

Series: "TRUTH BE TOLD"

Text: John 4:7-30

Title: "Cups of Sand"

Introduction: GOOD MORNING, BMZ! Glad you are with us as we CONTINUE a SERIES CALLED: "TRUTH BE TOLD"! TRUTH is a TRICKY thing these days. In the Western World (that's us!), we have, over the PAST FEW DECADES, REDEFINED what "TRUTH" is. The idea behind it is: Jesus came into a DARK WORLD back in 1st Century Palestine and said things like, "*I am the LIGHT of the World*" and "*I am the WAY the TRUTH and the LIFE.*"

In JOHN 8, Jesus said if you will REMAIN/DWELL in my teachings (don't run away), even though they are DIFFICULT, eventually we will REALIZE Jesus is teaching TRUTH. And Jesus said ... John 8:31-32 = ³¹ *Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* ¹

The PROBLEM: We don't always like to LIVE out of Truth. We like to live out of what we HOPE, WISH, DESIRE to be TRUE. If we ignore the REAL, OBJECTIVE, DISCOVERABLE TRUTH, then we can keep living life the way we want and not have to be responsible for what Jesus said. Living that way usually takes us to some bad places...

GRAB your MESSAGE NOTES ... *If you haven't already, I invite you to take out your 3-HOLE PUNCHED MESSAGE NOTES and CONNECTION card. You will see that there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Grab a PEN and write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, drop off your CONNECTION CARD and take your MESSAGE NOTES home. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. **For those of you joining on-line, you can go to our website, www.bmzchurch.org ... find the NOTES and follow along ... LET'S PRAY (turn off marked lights during prayer)!***

Background: 720 BC = Assyrian King named Sargon conquered the area of Judea we're talking about today. He exported Jews out of this area and shipped Gentiles in. Over time they intermarried and became a mixed race. They were no longer pure-blood Jews. This was not acceptable to the traditional Jews and this new race became known as Samaritans. 750 years later, they lived in a territory called Samaria (MAP). Samaritans were nothing more than dogs to the Jews / sub-human (very racist).

In our Scripture for today, Jesus leaves Jerusalem and heads NORTH to Galilee to continue MINISTRY. It says in JOHN 4:4 Jesus "HAD" to go through SAMARIA. Not true. Most Jews traveled EAST of the Jordan River and went around Samaria, so they didn't have to deal with those "half-breed dogs". But, Jesus HAD to go through Samaria on THIS TRIP ... Do you know why?

Jesus HAD to go through Samaria, to have an opportunity to invite people to meet his Father. Samaritans? Yes, Samaritans. NOT JUST Samaritans, but today we watch and listen as Jesus meets up with a Samaritan WOMAN ... and this woman had a PAST! We find out she had, not one, not two ... but, FIVE Husbands! This is UNUSUAL in our day; but, it was VERY unusual in 1st Century Israel.

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 8:31-32). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Then Jesus reveals she is no longer married but is living with a man who is NOT her Husband! Not such a big deal in our culture, but HUGE deal in hers ... this is a woman with many issues. She not only had a past, but she had a past everyone knew about ... she lived in a small town! Her life was public knowledge...

Now, we DON'T know WHY she had FIVE HUSBANDS; MAYBE they all DIED. But, in their culture, she would be CONSIDERED CURSED by God because all her husbands had died. Maybe her husbands all LEFT HER for other women. Then, she would have some serious SELF-ESTEEM issues, wouldn't she?

MAYBE the ALL LEFT her because she was UNABLE to bear CHILDREN. That too would be a CURSE of God. She would be WORTHLESS in her culture because a woman's purpose was to BEAR CHILDREN. Men could DIVORCE women if they couldn't have kids, so maybe she went from husband to husband hoping to have kids.

What we do know is this woman is *DAMANGE GOODS!* She is THIRSTY. LIFE, by HER CHOICES or OTHER people's CHOICES or by LIFE and CIRCUMSTANCES, had left her THIRSTY! For her, there must be something MORE to life ... there must be a way to EXPERIENCE LIFE ... BETTER.

Now, John gives us needed DETAILS in this story. One of the details is, this woman went to the well, outside the town of Sychar, to gather water for the day at NOON. Most women went out EARLY in the morning or LATER in the afternoon when it wasn't so hot. Women went TOGETHER for PROTECTION / CONVERSATION (women like to talk). But, this woman who'd been MARRIED 5 times and was now living with a man who probably REFUSED to marry her (women had no status on their own ... she was property now) came to the well at NOON, and she came ALONE!

