

Lesson 6 – Jesus Going to Galilee

Text: John 4

Main Characters: God, Jesus, Samaritan woman

Key Passages:

- John 4:25-26 – Jesus revealed to the Samaritan woman that he was, in fact, the Messiah (Christ).
- John 4:39-42 – Many ultimately believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony about him.

Main Storyline:

After being in Judea for some time, Jesus decided to return to Galilee. There appear to be two reasons that Jesus decided that it was time to return. First, the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (again, noting the disciples were actually doing the baptizing). Second, it seems that the imprisonment of John the Baptist caused Jesus to move on as well (Matthew 4:14; Mark 1:14).

Jesus took an unusual route in returning to Galilee by taking the direct path (north, through Samaria). Typically, Jews would cross over the Jordan River (to the east), go north until they had passed Samaria, and finally cross the Jordan River again (to the west) to pass into Galilee. This was because of the hatred that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans (see 2 Kings 17:24-41 and recall the events of Ezra and Nehemiah). This animosity was strong even in Jesus’ day, yet it appears Jesus did not share in that feeling.

At around noon on their journey, Jesus and the disciples came to the city of Sychar in Samaria. Tired, Jesus rested near Jacob’s well while the disciples went to buy food. A Samaritan woman approached the well to draw water, prompting Jesus to ask her to give him a drink from the well. The Samaritan woman was taken aback by the fact that Jesus, a Jew, was asking her for a drink. Jesus told her that if she knew who Jesus was, she would have asked for living water from him. She did not understand that Jesus was speaking spiritually, so she questioned him about how he would do that. Jesus went on to state that if a person drank from the well, they would thirst again. However, if a person drank the water Jesus could give, they would never thirst again.

The Samaritan woman was interested at this point, so she asked him for some of the water. Jesus told her to get her husband and return. She told him that she did not have a husband. Jesus clarified her statement for her, adding that she had had five husbands, and the man she was living with at the moment was not truly her husband. The woman recognized that Jesus was a prophet and asked a question (asking him to clarify whether the Jews or the Samaritans were correct). Jesus then taught the woman briefly about the type of worship that God demands (in spirit and truth). The woman mentioned that the Messiah was coming at some point, and she knew that he would explain everything. Jesus told her, “I, who speak to you, am He.”

At that point, the disciples came back and were surprised to see Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman, though they did not question him. The woman left in a hurry, leaving her bucket behind. She went back to the city and told everyone about Jesus, how he had known about her life, and that they should come meet him, as he might have been the Christ. As a result, many people started coming out to see Jesus.

The disciples tried to get Jesus to eat some food, but Jesus pointed out that he had food that the disciples did not know about. They did not understand, so they began to question if someone else had brought Jesus food. Jesus clarified that his food was to do God’s will, and that the fields were ready for harvesting. Many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus from that time because of what he taught them.

After staying in the city for two days, Jesus went on to Galilee, where he began his great Galilean ministry. He began preaching that the kingdom of God was near, that people should repent and believe the good news (Mark 1:14-15). The Galileans received him gladly, having already seen things he had done during the Passover feast in Jerusalem. Jesus also helped a nobleman believe by miraculously healing his son.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) We cannot let prejudice and stereotypes influence whether or not we tell someone about the gospel.
- 2.) We can never know what effect telling others about Jesus will have until we have done it.
- 3.) Faith in Jesus should not be blind; it should be based on the evidence recorded for us (John 20:30-31).