

GROUNDED IN GRACE

MISSIONAL LIVING: BECOMING A BROKEN HEALER IN A WOUNDED WORLD PT 4

A Dialogue with a Dehydrated Soul

John 4:11-18

All of us have a story line. There are a cast of characters which have entered into our lives, places in which we have lived and experiences that have formed us into who we are. There are experiences of rejection and of acceptance, patterns of engagement and retreat with joyous times and unfortunately self-built walls of protection. In whatever ways we have engaged in relationships, whether good or bad; these patterns have become engrained in our soul. Many times these patterns have also separated us from living in freedom, living in love and living in honesty of our souls.

And so it was with this woman. She too had broken patterns and bruised relationships. And Jesus gently initiates a conversation to challenge and expose the brokenness within her story and her soul. If we listen closely, maybe we will hear him whisper some calming insights into our souls as well.

Jesus dialogues with her heart

So far we know that she has been living a life of loneliness, separation and being on the outskirts of society. By asking for a drink, Jesus has entered into her story, crossed cultural bounds, gained her trust and now begins to dialogue with her on a heart level. He points out the fact that she needs not only physical water but also spiritual refreshment. She is dehydrated. When you become dehydrated your body becomes weak, not able to function and if you do not receive water you could die. In the same way, this woman is dehydrated in her soul. She is left without connection, without a vision and starving to be satisfied. She recognizes her need and desires to be refreshed, so she asks Jesus to provide this “living water.”

Jesus challenges her heart

Jesus challenges her in one bold statement, “Go call your husband and come back.” In this one statement, he strikes at a pattern in her heart and the corrosive story line she has been living. Because of this one statement, we also see the denial of truth in her reply: “I have no husband.” Instead of the woman becoming open and honest, she denies and hides. She wants change but she does not want to go through the hard honesty that true change requires. She wants something different but without the cost of giving up anything.

How often do we want the same thing? We crave freedom from our struggles but we don't want to be honest with our souls about our motives. How often do we say: "I really want to change but I can't?!" Instead of looking deep within our souls at "why," we rather deny and allow others to pay the cost for our sinful patterns. I know over the last year God has used many people to convict my soul over areas that I am weak. And I often find myself trying again and again to find freedom apart from clinging to grace that has been given to me. I would rather duck and hide than to be truly honest with my soul.

Jesus exposes her life.

Instead of Jesus allowing this woman to hide, he exposes her broken life and her battered heart. In a sense Jesus states, "I want you to be new but I must challenge and seal the leak within your soul. You can not have true life until you acknowledge where you are broken. You can not have true change until you understand why you are broken. You can not have true refreshment until you allow me to become the healer of your soul." It must have been painful for this woman to be exposed. It must have hurt deeply. There must have been tears welling up in her eyes when Jesus stated the hard truth.

Jesus confronts our hearts with the patterns of brokenness that we have lived for many, many years as well. In challenging our hearts, he begins to allow us to experience real pain through real exposure. He exposes our real motives of wanting to be in control. He exposes the way we would rather be competent instead of vulnerable and weak. He exposes our desire to look complete rather than admit that we are weak and needy people. In all these areas, he exposes our pride. Often time's exposure is painful but necessary.

In order to be healers in this world, we must understand where we are broken. (What relationships or situations have hurt us?) In order to love we must know "heart wise" what keeps us from truly loving our neighbors as ourselves? (Is it our pride, our selfish need to look good? Is it our anger, insecurities or emptiness?) In order to make an impact in this world, the gospel needs to make an impact on these dehydrated parts of our soul. (What places do we hide or retreat? Why?) For in being exposed, we can become one who is being healed and become a healer as well.

Where are you dehydrated? Where are you broken? Where do you need to be exposed?

Steve