PICTURE IT; late morning, she leaves town carrying her EMPTY water JUG and she sees a GROUP of MEN coming toward her. As she gets closer she realizes they're Jewish men ... no EYE contact and absolutely NO Conversation. That's weird ... why would Jewish men be in our territory? On to the well she goes...

As she gets closer, she sees a lone figure ... a MAN. Little does she know, she's about to have a ONE-ON-ONE conversation with the SAVIOR of the WORLD! Her LIFE is ABOUT to CHANGE. She's about to have some TRUTH BE TOLD! SOME TRUTH she needs to HEAR. Some Truth about God and GOD'S LOVE. WHY? Because she's THIRSTY! Remember how Jesus said he 'HAD' to go through SAMARIA? Everything about this conversation FEELS like it's an APPOINTMENT Jesus set up!

Now, before I go on, here's MY GUESS: There's more than one person HERE who would, if you were HONEST, say LIFE HAS LEFT YOU THIRSTY. Either by the DECISIONS you've made or the decisions of others in your life, you are feeling DRY / DEHYDRATED right now. My guess is some of you here have TRIED a BUNCH of ways to feel FULFILLMENT in your life. And you've tried them AGAIN and it didn't work, so you tried them AGAIN and it didn't work... So, you tried SOMETHING ELSE, so you could feel FULFILLED and maybe it felt good for a WHILE, but then it went away, and something was STILL MISSING...

I don't know what you believe about God. I don't know how you view God, but, as we watch this scene unfold, you are going to SEE the TRUTH about how God LOVES people, and how God VIEWS those who are THIRSTY; how God cares about and deals with people who are DRY. Brace yourselves though. There is going to be some ABSOLUTE TRUTH ALONG THE WAY YOU might NOT want to HEAR!

Let's get going ... JOHN 4:7-8 = ⁷ *Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink."* ⁸ *He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.* ²

But YOU Are A JEW

We KNOW the Disciples were headed into town to get some food for the trip. The IMPORTANT thing here is what Jesus ASKS ... *"Please give me a drink."* Can you imagine the LOOK on HER FACE? A Jewish man asking a Samaritan woman for a drink... This would NEVER HAPPEN in their society! They wouldn't even TALK, much less have a Jew ASK a Samaritan for a FAVOR!

Here's her REPLY ... JOHN 4:9 = 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?"* ³ Know what JESUS DID?

She's PICTURING it. Jesus would have to use HER WATER JAR ... He would have to TOUCH and DRINK FROM the SAME VESSEL she drank from. His LIPS would TOUCH where her lips touched! You know what Jesus SAID? He said he did NOT FEEL about her like others did. Samaritans had been REJECTED by Jews for generations and she personally had been rejected by everyone she knew...

Jesus = I do NOT think LESS of you BECAUSE you are THIRSTY! Jesus psychology? He went to that well to meet this woman and he was going to have a conversation with her! He USED what was in her HAND and WHERE she was in LIFE to CONNECT with her.

JOHN 4:10 = ¹⁰ *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."* ⁴

Never THIRSTY Again

Jesus replied, *"If you only knew the ... GIFT (not deal, not barter, not 'you owe me') ... God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would GIVE you living water."* Jesus said, ***"You don't owe me. I know the men in your life treated you like you owed them something (children, cheap labor, etc.); but not Me!"***

Now, I think she KNEW something was going on. You can NOT be in the PRESENCE of Jesus and NOT KNOW something is going on! She was ENGAGED in CONVERSATION with a MAN LIKE she'd NEVER BEEN AROUND ...

JOHN 4:11-12 = ¹¹ *"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?"* ¹² *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?"* ⁵ She KNOWS Jesus is DIFFERENT, BUT, she STRUGGLES, like US, differentiating between PHYSICAL and "LIVING" water.

They're sitting by a WELL. Jesus asks for a drink and offers to get her a drink of "LIVING" water... LOGICALLY: *"You don't have a bucket!"* Jesus hasn't told her yet, but He LEADS her ON with the *"If you knew ... who you are speaking to..."* So, she kind of goes off that. *"Besides, do you honestly think you are better than JACOB? You remember Jacob, right? 'The God of Abraham, Isaac and JACOB... That's the God you JEWS believe in and the God we SAMARITANS still believe in, right? You think you are better than JACOB? JACOB used this well. It's GREAT WATER!"*

² Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:7-8), Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:9), Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:10), Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁵ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:11-12), Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

JOHN 4:13-14 = ¹³ *Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴ 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.”* ⁶ Jesus tells her, “*Yeah, MY WATER is better! With this water you come back and get more every day. With MY water you will feel complete and fulfilled forever!*” She knew Jacob’s water had to be refilled every day. She had been to this well a few times...

