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 2nd Mark of a Vital Church

***Authentic Evangelism
 John 4:5-30***

5 So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

*⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "**How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?**" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)*

*¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you **living water.**" ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir,^[c] you have no bucket, and the well is deep. **Where do you get that living water?**" ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but **those who drink of the water that I will give them** will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to **eternal life.**" ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir,^[d] give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."*

*¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "**You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,'** ¹⁸ **for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!**" ¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir,^[e] I see that you are a **prophet.**" ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you^[f] say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you^[g] will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You^[h] worship what you^[i] do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵ The woman said to him, "**I know that Messiah is coming**" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he*

will proclaim all things to us.”²⁶ Jesus said to her, “**I am he,^[j] the one who is speaking to you.**”

²⁷ Just then his disciples came. **They were astonished** that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?”²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,²⁹ “**Come and see** a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah,^[k] can he?”³⁰ **They left the city and were on their way to him.**

This is actually part of a sermon series—***The 7 Marks of a Vital Church.***

Last week’s was ***Lifelong Discipleship.***

This week is ***Evangelism.***

And this woman at the well—well, she makes it pretty ***easy to understand.***

After hearing the Good News from Jesus himself,

she runs home and says to her community, “***Come and See***”.

That’s ***evangelism!***

That’s really it---in a nutshell!

Evangelism is one of those words and activities that ***gets a bad rap.***

We tend to think of Jehovah’s Witnesses

coming door to door with their pamphlets,

or other denominations handing out tracts with the 5 steps to be saved.

We think only of street preaching or pushy people asking ‘*Are you saved?*’

Or ‘*If you died tonight, where would you go?*’

But here in John 4, we learn from Jesus that evangelism is pretty ***simple and straightforward.***

It is simply ***sharing the Good News—aka—God’s love.***

What God is doing in our lives, and our world.

That’s evangelism!

It’s just saying, “***Come and See!***”

I wonder, who first ***told YOU the Good News?***

Who invited you to come and see?

How ***did you come to be HERE*** in these pews?

When I was a little kid in elementary school

my best friend was a neighborhood girl named Nancy.

Her mom was the best, and I spent a lot of time at their house.

Her mom was helping at the *neighborhood Presbyterian church with VBS* one summer, so she took both of us.

It was *awesome!*

I remember it was full of *kids smiling and laughing, dancing and singing* songs like *His Banner Over Me Is Love*, and *This Little Light of Mine!*

I heard about the love of Jesus, and judging by the reaction of all my peers, I thought: *this guy Jesus is awesome!*

Eventually I decided to try *Sunday school*, and by ‘try’ I mean that I went to church, and hid in the bathroom. I know you’ll find this hard to believe, but I was painfully shy growing up.

I started going to Sunday school, loved it, and then joined the *youth group*, and made some of my best friends there. It was at a youth artists camp through that church that I received my *call to ministry. All because of Nancy and her mom! Their evangelism!*

Who told YOU about God? About Jesus?

Who said to you, “Come and See”?

In our Acts Bible study, many people said their parents, their friends, summer camp, and Sunday school teachers were all instrumental in leading them to faith!

Who was that for you?

Come and See is the *ultimate invitation* to faith!

It’s what *Jesus said* to his earliest disciples when inviting them to join him. *Come and See!*

The woman at the well, when she left to share the Good News, we might think of her as *a bold evangelist or even an early preacher!*

But really she was an *ordinary* person.

She was beyond ordinary—in those days she would have been considered a ‘*nobody*’. She was the ultimate outsider, marginalized forgotten person.

She was a *Samaritan* (an enemy of the Jews), she was a *woman* (aka property), living with a man, many times divorced (a serious *sinner*),

and she was drawing water at *noon* in the heat of the day talking to a man (totally against all social norms)!

So what does her *story say us today?*

Her story tells us that *anyone and EVERYONE* who knows Jesus has the *power and the call* to tell others the Good News!

Everyone is called to invite others with a simple ‘Come and See’!

This is not a special program of the church, this is not just for special people or leaders or preachers, this call is for *everyone*, even those who consider themselves to be ‘*nobody*’!

And what is it that we are called to share?

The Good News.

God’s love for us. Jesus’ love for us.

