

Before and After - Lesson One
Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places (John 4:4-42)

Talk about before and after...

4 And he had to pass through Samaria. **5** So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." **8** (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Right off the bat she knows there's something different about this Jewish man asking her for a drink of water.

Why was this so surprising? I. Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. And, two, vs 27, it was surprising that He was speaking to a woman.

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

Living water? That sounds really weird. What in the world is that?

11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." **13** Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Have you ever said something before that wasn't exactly taken like you meant for it to be?

—Lucas and skeletons.

The woman at the well is still thinking about this literally, like Jesus has this magic water He can sell her, like some sort of essential oils rep or something. She's not thinking about this spiritually. Instead, she's thinking, "Ok, you're telling me I won't have to come to the well day after day? I want have to carry my water jar back and forth day after day after day? Tell me more!

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

She's sold. How much for the magic water? Sign me up! Take my money.

And then Jesus says something to her that for the longest time I thought was really random.

Kitty cat dressed up like a scuba diver.

I used to think He was changing the subject entirely here, but watch where He goes next.

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

Wait, what? Why are we all of a sudden discussing her relationship status? I thought we were talking about water. Stay with me.

17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; **18** for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

Why does Jesus take the conversation from wells to relationships?

It's because that empty jar that she was carrying to the well really represented who she was inside. She couldn't find fulfillment. She had been married and divorced **FIVE TIMES**. And since the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, it wouldn't be crazy to assume that failed marriage #6 is on the horizon.

Look carefully at the way Jesus refers to the guy she's with. He says, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband."

If the husband she has now "is not her husband," it makes me wonder "well, whose husband is he?" It sounds like could be an adulterous relationship going on.

Why does Jesus take the conversation from wells to relationships?

Because her relationships were like returning to the well! It would keep her satisfied for a while, until it didn't work out, and so then she'd go back to the well.

She was trying to fill the void in her life with the love of a man. She was looking for love in all the wrong places.

Think about it. She falls in love and marries the man of her dreams. Finally I've found love and fulfillment. Nope. Husband #2: this guy's different! Nope. #3: Third times the charm! Another broken marriage. Husband #4. Nope. Husband #5: Same old story.

And time after time, relationship after relationship, this woman has tried to find fulfillment in the arms of a man.

Yet here she was. Back at the well.

Why does Jesus take the conversation from wells to relationships? Because He wanted to show her that what He had to offer her was better than anything she had experienced.

A well that would never leave her wanting more. A well that would fill her life, not with the love of a person, but with the love of a Savior!

19 *The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.*

I mean, how else would He have known that? Skip down to verse 25.

25 *The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." **26** Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."*

Wow. She heard it straight from His mouth. This was the Messiah! The promised one! The one that the Scriptures had told about! And in sort of a rare moment, Jesus tells her who He is. And in doing so, He reveals His identity to the Samaritans.

27 *Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" **28** So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, **29** "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" **30** They went out of the town and were coming to him.*

Skip down to 39 and we'll finish the story.

39 *Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his word. **42** They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we*

believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

You gotta love verse 28. Did you catch it? What did she do with her water jar? That water jar isn't so important anymore. She's found living water.

She was never the same. Before she met Jesus, she was that empty jar. But after she met Jesus, she was filled with living water.

So what do we learn from this story?

Life Lesson: All Jesus needs is an empty jar.

Until we realize our need for Jesus, we won't think we ever need Jesus.

“I'm good. My jar is full. I've got my friends and family. And that's all I need. You can just have your Jesus and leave me alone.

“My jar is full—I've got my career. And it keeps me really busy. I don't have time for church. I don't need that in my life right now.

“My jar is full. I don't need Jesus. I've got science! Christianity doesn't have any evidence. There's no such thing as sin. It's just a made up morality system.

“My jar is full. I've got this girl/guy in my life (and that was the woman at the well by the way), but I've got this girl in my life and she makes me happy. She understands me and she loves me and she doesn't judge me.

“My jar is full. I've got money. I don't need God. I can take care of myself. I'm a self made man.”

