

Hope and Healing

Week 13: Helping Others Find Hope and Healing

John 4:25-30, 39

Hi, my name is Shawn. I have a new life in Jesus and I struggle with perfectionism and people pleasing, and currently, a bout with bronchitis, so bear with me!

Have you ever been busted for something? Like, caught red-handed with no excuses and no defense? The first time I really remember this was when I was 10 or 11 years old...(story of stealing bottle of cologne from Hooks and getting caught. I'm the reason stores lock those up now!)

That phrase, getting caught "red-handed" comes from 15th Century Scotland. It describes a person who was literally caught red-handed w/ blood on their hands from murder or poaching. It's that moment of undeniable guilt. You have been found out and fully exposed. Have you been there? That's what I felt like holding that bottle of cologne that day, and I've felt it since then, too.

And, when we feel exposed like that, it's kind of this sinking feeling that we just want to go away. We want to hide, deflect, minimize our actions. Or we just go right to trying to change the subject. "Can we not talk about this anymore?" "Can we just keep this between us. No one else needs to know about it."

We just want it to all go away. We don't want anyone else to know. I think that's because, most of us have learned through experience that if people really knew us, they wouldn't really love us.

Which is why I'm so amazed by our text today. We looked at the first part of this account back in Week 5. Catch you up on the context:

- Jesus meets this woman at a well in Samaria. All kinds of cultural divides between them, but Jesus busts through them and starts up a conversation by asking for a drink of water.
- Text says that it's noon. Heat of the day. Not a typically time to get water. Might tell us a little about this woman's story. There could be a reason she doesn't want to be around all the other women who would have collected water earlier? Some hurt and pain in this woman's life.
- Jesus lovingly exposes that pain. Points out that she's had 5 husbands and the man she's currently with isn't her husband. She's probably just doing whatever she can to survive, but I imagine it's still a point of shame in her life.

- But instead of feeling shame and rejection from Jesus, just like she'd probably received from every other person in her life, she experiences something else. Something different.
- Verse 28 says...(READ vs. 28-29a w/ emphases on "leaving her jar of water")

What kind of grace leaves you feeling fully known AND fully loved? What kind of grace makes you run back to the people who have probably added to your pain and made you feel judged and looked down upon and say, "Hey! You've got to come see this man who told me everything I've ever done!"

It's say it's ONLY the kind of love and grace that we experience in Jesus.

The only explanation for a response like this is the kind of love she experienced in that moment. And when you experience a love like that...you can't help but share it with others. **Grace received becomes grace shared.**

We don't have to have all the answers. We don't even have to have our lives fully put together. But if you've truly experienced the grace of Jesus in your life, there's something in you that wants others to experience it, too. It's why evangelism has been described as "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

I think that's what the woman in this account is doing. She knows she's not perfect. But she knows all those people who judge her aren't perfect either. And she loves them enough to say, "Come and see," and maybe you can experience this kind of freedom, too.

This has been the mission and message of followers of Jesus for centuries, and it's still happening today. Check out this video...(Relational Evangelism Video)

Panel Discussion

Wrapping up Hope and Healing.

- We're all one of "those people." We all have some kind of hurt, hang-up, and habit that only Jesus can provide hope and healing for. Question isn't if we are, it's if we're willing to admit it.
- 12 Steps of Recovery aren't just a pathway to sobriety and getting clean, they're a discipleship pathway for those of us who are following Jesus.
 - Confess our need for Him, be honest about the destructive habits we turn to and why, confess to those we've hurt, make amends, live a life of honesty and integrity.
 - These are the 12 steps of recovery, but they're how we follow Jesus, too.

Matt and Maggie, you all helped preach through this series and were honest about sharing some of your own story. We'll get to that in a bit, but first...

1) What's something that got left on the "cutting room floor" on the weeks you preached? One thing you wish you could have said, but it just didn't make the final draft?

- a) Had in a sermon TWICE, but had to cut.
- b) Mercy and Grace are not synonyms. Two different gifts we receive through faith in Jesus.
 - a. Mercy – Not getting what we deserve. (God's judgement for our sin.)
 - b. Grace – Getting what we don't deserve. (God's love)
- c) Woman at the well received both.
 - a. She DIDN'T get the judgement she deserved for the life she'd lived apart from God's Law.
 - b. She DID get acceptance, compassion, love and it COMPLETELY changed her life!

Matt, you said something in your snow day sermon when we had to cancel church that I loved! I want to make sure you have another chance to say it...("What kind of people does this church hire?!")

2) How has experiencing grace shaped your life and calling in ministry?

Step 12: Regenerate – Because of our new life in Christ, we carry God's message of reconciliation to others and live out these principles in every part of our lives.

3) How has your story helped someone else find hope and healing in Jesus?

4) What would you say to someone who feels like they're not "qualified" to share their faith or story?

- a) John 9 – "All I know is I once was blind, but now I see."
- b) Only a hypocrite if you pretend to be perfect while looking down on others. Honest is the opposite of hypocrisy.

John closes this account with these words in verse 39...(READ John 4:39, 42)

The woman left Jesus that day feeling fully known and fully loved. She shared it with others and that experienced it in their lives, too. Grace received becomes grace shared. Your story of God's grace is the most powerful tool you have to help others find hope and healing in Jesus. The question is, will you keep it to yourself, or will you share it with others?

Step 12, because of our new life in Christ, we carry God's message of reconciliation to others and live out these principles in every part of our life.

Paul tells us what this message of reconciliation is in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Mercy: Jesus took on our sin and the punishment we deserved for it on the cross. (Holy Week, Good Friday)

Grace: God raised Jesus from the grave and now gives us freedom and new life through a relationship with Him. Which is what we'll celebrate on Easter next Sunday.

But today, you might be here feeling a little like that woman at the well when she met Jesus. You feel fully known, but not fully loved. Or you're carrying things in your life that you hope no one ever finds out about. And the truth is, you can hide from people, but you don't have to hide from Jesus.

He already sees you. He already knows you. And he already loves you. And that kind of grace has the power to change everything in your life. (Invitation)

Communion

The reason we can be fully known and fully loved God is not because of anything we've done, but because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. We remember now as we take the elements.

Let's thank Him for the mercy and grace we've received and, as we do, I invite you to pray, "Lord, who can I say, 'Come and see' to and help them find the hope and healing in you that I've found?"