

Sermon Series: Life In His Name
Sermon Title: The Touch of Life
Text: John 4:43-54

Discussion Questions:

Read aloud the definitions of these six words—

Coincidence: A remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent causal connection.

Luck: Success or failure apparently brought by chance rather than through one's own actions.

Happenstance: A circumstance that is due to chance.

Serendipity: The occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way.

Fate: That which is inevitably predetermined; destiny.

Sovereignty: Supreme power or authority.

- What are the similarities in these words?
- What are the differences?
- Can there be both sovereignty and luck at the same time?
- Can multiple people observe the very same event and view it through completely different lenses?

Examination:

- Read **John 4:39-42**
 - We learned last Sunday that the evangelist in this account is none other than the Samaritan woman - who has buried or been divorced by five different men - who is now living with a man who is not her husband - who is going to the well for water at high noon...a time that almost certainly indicated that she was trying to avoid anyone else since rarely would someone go for water in the extreme heat of the day. This is a woman that, by all accounts, probably wouldn't even show her face around town. And yet, here she is excitedly telling everyone that she meets about this Jewish man that she met at the well. What do you think it was about what she shared (or how she shared it) that caused such a positive response from the towns-people?
 - What do you think she meant by saying, "He told me everything I ever did"?
 - Based on what you know about Jews and Samaritans (think present-day Jews and Palestinians), how unusual was it for the towns-people to urge Jesus to stay with them?
 - What kind of reception did Jesus receive (v. 41)?
 - How much credibility did the people give to the woman's testimony?
 - What do you think the Samaritan's meant by what they said in v. 42?

- Read **John 4:43-45**.
 - On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the success of Jesus' ministry in Samaria?
 - Does this help make sense of why Jesus "had to" go through Samaria on His way to Galilee (v. 4)?
 - Why do you think Jesus only stayed 2 days - given how well things were going?
 - John gives us this parenthesis in verse 44, as Jesus is now making His way back to where he grew up in Galilee. He tells the disciples that "a prophet has no honor in his own country." Why do you think Jesus brought this to their attention?
 - Why is this saying true? Why don't prophets have honor in their hometowns?
 - And yet - in verse 45 - when Jesus arrived in Galilee...the locals welcomed Him. John tells us the reason why in the second sentence of verse 45. What was the reason?
 - What do you think it meant that Jesus was welcomed? Was this a similar response to the one He received in Samaria?

- Read **John 4:46-54**.
 - Why do you think John wanted us to know that Jesus was once again back in Cana (a very small and out-of-the-way village) - the very same place He performed His first sign (water into wine)?
 - What does it say about Jesus - seeing that He cared about the lack of wine at a wedding, as well as the ill health of a royal official's son?
 - We know that John is very intentional about the accounts he very, very selectively chooses to include in his Gospel. What do you make of the fact that in these three consecutive stories, Jesus is responding to a Jewish leader of very high standing, a Samaritan woman of very low standing, and a (I believe Gentile) royal government official? What is John wanting us to see in this?
 - It's a twenty-mile walk from Capernaum to Cana. This father "hears" that Jesus is once again back in the region. When he finds Jesus - he begs Him to "come and heal his son." Take a few minutes to "dissect" this man's faith. What was going on inside his head? Do you think he had certain beliefs about Jesus before he heard that Jesus was within walking distance? When he heard that Jesus was relatively close by, how did this "trigger" his faith? Did desperation play a role (his son was near death)?
 - Jesus gives a seemingly harsh reply (even a rebuke!) in verse 48. Why do you think Jesus rebukes him? How impressed does Jesus seem to be with "signs-and-wonders faith"?
 - How does "signs-and-wonders faith" compare with the second-soil faith we see in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:5-6)?
 - We began this lesson by thinking about the difference between a coincidence - and sovereignty. When this man learns that his son got better at the exact time that Jesus commanded it - could he still have chalked it up to serendipity? How often do we attribute "unusual happenings" to coincidence - failing to credit God?

Application:

Be extra aware of your own heart - and how much faith you have in God. When you think of Jesus - does your heart leap with faith? When prayers are answered - do you give thanks to God?