And it's foolish, arrogant, prideful.

You cannot fill a jar until it's been emptied first. Unless we empty ourselves of ourselves we will never see our need for a Savior.

Life Lesson: The Messiah knows everything you've ever done and still wants to have a relationship with you! vs.39

That blew this woman's mind. Jesus knew her reputation. When you get married 5 times you're going to have a reputation. He knew about her 5 failed marriages. And he knew about man #6.

The thing that surprised the woman at the well the most, wasn't that a Jewish man spoke to her or asked her for water. It was that the Messiah Himself knew everything she had ever done, yet still wanted to have a relationship with her.

Jesus loved her anyway. He wanted to have a relationship with her anyway. He offered her living water.

That's a powerful kind of love. And it's good news, because Jesus knows the things I'm struggling with, and He knows my past, and He knows that I don't have my sins under control.

He knows your reputation, the part of you that everybody sees. And He knows your character, the part of you that nobody sees.

And in spite of all of that, He loves you. And He offers you living water.

Life Lesson: Which well are you going to?

The well of relationships? Drugs? Beauty (is fleeting)? Popularity? Athletics? I'm telling you, those things will leave you wanting more, because those wells run dry. But Jesus Christ offers us living water from a well that never runs dry.

Life Lesson: Living water is meant to be shared.

Remember, the Samaritans “weren’t supposed” to be associated with. Yet, this woman that most Jews would’ve ignored became a great evangelist in Samaria, telling others that the Christ had come!

—Who do you know at your school that has a reputation like the woman at the well? How could you speak like Jesus to him/her?

-Pray.

For Cocoons

Before you get to church Wednesday night, I think it would be awesome to ask someone in your cocoon if they would lead a prayer about drinking from the well God offers us.

Verse to emphasize: John 4:13-14 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.”
(This will be a point that I will emphasize in the lesson) Notice the tense of what Jesus says in those verses. It's present tense. "Everyone who drinks." In your experience, what happens to our relationship with Jesus when we stop drinking of the water that He offers us?
(Follow up: How does it leave us feeling?)

Jesus spoke kindly to the woman at the well, but He also spoke truthfully. Imagine that you have a friend that has made repeatedly poor choices when it's come to relationships with the opposite sex. If they came to you for honest advice, how might you speak lovingly and truthfully to them?

Close with that prayer I mentioned. =)

Lesson Two: The Beast (Mark 5)

Play clip from Beauty and the Beast.

In tonight's lesson I couldn't help but think of the Beast. This monster of a guy who lived alone, secluded from society, people deathly afraid of him, and for good reason. He was terrifying. How many of you were afraid of him when you were little? But then we meet Belle. And she's afraid, too, at first, but when she begins to past the exterior and she starts to see who he is inside, that's when the story gets interesting.

Look with me tonight in Mark 5. They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.

Ok, right off the bat we see that Jesus and his disciples have gone from one side of the sea to the other. What's that about?

On the night before, Jesus and the apostles were in a boat getting ready to cross over. It had been a long, demanding day in the life of Christ. There was a terrible storm, one that was so violent that it scared a bunch of burly fisherman so much that they thought they were going to die.

But Jesus is asleep. I guess he's a deep sleeper, which I totally get. And he's out cold. They wake him up and He rebukes the winds and the waves and they are stilled. Silent.

You can imagine that it would've been a long, long night for these guys.

Finally, the boat reaches shore. And now they are in the country of the Gerasenes.

This is a picture of the area on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee believed to be the country of the Gerasenes. It would make

sense. You can see some ancient tombs here. And even a sharp cliff. Those two things will make sense in a moment.

2 And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. **3** He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, **4** for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. **5** Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

Talk about something that would wake you up and freak you out.

As soon as Jesus steps out of the boat, he is greeted by this demon possessed guy.

What do we know about him?

1. (Verse 3) He lived among the tombs.

Maybe he wouldn't have lived in the graveyard if he could've found a roommate. But nobody wanted to be around him.