Jesus says the water he OFFERS brings “**ETERNAL LIFE**” = *definition: you will know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent. This is what you will have if you trust JESUS!* I’m sure she knew there were things JESUS was SAYING that she could NOT UNDERSTAND, but JESUS seemed TRUSTWORTHY and was offering her a gift ... JOHN 4:15 = ¹⁵ “*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.*” ⁷

You’re offering a GIFT; I’ll take it! BUT, she’s still thinking H₂O. She is still NOT UNDERSTANDING what He’s offering. She wants to have it EASY (I won’t have to come here to get water). Many of us think if we FOLLOW Jesus and WORSHIP once a week, Jesus will MAKE our life EASY ... NOT what Jesus was offering!

Then, Jesus does something that seems INSENSITIVE. Like, IF I said it to one of you, YOU would STORM OUT of my office and NOT come back So far, they’ve been talking about the WEATHER and WATER. Jesus knows its time to GO DEEP! Time for “TRUTH be TOLD”! JOHN 4:16 = ¹⁶ “*Go and get your husband,*” Jesus told her. ⁸

Here’s Your THIRST

OUCH! Talk about grabbing the SCAB and ripping it off and throwing SALT in the open wound! That’s what she’s spent YEARS making up EXCUSES for, IGNORING, JUSTIFYING and CONVINCING herself she had reasons for decisions she made. But, Jesus KNOWS, to QUENCH a THIRST, you must first RECOGNIZE your THIRST! Jesus put the DESERT part of her life FRONT and CENTER!

She responds ... JOHN 4:17-18 = ¹⁷ “*I don’t have a husband,*” the woman replied. Jesus said, “*You’re right! You don’t have a husband—¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!*” ⁹ Jesus lays right into her. “*Let’s go ahead and identify your THIRST and where it came from! You’ve had 5 HUSBANDS and the MAN you’re LIVING WITH NOW is NOT EVEN your HUSBAND! HOW’S THAT GOING FOR YOU?!*”

And she pulls the TACTIC we use! IF ANYONE gets CLOSE to where we are VULNERABLE; if anyone gets close to our REAL THIRST in this life, we try this... JOHN 4:19-20 = ¹⁹ “*Sir,*” the woman said, “*you must be a prophet. ²⁰ 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?*” ¹⁰ “*Wow! You must be a prophet to know all that about me! Let’s talk about something else ... let’s talk about Jews and Samaritans and God, okay? You Jews say Jerusalem; we say Mount Gerizim ... let’s DISCUSS.*” Great TACTIC! And WE USE IT, don’t we?

“*Let’s talk about ANYTHING ELSE besides what I feel VULNERABLE ABOUT, because if I had the time, I could TELL YOU what happened with each of those relationships and how it was NOT MY FAULT. I could tell you HOW I JUSTIFY my*

⁶ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:13–14). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁷ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:15). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁸ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:16). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁹ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:17–18). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹⁰ Tyndale House Publishers, (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:19–20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

ACTIONS to myself ... it's NOT the TRUTH, but I'm hoping if I tell myself long enough it will become TRUTH!"

We do it don't we. In RELATIONSHIPS, with our time, in our WORK ... we DEFEND and JUSTIFY and EXPLAIN and try to make it LOOK BETTER than it is!

And then, check this out ... Jesus LETS her GET AWAY with IT! JOHN 4:21-24. He follows her TRAIL and talks about WORSHIP. How the time is coming when we'll all realize it doesn't matter what RACE you are or WHERE you decide to worship; what MATTERS is: you worship with a RIGHT HEART. What matters is: we come back to God to GIVE THANKS and WORSHIP like we recognize the LORDSHIP of Christ!

At this point, she has the WATER she NEEDS, and she does NOT WANT to get back on the MAN SUBJECT! She wants to KEEP it LIGHT, so she throws out her CLOSING STATEMENT for her meeting with this "Jewish prophet" ... JOHN 4:25 = 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."* ¹¹

She LEFT the WATER JAR

Have you ever come up with PHRASES to help you END a CONVERSATION? Like, "I think I HEAR my MOM CALLING"? Well, this is her "End of Discussion" statement: "***When the Messiah comes, he will explain everything to us. Okay, see ya' ... gotta go now! Bye!***" And JESUS LOOKS her in the EYE as she's trying to walk away ... JOHN 4:26 = ²⁶ *Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"* ¹² She can NOT WALK AWAY now! She's STUCK. And she's had enough conversation with Jesus that she has NO MORE QUESTIONS. She is CONVINCED Jesus is telling her the TRUTH!

