

The People Path

Hebrews 6

19We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, **20** where Jesus has gone as a **forerunner** on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 12:2

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the **author** and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Both these scriptures have one thing in common. When Jesus went somewhere first, when he blazed a trail, it was for the sake and benefit of humanity. He went as a forerunner so *people* could have hope and so *people* could be made right with God.

Today, let's call that the The People Path

I want to look at three things Jesus did when it comes to people where it seems the brush has begun to grow over the trail again. That's what happens, isn't it? That once a path is cleared, it has to be maintained. If it's not, it begins to become narrow and then eventually it becomes hard to find all together. And I want to give you a clear visual today that will hopefully help us remember these three acts that paved the way for the people path.

1. He saw people and made space for them- He set the table

4 So Jesus left the Judean countryside and went back to Galilee.

4-6 To get there, he had to pass through Samaria. He came into Sychar, a Samaritan village that bordered the field Jacob had given his son Joseph. Jacob's well was still there. Jesus, worn out by the trip, sat down at the well. It was noon.

7-8 A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, "Would you give me a drink of water?" (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.)

9 The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, "How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking *me* for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water."

11-12 The woman said, "Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this 'living water'? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?"

13-14 Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."

15 The woman said, "Sir, give me this water so I won't ever get thirsty, won't ever have to come back to this well again!"

16 He said, “Go call your husband and then come back.”

17-18 “I have no husband,” she said.

“That’s nicely put: ‘I have no husband.’ You’ve had five husbands, and the man you’re living with now isn’t even your husband. You spoke the truth there, sure enough.”

19-20 “Oh, so you’re a prophet! Well, tell me this: Our ancestors worshiped God at this mountain, but you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place for worship, right?”

21-23 “Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you Samaritans will worship the Father neither here at this mountain nor there in Jerusalem. You worship guessing in the dark; we Jews worship in the clear light of day. God’s way of salvation is made available through the Jews. But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you’re called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter.

23-24 “It’s who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That’s the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly *themselves* before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration.”

25 The woman said, “I don’t know about that. I do know that the Messiah is coming. When he arrives, we’ll get the whole story.”

26 “I am he,” said Jesus. “You don’t have to wait any longer or look any further.”

27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked. They couldn’t believe he was talking with that kind of a woman. No one said what they were all thinking, but their faces showed it.

John 4:1-30 MSG

There’s no one who Jesus didn’t purchase a seat for. You’ve never met a person who Jesus wouldn’t gladly pull up a chair for. We have to get past viewing ANYONE as “that kind of person.” The woman knew that Jesus knew her inside and out but still he chose to reveal himself to her.

2. He spent time with people- He sat at the table

“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.””

Matthew 9:9-13 ESV

Why does your teacher sit with tax collectors and sinners? What was Jesus’ answer about why he did it? Because healing happens in the presence of Jesus, and as he sat and built relationship, the sick found a doctor. There’s always a debate about what tables we sit at as Christians. Is it right to get saved and still sit at the same tables we sat at before we met Jesus or Is it right to abandon those tables and surround ourselves only with strong believers?

Disclaimer because there’s always someone looking for permission to go back to what Jesus rescued them from. A doctor at the table is no good if their immune system is shot and they’ve got the flu.

But what if we stopped asking the wrong question about what table is best for us and started asking “what is my place at the table?”

3. He counted others as more significant than himself- He served the table

“It was now just before the Passover Feast, and Jesus knew that His hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the very end. The evening meal was underway, and the devil had already put into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had delivered all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was returning to God. So He got up from the supper, laid aside His outer garments, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel that was around Him. He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, “Lord, are You going to wash my feet?” Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “Never shall You wash my feet!” Peter told Him. Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me.” “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!” Jesus told him, “Whoever has already bathed needs only to wash his feet, and he will be completely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” For He knew who would betray Him. That is why He said, “Not all of you are clean.” When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His outer garments, He reclined with them again and asked, “Do you know what I have done for you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, because I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example so that you should do as I have done for you. Truly, truly, I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”p

John 13:1-17 BSB

Jesus knew that the Father had delivered all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was returning to God. So He got up from the supper, laid aside His outer garments, and wrapped a towel around His waist.

What enabled Jesus to put on the garb of a servant? He knew he was here to do something different. He WAS the most important person in the room yet his full understanding of his purpose allowed him to stoop the lowest.

We are obsessed with being the most important people in the room.

Flying

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Philippians 2:1-8 ESV