2. He was treated like a monster.

Look at the rest of verse 3. Apparently this guy had become such a terror to the inhabitants of the area, that they decided to try to do something about it. They tried to tie him up. Tried to control him. To put chains on him. But he was like the Incredible Hulk. He would break the chains that were on him. He overpowered everybody. Don't you know that this monster of a man who lived in the tombs had to be the talk of the town? The urban legend. Imagine the stories they would tell about him. Imagine the dares from the neighborhood kids. "Hey, I dare you to go ding-dong ditch Legion's tomb."

He was an outcast. He was feared. It was safer not to have deal with this guy. He was like an animal. In fact, Luke's account tells us that he hadn't worn clothes in a long time. So that doesn't make his social life any better.

Everybody saw the monster, but look who he really was.

3. (He was) a man in pain.

This part makes you feel for him.

5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

Can you imagine this man's pain? The eerie sounds of him crying out late into the hours of the night. The wounds on his arms and legs.

He didn't choose to be this way. He was being tortured. Abused by the demons. They were ruining his life. He didn't have any friends. He couldn't even think about having a girlfriend. He couldn't find a job. Maybe hanging out with the dead, because they're the only ones who could stand around being around him.

6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him.

7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

Isn't it amazing that the demons had more faith in God and more faith in Jesus than some people walking around on the earth today? Did you catch that in verse 7? They call Him Son of the Most High God. They even say, "I adjure you by God, do not torment me!"

Whoa. Wait, I thought the demons were the tormenters in this story? They are scared to death of Jesus. They know EXACTLY Who He is, and they don't want none.

9 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

A Roman legion was comprised of 3000-6000 soldiers. (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/legion?s=t>) He didn't say, My name is dozen for we are twelve. Or my name is Century for we are 100!

There were 3,000-6,000 demons tormenting this guy.

10 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

11 Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside (remember that cliff I showed you?), 12 and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." 13 So he gave them permission. (Again, look how that reads: The demons asked Jesus for permission. They're powerless against Him and they know it.) And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank (Lone Ranger music) into the sea and drowned in the sea.

And this little piggy went "Wheee wheee wheee all the way...to their death."

Now I'm going to read a little from Luke's account. Same story, different story-teller.

Luke 8

34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, [Remember our series? Before and after? What's different about this man now?] sitting (that's different. Sitting where?) at

the feet of Jesus (that's different), clothed (that's a welcome change), and in his right mind (that's different, too), and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.

Maybe the only thing scarier than a naked, bleeding, demon-possessed guy who howls at the moon and hangs out in the graveyard, is seeing that guy acting normal. Boy, that would mess with your mind, wouldn't it?

I mean, how do you explain *this*?!? **This man that was mastered by demons is now sitting at the feet of the One who mastered the demons!** Jesus. His new Master.

38 *The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away*

Well why would Jesus do that? Why would he turn this guy away? Look what he says. I'm going to go back to Mark's account here because I like the way he puts it.

19b "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

Jesus said "Go home to your friends." Wow. Were there any two words that were more beautiful to this guy than those? Home and friends. He hadn't been home in a long time. He didn't belong at home anymore. His friends watched him become this monster.

Maybe he left home because afraid of what would happen if he didn't —what if he hurt somebody he loved? Or maybe it was his own

friends that tried to bind him with chains to protect him from himself.

Now Jesus was sending this man home with a powerful story. And so that was his message. Go tell your story. Tell people what the Lord had done for you.

So what? What does this story have to do with you and me?

Life Lessons

1. Evangelism begins with your friends right here at home.

Legion didn't have to relocate to a 3rd world country to tell people about Jesus. Instead, Jesus tells him to go where? (Home) To whom? His friends.

Maybe you've thought before: "When I grow up I think I want to be a missionary and do mission work!"

That's awesome! We need that!!! But just know, your friends need that Gospel, too. If you want to do mission work, do it now. You are in the mission field right now! I wish I could go back and live like a missionary in my middle school, in my high school.

