

Who's In Control?

Theme: Is Jesus in control of your Life?

Object: A remote control

Scripture: Mark 1:23-27 NASB

Do you know what this is? That's right it is a remote control. Some of you have TVs that have a remote control. When you watch TV you can turn the TV on or off, change the channels and even adjust the volume. There are remote controls that can even do more than control a TV; they are called universal remote controls. They can control your TV, DVR, Stereo and they can control movies – making them go fast forward or reverse and pause. If you have a universal remote control you might think you have complete control, but you are not. I have a remote for the power point slides we use on Sunday morning and I am rarely in control.

Our lesson this morning from the Bible is that Jesus has amazing control of everything. Jesus is the true universal remote control of everything that happens in the universe, on earth, in our town, in your home and in you. Let me read you a passage out of the Book of Mark that showed the people **Jesus has total control**. Beginning in chapter one, verse 23, “Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,²⁴ saying, ‘What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!’²⁵ And Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet, and come out of him!’²⁶ Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.²⁷ They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching with authority! He

commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.’ ” (Mark 1:23-27 NASB)

Jesus controls everything: you breathe His air, you eat His food and live in His home. Jesus wants control of you also. If you will let Him into your heart - Jesus will help keep evil thoughts away, He will help you speak kind words and think pure thoughts. Jesus wants to be in control of you because He wants the very best for you. When we sin we hurt ourselves, and Jesus will stop the hurt. The Bible tells us that God has a plan for everyone of our lives – it is a good plan that gives each person hope and a future with Jesus that will never end.

Jesus, Son of God, we come before You this morning and we plead with You that You will take control of our lives for You know what is best for each of us. Amen

Opening Prayer

The story that has unfolded in the Book of John between Jesus and the Samaritan woman reveals truths to who Jesus is – the long awaited Messiah, His complete control of circumstances and His impact on the woman. Remember in verses 25 and 26 Jesus had just revealed Himself to this woman that He is the Messiah – He is God. As Jesus utters, Slide “I who speak to you AM.” Slide²⁷ “At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why do You speak with her?’ They are concerned and somewhat in shock to see Jesus speaking with a woman and a Samaritan. Blank The disciples are concerned – thinking, what is this woman asking Jesus for. But as they walked up they also overheard Him say, “I who speak to you AM.” The disciples knew the meaning of this statement and they knew enough not to interrupt Jesus. As shocked as they are of the situation they would have been even more shocked had they heard the entire conversation and who this woman was. Not only has Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah to a Samaritan woman, but there was also an important lesson for the disciples as well. What they overheard and witnessed showed that although the gospel would be preached to Jews first as we see in Matthew where Jesus is instructing the disciples and preparing to send them out to preach and share the gospel. Jesus says to the disciples in Matthew, Slide “Do not go in *the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” (Matthew 10:6_{NASB}) After the gospel was preached to Israel it had always been God’s plan for the gospel to be taken to the Gentiles. God calls Abram to be the Father of the chosen people of God. In

Genesis, God tells Abram, **Slide** “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; **and so you shall be a blessing;** and **Slide** I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**” (Genesis 12:3-4 NASB) For years as Joyce and I worked in Muslim countries helping to plant churches we referred to the “Top Line” and “Bottom Line” of these verses. Let me explain; in verse 2 the “Top Line” is that God **Slide** “will make you (Abram) a great nation, and I will bless you (him).” The “Bottom Line” of verse two is **why** will God do this? The “Bottom Line” of verse two is the **why** of the “Top Line.” Can any one tell me what the “Bottom Line” of verse two is? Right, it is God will bless Abram in order that Abram **Slide** “shall be a blessing” to others in the name of God. OK, lets look at verse 3, “I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**” What is the “Top Line”? Right, **Slide** “I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.” Why will God do this for Abram, or what is the “Bottom Line” of verse 3? **Slide** All the families of the earth will be blessed through Abram, who becomes Abraham and through his descendants or the nation of Israel; because they are blessed by God, it is so that they will be a blessing to all the people of the world. So from the very beginning it was God’s plan for the gospel to go out from Israel to the rest of the world. **Blank** This is one area where Christianity is different from all other religions. Language, customs and culture are different all over the world, but the gospel of our Lord Jesus works in all cultures without sacrificing the integrity of the gospel. For Jesus’ disciples to hear that the gospel will be given to non-Jews, like this Samaritan woman, was most likely difficult for them to hear – for Jews thought they were the center of the world and had God all to themselves. God taught this lesson of going out beyond Israel to the prophets before, but how soon people forget. Remember the story of Jonah? He

