than our true need.
    - b. You'll hear sermons on how to overcome loneliness, how to find personal fulfillment, how to cope with stress, how to deal with financial worries, dealing with difficult people.  
Of course, expository preaching will deal with many of the issues of fallen humanity—but we must always maintain the heart of the Gospel. The Gospel is about our fallen condition.
    - c. Albert Mohler describes the weakness of preaching to "felt needs" – "There are several basic flaws with this approach. In the first place, our "needs" are hopelessly confused — even hidden from us. As a matter of fact, the knowledge of our deepest needs is a secret even to ourselves until we receive that knowledge by the work of the Holy Spirit and the gift of Scripture. The sinner's need for Christ is a need unlike all other needs — and the satisfaction of having other needs stroked and affirmed is often a hindrance to the sinner's understanding of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup>
- B. The woman persisted in skirting the issue of her sin
1. She immediately pretended her sin didn't exist  
"I have no husband." As if to say, "Husband, what husband? I don't have a husband."
  2. Then she turned to "religious talk," as if to change the subject away from her sin. Human beings are religious by nature. We use religion to avoid dealing truly with our sin in Biblical repentance and faith in Christ.
    - a. She reflected a misinformed incomplete doctrine of Christ  
**John 4:19 NAU** - "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."

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<sup>1</sup> Mohler, Albert, Blog - <https://albertmohler.com/2006/09/14/the-problem-of-preaching-to-felt-needs/>.

- b. She engaged in religious conversation void of the essential truth  
**John 4:20 NAU** - "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."
- c. The Samaritan religion was man-made religion. They determined how God would be approached. They determined the location the location of the temple and the way to worship God. It was as religion of human imagination. Religion will never bring a solution to our sin. We need God's solution of a redeemer. This is the meaning of our Lord's words:  
**John 4:22 NAU** - "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."

#### IV. Only the power of Christ can free us from our bondage to sin

- A. Jesus revealed Himself as the Christ
  - 1. The woman's religious background taught her of the coming Messiah – the Deliverer of His people.
  - 2. She didn't understand the fullness of what this meant  
**John 4:25 NAU** - "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."
  - 3. What the Christ came to declare is God's holy kingdom that must be entered through faith and repentance.
    - a. Only through Christ is reconciliation with God possible.  
Jesus came to bring the salvation promised in the Old Covenant  
**John 4:22 NAU** - "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."  
**Isaiah 53:6 KJV** - "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."
    - b. Jesus told her of living water. In order to receive this living water, one must desire it. There must be a thirst for it. There can be no thirst for this water without an acknowledgement of sin.
- B. This is the message Jesus revealed to this Gentile Samaritan woman.  
**Verse 26** - "I who speak to you am *He*." (ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι)  
Literally following the OT expression – "I AM the one speaking to you"
  - 1. The lusts of today will only be repeated by new lusts tomorrow. Earthly lusts will never be satisfied.
  - 2. Only Christ can deal with our true need. Only Christ can deal with the matter of our sin. Only Christ can provide true life. Only Christ can provide the living water that springs forth to eternal life.
  - 3. Suddenly, Jesus came into bright focus. Her earthly needs lost significance.  
**John 4:28-29 NAU** - "So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?"

Conclusion:

1. The Gospel exposes. The lost man hates this.  
**John 3:20 NAU** - "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."
2. But when Christ by His Spirit graciously opens our heart we joyously embrace Him. What a glorious gift! Jesus told her in **Verse 10** - "If you knew the gift of God" The Samaritan woman found this gift.