

“Honour releases life, and life and freedom are the goals”

John 4:1-30; 39-42

Jesus reason's to culturally dishonour the woman

1. She is a woman
2. She is of a different ethnic origin
3. She has been through several husbands

How does Jesus honour the woman?

1. He talks to her
2. He asks her for a drink – not very British to ask for help!
3. He communicates care and compassion – unsurprisingly He is full of grace and truth
4. Although he knows her background and history, He honours her through respect by asking her to go and get her husband. He gives her the opportunity to own her 'mess.' He doesn't judge her for her previous five husbands and divorces, or that she is now living with a man.
5. He isn't worried about what His friends will think when they see Him talking to her

What is the fruit of honour?

1. She is seriously interested in knowing Jesus and coming to faith
2. She becomes a messenger and conveyor of good news
3. She moves from outcast to person of influence after an encounter with Jesus
4. She points the way to Jesus because of the nature of her encounter with Him
5. She is fruitful and many come to faith in Jesus, and even more later

Honour releases life and freedom!

Honour is good news for marginalised and minority people groups. Traditionally we may think more about honour when important people are around us but not so with Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Jesus sees a person made in the image of God and foresees her prophetic destiny, effectively calling it out.

This Samaritan woman was shocked and the heart and message of the kingdom and the way we 'deliver it' can, will, should be shocking and get people's attention. Behind the honour is a vital message. A message delivered without compromise but the context is everything. Jesus has built a massive, honourable bridge into this woman's life. We must build bridges, constructed with honour and respect – whatever the background and life choices of the person or people we are speaking with.

Honour is the context for the gifts of the spirit. Jesus delivers a hugely significant word of knowledge about this woman's background and life. Everyone in her village knew her reputation and history and so this word of knowledge gets not only her attention but that of many in her village. Firstly the village respond on the basis of her story but then they look for Jesus themselves – and find Him.

Honour releases life and freedom, life and freedom are the goals!

Questions

1. Can you remember a time when you were shown honour? What did it feel like and what was your response to this occasion?
2. Try showing (verbalising) honour to someone. Think about their positive qualities and affirm them. If it's someone you don't know very well, look for Holy Spirit revealed insights and express them with care and sensitivity.
3. What does it look like to be the recipient of grace and truth? How might you be left feeling?
4. Do you have prejudices in respect of certain types of people or people of different ethnicity? How can you counter these by showing honour to these people and what might it look like for you in practice?