hated the Assyrians so much that he disobeyed God and traveled the opposite direction away from Nineveh. God said the Assyrians would hear and repent and it would be done even if God had to send a whale to swallow up Jonah to make him understand he would be obedient. Jesus, as God in the flesh, sovereignly controlled this conversation with the woman and the timing of the disciples' return. As God, Jesus not only controlled this situation, but He controls every detail of the entire universe – just as He had with Jonah. History past and future is under the total control of God and was written before the foundation of the world. Everything, absolutely every circumstance, is acted upon as God has ordained and follows His timetable.

Back to Jesus, the woman and the disciples gathered around the well. The woman does not wait to see who the disciples are or what they might say. We read in verse 28, [“So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city.”](#) I love the way John writes. He does not just say the woman went to the city, but he puts in details, like she left her waterpot. Here she came for physical water and was tired and thirsty and now leaves with spiritual living water and her physical thirst is no longer important. At the same time Jesus had walked for hours and arrived at the well tired and thirsty and still has not had a drink. This is not a problem because Jesus always placed the spiritual before the physical.

This is the first record in the scriptures of a person being “born again” spiritually. She had come to the well - a woman who inherited the sin of Adam and had in fact continued the cycle of sin. At the well she meets the Second Adam, Jesus, who fills her with a passion for the spiritual instead of the physical. We know she was “born again” because of the changes that took place in her. As the result of Jesus she believes and because she believes she becomes a witness of Jesus. Let me continue to read from our story in John chapter four beginning with verse 28, [“So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, ‘Come, see a man who](#)

told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?' They went out of the city, and were coming to Him." Look back to the words of our Lord in verse 14, "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him **will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.**"

These words are now evident in the woman's behavior. The good news of the gospel of salvation through Jesus is welling up and flowing out of her as she tells the people of the village about Jesus. The first thing a doctor or nurse wants to hear at the delivery of a baby is the cry. For the cry is evidence that air has entered the lungs and the baby is breathing. When a person is born again spiritually the first thing we should hear is the cry of new life, the cry proclaiming the gospel of salvation, for this is the evidence that the new life of God has entered them. The Bible speaks in a number of places for the need of public confession of faith in Jesus Christ. It is true that salvation is not dependent upon an outward confession. Public confession is not required or demanded by the scriptures in order to be accepted into the family of God, but we publicly confess Jesus as Lord because we are born again and living water is welling up in our souls and overflowing out of us for we are now a child of God. But, it is equally true that confession of our faith is not optional. Some believers think they can remain secret, but nowhere in the Word of God is this considered a possibility. What does the Word of God say, what does our Lord Jesus say, **Slide** "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33 NASB) It is at this point we find the greatest contrast between Nicodemus found in chapter 3 and this woman at the well here in chapter 4. **Blank** Nicodemus was interested in spiritual things; he studied the scriptures and sought out Jesus in the night. The woman was uneducated, there is no evidence she studied the scriptures or was

interested in spiritual things. She was focused on living her life as it had unfolded through bad decisions and sin, and trying to survive. Jesus sought her out. Nicodemus asked Jesus the first question and Jesus spoke to the woman first. Nicodemus asked Jesus how a person might be saved and the woman tried to avoid Jesus' questions and statements that were exposing her sin. Nicodemus appears the more spiritual and sought Jesus, the woman was not spiritual and tried to avoid the spiritual. Yet the evidence shows Nicodemus was not born again and the woman was. It appears that Nicodemus may have believed later, but not the night he sought Jesus.

The encounter between the woman and Jesus is so very different. She is born again and the first thing she does is go to the village that had scorned her and tells them the Messiah is here. She is for the first time concerned with the salvation of others. Notice too that she goes to the men. Men had authority over their wives and daughters – so she goes to those with authority. She does not demand that they accept her statement that Jesus is the Christ, but she asked them, [“This is not the Christ, is it?”](#) Her passion is so strong that the men were persuaded to go and investigate who Jesus is. Let me ask you, each of you, “Is this what happened when Jesus saved you?” I remember I was very unlike this woman. I excited and thankful Jesus saved me, but at the same time I was overcome with guilt of my past life. I did not go and tell everyone about Jesus without worry about my past and if they would accept what I said, for they knew of my past. I was more like Nicodemus in that I was worried about what people would think. It took time for this to change. You see I did not leave the water jug that represented the physical behind and embrace fully the spiritual. Let me ask you have you left the water jug of your old desires and interests behind in order to bear a passionate witness to the Lord Jesus?