2. A simple, powerful way to do evangelism is to tell what the Lord has done for you.

You don't have to know all the answers. You don't have to know 50 Bible verses. You don't need a degree. You don't have to be a certain age. You don't have to be a "preacher" or a youth minister.

Legion had his own version of "Amazing Grace."

I once was lost but now I'm found.

I once was demon-possessed, but now I belong to Jesus.

I once was in pain, but now I'm healed.

I once was in chains, but now I'm set free.

I once was a slave, but now I have freedom through Christ.

I once naked, but now I'm clothed in Christ.

I once lived mindlessly, but now I'm in my right mind.

I once was feared, but now I fear God.

I once was an outcast, but now I'm welcomed.

I once walk amongst the dead, but now I'm alive.

I once was a wanderer but now I've come home.

I once was lost but now I'm found.

You just **tell** your story. Tell your friends what Jesus has done for you.

Number three, and I struggled with how I wanted to word this point. Let me say it in one sentence and then say it a bunch of different ways:

3. Proclaiming the Gospel to every creature and every nation should cause us to meet some interesting people.

Evangelism demands us to step outside of our comfort zones.

Jesus made a difference in someone's life that most people were scared to death of. He was dangerous. It would've been unsafe to go deliver Legion bread on a Monday night visit.

Some people are going to look different than you. Some are going to be from other countries. Some are going to be in enormous pain. Some are going to be outcasts. Some of them are going to be extremely difficult. Some of them are just going to be easier not to have to deal with,

But my question to you is this: how would Jesus treat them? He'd still give them the Gospel. He'd still give them His time and His love and His attention.

Everybody at your school needs Jesus. From the scariest person, to the person that person that seems the most "normal."

4. Maybe I'm not so different from "Legion" after all.

At first we hear story and we think, "This dude is crazy. And there's no way I can relate to him. But maybe this guy isn't as different from you and I as we would think at first.

Maybe you're in pain. Maybe you feel like you've lost your mind spiritually. Legion gives a beautiful picture: we will be in our right mind if we will sit at the feet of Jesus.

Have you wandered away from home, have you surrounded yourself and your home among those that are spiritually dead? It's time to come home.

Lesson Three: The Rich Young Ruler
(Luke 18:18-30)

Switch to Price is Right Slide After I give thumbs up! :)

The Price is Right!:

It's time to play the Price is Right!! Let's get two volunteers up here (guest and friend.)

Here's how we're going to play i'm going to show you a picture and which ever one of you is closer to the price wins!

Here's the first pic:

1. Ferrari 250 GTO Burlinetta
(\$38 Million)
2. Diamond Studded Shoes Worn by Nick Cannon
(\$2 Million)
3. Black Diamond Iphone
(\$15 Million)
4. Most Expensive Chocolate Bar
(\$250)

Alright thank you for participating! Here' the visitors prize!

Isn't absurd how much that stuff cost? It's unbelievable the price some people will pay for things. Far too often people look at the life of a Christian and think "the cost is too much." They might not actually consciously or verbally think or say that, but that's essentially what we believe when we aren't willing to give up something or everything to be a Christian. It's especially hard to give up or sacrifice everything when we have so much. It'd be much easier to convince someone who has very little to give up everything

as opposed to someone who is very wealthy. Tonight we're going to take a BEFORE and AFTER look at a man who was very wealthy. Grab you Bible and turn with me to Luke 18:18-30.

Before:

Let's take a look what this "Rich Young Ruler" is all about BEFORE he approached Jesus. We know three things about him just from his Title alone! We know that he is Rich, that he is Young, and that he is a Ruler. The man is described as a "ruler," which more than likely means a prince or magistrate of some sort, and many people believe that he was probably a leader in a local synagogue. So, let's put this man's description into 21st century words. He's young which means he's in good health and has a long life left to live. He's rich and if you think back to how the Jews viewed wealth, it probably means that he was a devout man and honorable. He's ruler, which means he's successful and has a lot of influence, and many scholars even think he was a leader in a synagogue. So, this "Rich Young Ruler" would be the equivalent to a young devout Christian that was very successful and had a lot of influence on people. He was someone that people really looked up to. We learn all that by just looking at his name. Now let's take a closer look at what we learn from his words, actions, and interaction with Jesus.