And this story reveals the *depth* of the Good News.

Jesus *tells her everything about her life*, revealing that he is indeed God, the Messiah, because *who else would know* those details—and *still sit there* talking with her! Jesus tells her that he can give her ‘*living water*’—
Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

He *offers her something she desperately needs.*

Her life is kind of a *mess* (like all of us), and he *meets her right where* she is, and offers her something that no one can take away.

He offers her true life, eternal life, he offers himself!

What does that mean to YOU, today?

Doesn’t Jesus still offer us himself, and this living water of new and eternal life?

Doesn’t Jesus *meet us, right where we are*, today?

Jesus did *NOT* scare her, guilt trip her, or require repentance for her lifestyle!

Think about that!

There was no fear or anxiety, only acceptance and grace and love.

Living water.

In our Acts Bible study Wednesday night,

we studied a great story from *Acts 3*,

when Peter and John go up to the Temple to pray,

and they see a man who is lame outside the temple, begging for money.

And they look right into his eyes and say:

“I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,^[a] stand up and walk.”

Wow. Talk about a life-changing moment.
But they too don't use any scare or guilt 'tactics',
 they just offer the power of God to this man,
 by meeting him where he is,
 looking at him as a person
 and boldly declaring that Jesus will heal him--
 And he is instantly healed!

So, what if this means that we are **ALL evangelists**?
 What if it means that we are ALL called to **meet people** right where they are,
 to meet their **needs**, whatever they may be,
 to **look at them** as people, deserving of God's love and grace?

Does that mean sharing the **Good News is easy**?
Not always.

It might mean we have to step **outside our comfort zone**.
 It's easy to just come to church, sit in the pew, soak it up, and go home,
 without thinking of the people in our lives who need to be here
 and experience this love!
 It's easy to just take in faith for ourselves,
 and forget about the people we need to invite,
 the people with whom we need to share the Good News!

Who are those people in your life?
 Who is one person who needs **YOUR attention**? Your personal **invitation**?
 Your words of **Come and See**?

When was the last time you invited someone to church or study,
 or **told someone about what God is doing** in your life?
 And **what keeps you** from doing that?

If we think we are not ready or equipped, **think of it this way**.
 The Good News of God's grace and love is **like other 'good news'---**
 like when you can't wait to tell someone about **a new baby, a new job,**
a new home, a new relationship!
 It's like **pulling out pics** of the grandkids on your phone,
 to show to anyone who will look!

Sharing the news of *what God is doing and has done* in your life,
is like sharing what has happened in your family, your marriage,
or with your best friend!

How can you share—the *impact of God? Of Jesus? Of faith? In your life?*

And notice something really important in this story---

The woman at the well *left behind her water jar* to run home
and tell people to Come and See!

She left behind something that would hold her back, or slow her down!

What *do we need to leave behind?*

What is *holding us back?*

Is it fear? Anxiety? Shyness?

A fear that people will not respond?

Truth is, just like sharing any other news, *some people WON'T respond.*
Some people won't accept the invitation.

But other people WILL.

And how can we be leave them behind?

Don't we want others to *have the joy that we have*, in this place?

In this family of faith?

Don't we want *EVERYONE to know that joy?*

Someone did it for you—how can you do it for someone else?

And how are we, as a church, *encouraging and equipping people to share their faith?* To say Come and See?

We've been talking about being Salt and Light, and using not just words,
but also our actions to shine the light of God's love in this world.

But evangelism means *we can't JUST use our actions—
we must ALSO use words.*

We have to get the *Word out.*

Remember what the Gospel of John calls Jesus? *The Word.*

Evangelism means we *use our words to share the Good news!*

We approach people where they *are*, we meet their *needs*,
we develop *relationship*, and then we say Come and See!

And the result?

Well, that's the *really Good News of the Gospel.*

When we share, when we invite,
when we don't keep the good news all to ourselves, *lives are changed!*

People come to faith!

Churches grow and deepen!

Many come to believe.

Just like they did in her community in *Samaria*.

Just like they did around the early church in *Acts*.

Just like *they will do in Matawan, New Jersey!*

And it's all *if we are willing to say "Come and See"!*

Now That's Good News.

And for that, all God's people can say together, Amen!