What gave this woman concern for those who in her village, the people who had

shunned her? The answer is gratitude; gratitude for what Jesus had done for her. But gratitude alone would have kept her at the well with Jesus. Beyond the gratitude she now had what Jesus had given her; she was also shown and given love by Jesus. It is this love that motives her to go to the village to share the gospel – the love for others and their need for salvation. It was Jesus’ divine love that now permeates her heart. Does Jesus’ love permeate every fiber of your body? Do you have a burning love for the lost as Jesus does and modeled? What is left in your water jar that is preventing you from sharing the gospel of good news, the gospel of salvation with those around you who do not know Jesus?

Our study passage continues saying, “Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’” So while the woman is no longer concerned with physical thirst and hunger the disciples are still focused on the physical even though they overheard Jesus speaking spiritually to the woman and observing the woman’s change in countenance and excited departure. Jesus wants the disciples to understand and to move from the physical to the spiritual so He replies, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” But instead of catching onto what Jesus was trying to get them to see they stayed locked into the physical. The apostle John tells us how they thought after Jesus’ statement in verse 33, “So the disciples were saying to one another, ‘No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?’” The disciples are wondering why Jesus is not hungry for the food they purchased in nearby Sychar. This is similar to Jesus telling people in John chapter 6 that there is physical bread and the bread of heaven. Jesus tells them, **Slide** “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.” (John 6:36 NASB) Jesus takes the time to teach the disciples a truth concerning Him and salvation. It is these very disciples that will be responsible for taking the gospel to the lost after Jesus is resurrected. It is this truth that Moses understood saying to

the people in the wilderness, **Slide** “He (God) humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that **Slide** man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.” (Deuteronomy 8:3 NASB) In fact these are the words Jesus used to answer Satan during His temptation in the wilderness. Jesus speaks the words of Deuteronomy in Matthew 4:4 saying to Satan, **Slide** “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’ ” The spiritual food Jesus gave to the woman and He is now feeding to His disciples is of far more value to Him than the physical food they brought back from the village. **Blank**

Jesus now speaks again pushing the disciples to see the spiritual saying in verse 34, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.” In Jesus’ journey to Samaria and meeting with the woman at the well He was performing His Father’s will. There is great sustenance and satisfaction for Jesus in the spiritual, much more than in any food the disciples have now brought. This should be true in our lives as well. As Jesus was always focused on His mission given to Him by the Father, we too, my brothers and sisters, should be focused on the mission that has been given to us by Jesus. As Jesus’ mission was to do the Father’s will and He walked in perfect intimacy with the Father and the Father’s will, so too, Jesus calls us to walk in perfect intimacy of His will and this is His mission for us. Jesus was faithful in His mission until His cry of triumph from the cross, **Slide** “It is finished.” (John 19:30 NASB) Jesus’ cry marked the completion of His mission physically on earth. Will we, my beloved, be able to cry at the time of our death, “It is finished” marking the faithful completion of the mission our Lord has given us. **Blank** You see everyone’s salvation has a purpose and is part of God’s plan – you were saved for a reason. First, to bring God the honor and glory He alone deserves

by your redeemed life. Secondly, through your salvation you are to fulfill His mission for your life. How sad a life, even though saved, that fails in these two areas. I hope to say to my Lord's face upon my death and resurrection to eternal life, I desire to repeat the very words Jesus said to God the Father, **Slide** "I glorified You (my God) on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." (John 17:4 NASB) For me this is the "Bread of Life", this is what I want to live for. This is what the life of Dennis Park's stood for. At his funeral last Monday his children gave testimony of this. For Dennis it was not status in this world, but his love of Christ and his mission to tell people about Christ and love them with the love Christ had given him – just like the woman at the well. It was not material and earthly possessions he coveted – what Dennis sought was people – he spent his money and time for the sake of people to know Christ. I believe Saturday night Dennis stood before Christ, his Lord and Savior and heard, **Slide** "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Dennis has entered "into the joy of his master." (Matthew 25:21 NASB) God's work is before you – pursue it with passion and honor. **Slide** Christ is in control, seek Him in every circumstance and He will give you impact on the world.