Luke 18:18

"A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Ok, what stands out about the way this man addresses Jesus? He addresses Jesus as "Good Teacher", so this goes to show that this man at least seems or acts like he respects Jesus. Also, it more than likely proves that he is a Jew, because a Roman wouldn't have addressed Jesus as "Good." Also, we learn that this man is interested in knowing how he can inherit eternal life! Seems like a pretty good and likable guy to me so far! Let's continue reading in verse 19.

Luke 18:19-21

19 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. **20** You know the commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’” **21** And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.”

So, the man asks what shall I do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus tells him to keep the commandments, and the ruler says that he’s already doing that! So, not only is this man a ruler, young, and rich, but he’s also a keeper of the law. A good and devout man. Before Jesus even meets this man he’s got all these things going for him! Real quick let’s take a time out and look back at the other two Before and After cases that we’ve studied the past two weeks:

Week 1:

Philip talked about the Woman at the Well, who before she met Jesus was a sinner, an adulterer, a fornicator, and an outcast. After she encountered Jesus she walked away a believer and proclaimer of Christ.

Week 2:

Christian talked to us about the woman who washed Jesus’ feet. She was distraught and a sinner. After she encounter Jesus her faith was restored, her sins had been forgiven, and she went in peace.

So, here are two people whose “Before” Jesus picture looks, to be honest, pretty bad, right? However, look at how they turned out in their “After” picture! Their “After” picture shows a proclaimer, sins forgiven, peace, and restoration! If these people walked into Jesus so broken and walked away so unbroken, how incredible will this man’s “After” picture be once he’s encountered Jesus. After all, an encounter with Jesus only makes things better right!? Well let’s continue reading and see the results of this man’s confrontation with Jesus.

Luke 18:22-23

22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “There is still one more thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.” **23** But when the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich.

So, wait a minute. You’re telling me that this man who seemed to have everything going for him both socially, physically, and religiously encountered Jesus the Bread of Life, The Great Physician, The Good Shepherd, and the wisest Counselor, and he walked away sad? How could this be? To be filled with the Bread of Life, you must partake in the Bread of Life, but this man wouldn’t eat. To be healed by the Great Physician you have to follow the treatment, but this man wanted no part in it. To be lead by the Good Shepherd you have to be willing to follow. To be receive help from the Good Counselor you must be willing to take advice, but this man wasn’t. He wasn’t willing to pay the price, because to him, it wasn’t worth it.

What’s it worth to you?

Luke 18:24-

24 Jesus looked at him and said, “It is very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God. **25** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” **26** When the people heard this, they asked, “Then who can be saved?” **27** Jesus answered, “The things impossible for people are possible for God.” **28** Peter said, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” **29** Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, all those who have left houses, wives, brothers, parents, or children for the kingdom of God **30** will get much more in this life. And in the age that is coming, they will have life forever.”

This Rich Young Ruler had fallen in love with the things of this life, and because of it he wasn’t willing to give it up for eternal life. He let his fame, status, and money prevent him from completely giving his all the Jesus.

Do you relate? Do you have so many good things going on for you in your life that it would seem impossible for you to give up? Maybe it's a job that you love, or your career, boyfriend/girlfriend, sports, music, friends, sins, lust, or maybe it's your family. What's it worth to you?

Does your "After" picture look like this Rich Young Ruler?

I would be lying if I said that the cost of being a Christian isn't a lot, because it is a lot. It's literally everything, but I also would be lying if I didn't say it was worth it.

It's worth the cost, but it's up to you to pay the price.

If there's anyone in here tonight that wants to know more about being a Christian, please give me or Philip a text. That's what we're here for and that's what we love to do. I'm going to end with a prayer and then we'll dismiss you guys to cocoons.

Prayer