

Heartache

Re-Routing: God's Back Roads to Joy—part 6

July 14, 2024

DAY 1: The Joy of Relating Like Jesus!

1. Most relationships start off on a “high,” but over time tend to dwindle. Why? What are we not seeing? What needs to be done? In the middle of relational pain you could hear God saying, “Re-Routing.”

- The surprising back road to joy #6: Heartache.
- What we discover: Joy definition #6: The joy of pouring Christ's love into another.

2. In a nutshell these are the signposts along the back road of heartache:

Self-centeredness → Broken → Grace → Tastes of God's love → Relate like Jesus (pouring out His love to others)

3. This kind of joy is the joy of loving like Jesus.

4. Just before Jesus went to the cross He prayed some extremely important things.

*John 17:13 "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the **full measure of my joy within them**.*

5. What is “the full measure of His joy?”

John 17:20 "...I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

6. “That they may be one” is not a euphemism for agreement. It is a definition of intimacy. Intimacy is the kind of relationship where two people become so close, they seem to be as one. Genesis calls this oneness.

John 17:23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

7. Jesus' prayer for us is that we would reflect the same kind of love to one another that God has for Jesus and Jesus has for God!!! The same!!

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Internal Thirst

1. Have you experienced the heartbreak of relational failure? This week we'll look at "the woman at the well," a nameless woman who knew repeated relational failure. How did Jesus relate to her? What was He trying to do for her, and build in her?

*John 4:7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you **living water**."*

2. 2,000 years ago, in the Middle East, the Jewish people looked down on the Samaritans as "half-breeds," "sell-outs" who intermarried with the pagan people around them. In addition, women were generally considered "2nd class citizens." Jewish men did not talk to women in public. Thus, the Samaritan woman is stunned when Jesus talks with her. What reasons do you think He would talk with her?

3. Who initiates the conversation?

4. How does He initiate the conversation?

5. Jesus' answer in v.10 is intriguing! Place a check mark next to the things that strike you.

He suggests that God wants to give her a gift!

He works to create "spiritual curiosity."

He moves the conversation toward a spiritual direction, but only with a nudge.

He doesn't use the "dump truck" method with her, dumping on her a truck load of truth.

He assumes she may not know God, but hints that if she did, something good would happen.

He relates to her as personal equals and spiritual "equals."

He takes something very ordinary, "water," and uses it as a metaphor for what He can give.

He uses a vague term, "living water," to prompt curiosity and a response from her.

Other: _____

6. His offer to her is something called "living water." What do you think He means?

DAY 3: Internal quenching

1. Jesus has suggested something called “living water.” It is not water for physical thirst. It is something that is needed for human internal thirst! What kinds of internal thirst comes to mind?

John 4:11 "Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it ...?"

2. She did not understand what Jesus meant by "living water." But, she is intrigued with Him and the conversation.

3. Her initial idea of Jesus is that he is just another man. But now, she compares Jesus to the great Jewish patriarch, Jacob. Why?

John 4:13 "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, [14] but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

4. What do you think each of the following characteristics mean?

a. "water I give him..."

b. "spring of water welling up..."

c. "welling up to eternal life."

5. "Eternal life" is a phrase that has a quantitative *and* qualitative meaning to it. As to quantitative eternal life, Jesus refers to heaven. As to qualitative eternal life, He means "life to the full." Which of the following statements strike you about His words in 4:13-14?

___ With physical water, you can drink and drink but you will always still be thirsty.

___ What the world has to offer to slake your personal, human thirst will still leave you thirsty.

___ What Jesus has to slake your personal thirst is the only thing that can slake personal thirst.

___ What the world has to offer, from the *outside*, cannot slake an *internal* thirst.

___ You are looking for something to meet the deep needs of the human heart. If you look to the world, you will never have that thirst slaked.

___ Your *internal* thirst can only be slaked by an *internal source*. That's where I come in!

___ You have a need for eternal life, both now and forever.

6. What strikes you most about today's study?

DAY 4: Admitting our human need and our inability to meet it.

1. In a Sinclair Lewis book, one of the characters is a businessman who is talking to the woman he loves. She tells him, “On the surface we seem quite different; but deep down we are fundamentally the same. We are both desperately unhappy about something—and we don’t know what it is.”

2. “At the heart of all this there is the fundamental truth that in the human heart there is a thirst for something that only Jesus Christ can satisfy.” -William Barclay

3. So far, Jesus has initiated the conversation, kept it moving, slowly turned it to spiritual matters, and has sown a few spiritual seeds. She is engaged in the conversation and her curiosity is piqued, but so far she doesn't "get it." The story continues...

John 4:16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

4. Jesus abruptly changes the subject *away from "spiritual things."* Why do you think Jesus turned the conversation to her "husband?"

John 4:17 "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. [18] The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

5. It is one thing to discuss theological topics, like eternal life and living water. It is another thing to pierce through what I'd like to think about my life and the reality of my life.

a. What has been this woman's approach to life?

b. Why do you think she has had five husbands? What factors could all be in play?

c. What has been her "real" "water" for trying to slake her thirst?

d. Has her strategy been working? Why not?

6. If you had been the woman, where would your mind have gone at this point in the conversation?

7. We will not see our need for what Jesus offers until we see our utter failure to provide what we most need!

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: The backroad of heartache opens her heart to see her deeper need and best opportunities

1 What happens when we trust ourselves and what the world has to give to meet our needs and then our approach fails? We “get religious.” She claims to have a religion of her own people.

John 4:21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."

2. Jesus tells her that “religiosity” is not the answer.

John 4:22 "You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews."

3. Jesus starts to point toward Himself as the "living water." He "hints" at it, nudging her.

John 4:23 "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24] God is Spirit and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:25 (woman) "I know that Messiah (Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

4. What is she starting to realize about the Man she is talking to?

John 4:26 Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

John 4:28-29 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, [29] "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

5. What does she realize about Jesus Christ?

6. What happened to her at the end of their conversation? What does she realize about herself?

“There are two revelations in Christianity; there is the revelation of God and the revelation of ourselves. No man ever really sees himself until he sees himself in the presence of Christ; and then he is appalled at the sight of himself.... Christianity begins with the sudden realization that life as we are living it will not do. We awake to ourselves and we awake to our need of God.”

William Barclay

7. This case study illustrates God’s back road of heartache.

- She faced her failed attempts to meet her heart’s need.
- Her heartache was exposed.
- She admitted her heartache to herself.
- That led her to see her approach to meeting her heart’s needs wouldn’t work.
- That led her through the doorway deeper into her heart, where she discovered Jesus.
- She relates to the townspeople, not as a failure but with the love of Jesus. (Joy #6)