She and Jesus are so locked in, they DON'T REALIZE the Disciples were BACK ... When they unlock eyes and notice the confused Disciples; she BOLTS! She DROPS her water jar and RUNS back to town! JOHN 4:28-29 = ²⁸ *The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone,* ²⁹ *"Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?"* ¹³ I'm sure they were thinking, "*So what? EVERYONE knows what you did!*"

BUT, there MUST have been SOMETHING in her eyes or in her demeanor that gave it away, because they went ... JOHN 4:30 = ³⁰ *So the people came streaming from the village to see him.* ¹⁴ Do you know what happened BECAUSE Jesus set up an APPOINTMENT with a very THIRSTY Samaritan WOMAN? Let's skip down ... JOHN 4:39 = ³⁹ *Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!"* ¹⁵ They BELIEVED! ***This woman, who was so thirsty and so lost and had so much 'PAST', became the EVANGELIST that helped many SAMARITANS come to Jesus!***

DRINKING Sand

In this LIFE, at SOME AGE, we discover we have a THIRST inside that is NOT about WATER (H₂O)! So, we try to QUENCH that THIRST with EVERYTHING the WORLD tells us will QUENCH IT! BUT, those things are just ***CUPS of SAND!***

RELATIONSHIPS ... "*This one didn't work, I'll try another one, that one didn't work, wait! That guy was a jerk too ... maybe the next one will be the one if I just try harder ... wow! He was worse than that other one. Maybe I should go back...*", etc.

¹¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:25). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:26). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:28-29). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:30). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 4:39). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

SUCCESS ... *“This business deal didn’t go right, so I’ll try again ... okay, now I’m making some money, BUT it’s not enough so I have to do more. Sorry honey, I just have to do one more deal... and then I’ll be able to relax some... Wow! I made money there, but it still isn’t enough...”*, etc.

How many CUPS of SAND do we have to DRINK to QUENCH our Thirst?

If you could name the ONE TIME in your life that was the absolute WORST ... DARKEST moment ... you would probably, if you were honest, have to SAY it had to do with QUENCHING this THIRST inside you! And you would ADMIT what you DID to quench it, did NOT quench it but COMPOUNDED the problems you already had!

And when we are CONFRONTED by anyone CLOSE to us who really CARE about US, we do the SAME thing the WOMAN at the well did: We CHANGE the SUBJECT... we don’t want to be HELD ACCOUNTABLE for what we do.

“So, you moved in with him/her?” *“Yeah, but it’s because it’s too expensive to have our own places and we’re getting married anyway and everyone is doing it and...justify, justify, justify...”* We love listening to our CULTURE and NOT GOD. But, slowly we FIGURE OUT listening to CULTURE NEVER QUENCHES our THIRST!

“So, you’re just going to leave him, huh?” *“Yeah, but we’re trying to still be friends for the kid’s sake and I needed some space and it’s his fault because ... and HE just got to be TOO MUCH WORK ... blame, blame, blame...”*

“So, you’re going to hang out at the bar again tonight?” *“Yeah, my old lady has the kids and they don’t really like me around and I have to have my time with the boys and if I don’t I’m just cranky at home anyway and me and my wife get into a fight because I’m never around and the kids don’t really like me... excuse, excuse, excuse...”*

How MANY CUPS of SAND will we DRINK before we finally go after the LIVING WATER Jesus offers? You and I were CREATED BY God to have a NEED FOR God! Until we come back to God and BELIEVE in JESUS and attempt to live life God’s way, we will ALWAYS BE THIRSTY!

This woman realized she NEEDED SOMETHING MORE than what men offered her. She went for that LIVING WATER that fulfills us when nothing else can.

Will you? At what point, at what EXPENSE to our LIVES, our FAMILIES and our FRIENDS ... WHAT will it TAKE for us to finally DECIDE to LIVE this life God’s way ... no more EXCUSES, no more JUSTIFYING, no more BLAMING other people or SOCIETY or our PARENTS for OUR BEHAVIORS.

Don’t hear me WRONG. I know some of you are VICTIMS. People are MEAN. But ... Please, sense Jesus looking you in the eye and saying, *“I’m the one you keep looking for. I’m right here.”*

Let’s Pray!

Next Steps: *I will memorize John 4:10
I will read John 4 and/or John 8
I will attend the “Truth Be Told” Series over the next few weeks
Sign me up for Believer’s Baptism (May 5th)*

*“Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy).”
Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegrum for outlines and ideas for this worship series.*