

Had To or Chose To?

*"Now he had to go through Samaria."
John 4:4 (NIV)*

The area sandwiched between the southern Jewish province of Judea and the northern one of Galilee was the country of Samaria. No self-respecting Jew of Jesus' time would travel straight north to get from one province to the other. They would go east over the river Jordan and then go north and thus avoid any encounters with the despised Samaritans.

So, when our text today said that Jesus had to go through Samaria that was not technically correct. Yet the text tells us that Jesus did go through Samaria. There must have been a strong reason for John to tell us Jesus had to go through that country. What we learn from John 4:1-42 is that Jesus did not make the ethnic distinctions others did in His time. We learn that He is the Saviour for everyone and anyone.

Another remarkable feature of this story in John is that the Samaritan woman Jesus spoke to had been married five times and was then living with a man to whom she was not married. So the woman was breaking the Mosaic law that forbade adultery. She had so much against her and yet Jesus still had to see her and talk with her.

Never think that because you have little education, have led a sinful lifestyle, or are poor that you are not regarded by Jesus as important. You mean as much to Him as anyone. His death and resurrection was accomplished especially for the poor, and the sinners (Mark 12:37; Matthew 9:13).

In fact, Jesus hinted that being wealthy caused many people to turn away from His message because the wealthy trusted their riches rather than God (Matthew

19:23-25).

If you do not regard yourself as worthy of coming to Jesus, or you believe you have little to offer Him, come just as you are. It is so obvious in the Gospels that the only requirement for anyone to come to Jesus was that the individual recognize their need of Him.

Come to Jesus just as you are — rich, poor, sinner — come and ask from Him what you do not deserve. He loves to be with social outcasts and make them into saints. Come, and come today.

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