

A Message in a Bottle

Text: John 4:3-18, 27-30

V.28 - *The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,*

She was supposed to have returned to the city with water. Water is essential to sustain life. However, she returned with something far more precious and vital to life, she came back with something greater: she returned with news of a type of water that could not be contained in a jar, couldn't be found in a well – it was living water springing up to everlasting life!

She left her waterpot behind - why would John include that detail? I do believe that there is a message in that little detail, there is a message in that bottle!

- 1. The jar left behind tells the story of a woman who discovered that her spiritual needs were more important than her immediate, natural needs.**

An encounter with Jesus will do that. The realisation of what really matters in this life and what really is important comes from encountering Jesus.

She realised at that point that her spiritual needs were far more important than her immediate, natural needs.

The jar left behind represents a change in the things she valued.

When one truly encounters Jesus, some things become important, some things don't – some things become worth pursuing, some left behind.

- The woman left her jar,
- Peter left his nets
- The blind man left his cape,
- The magicians in Acts 19 left their magic books

When we leave something behind at the feet of Jesus, our gains will always be greater than our losses!

Luke 18:28-30 - *²⁸ Then Peter said, "See, we have **left all**, and followed You." ²⁹ So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."*

Philippians 3:8 - *⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may **gain** Christ*

2. The jar left behind, reveals a woman who no longer wants to be weighed down, and slowed down by things of this life

A water jar was made of clay and heavy. If filled with water, it would definitely make for a very slow walk.

Hebrews 12:1 - *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight**, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us **run** with endurance the race that is set before us,*

1 Peter 5:7 - *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you*

Luke 21:34 - *34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be **weighed down** with carousing, drunkenness, and **cares of this life**, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.*

3. The jar left behind reveals someone suddenly moved with a sense of urgency, a sense of mission and purpose.

Carrying water became secondary to her newfound mission: she had to tell her city about the Messiah! This woman was most likely of low social standing. She carried water – maybe that is how she made a living. However, for the first time in her life she finds real purpose and a sense of ‘mission’:

She is no longer just carrying water; she is carrying a message!

They were probably expecting water, but she brought them an invitation – an invitation to come to Jesus: *"come and see a man who told me everything I ever did"*.

I love it how she embraced her mission so readily and without embarrassment. That is why she left the water pot behind: she didn't want to be slowed down.

Conclusion

V.39-42 - *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."*

40. So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

She didn't return with her husband like Jesus had asked. She returned with the whole city! Her whole city surrendered to Jesus because of her testimony.

Religion cannot produce that. Religion cannot produce transformation. Only an encounter with Jesus can do that! The woman already had religion when Jesus found her. However, what changed her life was an encounter with Jesus.

Also, what gave her a sense of purpose and mission, beyond the mundane task of carrying water to the city was this encounter!

The message of that bottle left behind is that

- It is worth leaving some things behind because they are no longer part of our future
- It is crucial to run and not be hindered by those things that would weigh us down
- In our future, there is mission and there is purpose.