

I. Intro

- A. Music leaders- should be as excited about church as the super bowl.
- B. Meant well. But rang hollow. Why? What was really being experienced was religion.
- C. It's hard to be excited about religion. Religion is more like sophomore math class than the super bowl
- D. Math class- When is this over? When am I ever going to use this? Will this be on the test?

II. WE

A. Religion: Trying to earn the acceptance of the god or gods

- 1. SIN (whether you call it that or not) has separated us...
 - 2. So we have to DO certain rituals, sacrifices, prayers, rules in order to get on the god's good side. (And don't forget to NOT DO bad things, too!)
 - 3. True for every religion throughout history... just different practices.
 - 4. But what can we do or give that someone/something that powerful needs?
 - 5. Truth is... **Religion can't deliver on its promises.**
- B. After a while...
- 1. See behind the curtain... bad things still happen to the devout... no REAL changes in your life
- C. No wonder you or those you know have rejected religion.
- 1. Maybe *you* haven't rejected... but deep down you feel like there should be more to this xianity thing.
 - 2. Been doing this stuff year after year and this is it?
 - 3. If we're honest... **Religion** (as we understand it) **is empty and lifeless.**
 - 4. It's why Jesus rejected religion too. But he didn't just reject it...
 - 5. **Jesus made religion obsolete and replaced it with something infinitely better. (Hebrews 8)**
- D. One of the first people who experienced this something better was one of the least likely people we would expect someone like Jesus to be around...
- 1. Someone a lot of us probably have more in common with than we think.
 - 2. A nameless Samaritan Woman.
 - 3. Samaritans- mixed ethnic group... J's and S's hated each other.
 - 4. Divided by religion
 - a. Both thought they worshipped the right way...
 - b. S's **Mt. Gerazim** was the correct place to worship
 - c. J's **Solomon's temple**.
 - d. J's even destroyed S's temple.
 - 5. Normally Jews avoided Samaria as much as possible... a respectable Rabbi wouldn't step foot in the area.

III. GOD (John 4:1-42)

- Things are getting a little hot from the religious leaders so J decides to lay low for a bit.

- A. **V. 3-4** *So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way.*

1. Had a route to go around (**map see below**)
 2. "Had to?" Not really... except he needed to have a conversation that changed one woman's life and ended religion as we know it forever. No big deal.
- B. Jesus and disciples stop for lunch.
1. D's go to town to get food... pretty uncomfortable experience for them.
 2. Jesus rests at Jacob's well / Woman comes to get water / Jesus asks for a drink.
- C. **V. 9** *The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"*
1. Almost angry response... edge to her voice throughout.
 2. Do not associate= not even use same cups.
 3. Jews- only thing worse was than a tax-collector was a Samaritan... only thing lower than a Samaritan was a Samaritan woman.
 4. Men didn't speak to women... especially not a S woman.
 5. Jesus did more to elevate the status of women than any religion ever has.
- D. **V. 10-12** *Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"*
1. Living water- usually fresh bubbling spring water
 2. Woman- Who do you think you are? I'm good, weirdo.
- E. **V. 13-15** *Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."*
1. Jesus- Not talking about what you think I am... this is more... this is better. Talking about full, real life.
 2. Samaritans had been coming to the well day after day getting the same old water that didn't satisfy or last.
 3. Just like religion... doing the same thing over and over but it never fully satisfies, it never lasts.
 4. So many of us have tried to do the same things over and over to satisfy our lives whether religion or otherwise...
 5. We need something new... something that can last..
 6. Eternal life? Woman- Yeah give me that water!
 7. She's starting to understand that maybe he's talking about something other than actual water.
 8. Jesus gets to her true need... the true failure of her religion...
- F. **Go get your husband.**
1. I don't have one... you've had 5 and the one you have now isn't.
 2. **Why she's there at that time**... rejected by others.
 3. What you've been doing hasn't been working.
 4. Same thing over and over with same result. Same hurts and failures.
 5. You ever been there? There right now?
 6. Gets her attention

- G. **V. 19-20** *“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”*
1. Woman- You’re right... what I’ve been doing isn’t working.
 2. You’re from God... so what’s the right way to reach him?
 3. Our way or the Jewish way?... Which religion is right?
 4. Which rituals, motions, hoops, places are correct?
- H. **V. 21-24** *Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”*
1. Religion has served its purpose... but now the real thing is here.
 2. It’s not about locations, rituals, rules, sacrifices.
 3. That leads us to a truth that’s both hard and hopeful...
 4. **We can’t reach God through religion.**
 5. It’s so much better... so much more
 6. Not go through religious motions but truly knowing God and being transformed into new people.
- I. **V. 25** *The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus told her, I AM the Messiah!”*
1. Religion is us trying to reach God.
 2. **God reached us through Jesus.**
 3. He made religion obsolete.
 4. Religion is trying to pay a bill that someone else has already paid.
 5. Following Jesus is accepting what has already been paid for. TRUST
 6. Sin Separates- We can’t do anything to change the past... Jesus came and took the penalty.
 7. There’s nothing left to pay for... just trust (faith) that he paid for it.
 8. Begins transforming you from the inside out.
 9. It’s about WHO you TRUST not WHAT you DO.
 10. Doing is the result of trust.

IV. YOU

- A. **Consider-** The first person Jesus clearly revealed his identity to was this nameless, rejected woman.
1. He sought her out... and used who she was to show her the truth.
 2. Even used the result of her choices to reach her.
 3. What if she wasn’t there at that time to meet him privately?
 4. Seeing it over and over...
 5. **God uses our own experiences to reach us.**
- B. He does the same for each of us.
1. What have you done over and over expecting different outcomes?
 2. How’s that working?
 3. Is he using where you are now to show you he is reaching for you?
- C. Have you discovered the truth that religion never lives up to its promises?
1. Has religion become a lifeless and pointless burden?

2. Did you expect more out of this journey?
3. It's time to stop doing a religion and TRUST and follow Jesus.
4. God has reached down to us.
5. You don't have to do anything to earn his acceptance.
6. He accepts you and invites you to enjoy a relationship with him and a full-life now and forever.

D. Trust

1. Time to give up what hasn't been working.
2. TRUST the one who can give you a new full life.

E. Live

1. Not about getting religious participation points... The worse the experience the better
2. Instead everyday a new chance to see what he is doing and have the courage to be a part of it.
3. Not always easy... but always worth it.
4. A life you can be excited about... **V. 28-30** *The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" So the people came streaming from the village to see him.*

V. WE

- A. What if we experienced freedom to be exactly who we were made to be?
- B. What if we could have every part of our life, every relationship, every job/task renewed and filled with purpose and meaning?
- C. What if we stopped following a lifeless and pointless religion and accepted the life Jesus offers?
- D. QUESTIONS????

E. Religion offers meaningless routines and rituals. Jesus offers a life of true meaning.

Rituals and routines can never fully satisfy our true needs.

Renewal, a relationship with God who loves you and accepts you is the source of true full lasting eternal life.
It's our Choice

Questions

1. What stood out to you most about this week's episode and/or passage (John 4:1-42)? Were any questions or thoughts raised?
2. Take a few minutes and read Hebrews 10:1-14. How do you think this passage relates to this week's episode and your experience with religions rules and rituals?
3. What is something you want to work on/ask about/apply from this week's message? How can your group help with that?