



Just Walk Across the Room
“The Single Greatest Gift”

(Biblical Text: John 4:1-15)

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***Sometimes making a difference in a person’s
life is as simple as a walk across the room.***

The question really is, *“Are you willing to take that walk?”* Even though it sounds really easy, a lot of us have a hard time doing so. In fact, it may be one of the hardest things we do as a part of being a follower of Jesus.

I never really thought of just how hard that is for us until one of our leaders, Ric Brockmeier, was talking with our Church Council about Vision for Old Mission. Our vision follows the acronym **ACTS**. *(Activate Spiritual Growth, Creatively Use our Campus, Take the Church to people and Share God’s Story.)*

Ric shared how hard the last thing is – how hard it is for almost all of us to share our faith. He talked about how we don’t want to be pushy or offend anyone, or come off as a “religious nut” knocking on doors for Jesus.

But what if it wasn’t “Knocking on doors for Jesus?”

Think of the length of an average room where people gather. It’s about twenty feet - that’s the distance across an office, a coffee shop, or a Church lobby. Sometimes more or less, but twenty feet is what? Ten steps? Maybe less if you take big strides, but lets say about ten steps.

If an average person walks 10,000 steps in a day – ten steps would be only 1/1000th of your daily average. But even if you are like me, and your average is just half that, consider that just 1/500th of one day’s worth of steps could make all the difference in the world to another human being.

Over the next four weeks, I want us to explore how something as simple as walking across a room can actually change someone’s life - maybe even yours.

***A few years ago, Bill Hybels’ wrote a little book by the same name -
Just Walk Across the Room - that I thought might be perfect for us.***

I want to tell you why. First, it is relationally based. Bill talks about sharing our faith by paying attention to the opportunities in our everyday lives.

Second, the subject matter is something we all are familiar with – work, family, sports, the things we do each day. And third, the stories he tells are real life stories about ordinary people like you and me. Over and over again, Bill shares how God can use our ordinary “real life” conversations to open the doors to people discovering that they have a place in God’s story.

If we are willing, we don’t know when and we don’t know how, but amazing things happen when we reaching out toward others with something as simple as a walk across the room. If – if we are willing to talk the first step.

***Sometimes, that’s all it takes. It was that way
for the woman whose story is told in John 4.***

If you want to follow along, you can find the passage in John 4, beginning with verse 4 - that’s page ___ if you are using the Bible there in front of you.

And, here’s something that’s really important to understand even if you’ve read or heard this passage before. In Jesus’ day, Samaritans and Jews didn’t like each other. They were bitter toward each other even though they both came from the original twelve tribes of Israel. But it was worse than Chiefs and Broncos fans squaring off over football, or the instate rivalry between KU and Kansas State, or the old border war between Kansas and Missouri.

It was like the racial tensions in St. Louis and elsewhere, or the nastiness of our divided politics, or the bitter religious debate over gay marriage – or the things that cause people to de-friend one another on Facebook. Like that.

But as you heard in this passage from John, Jesus crossed the gap between the two groups and began a dialogue with a Samaritan woman he ran into at [*Jacob’s Well*](#). With that as background, look at verses four through six.

Now Jesus had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

Jesus bridges the gap with a request, “Will you give me a drink?”

John 4:7-8 makes it clear that the context is a simple everyday one. Jesus and his disciples stopped for lunch. How many of you will have lunch somewhere today? How about other days this week? **See what I mean?**

Sometimes it’s as simple as that. The rest of the passage makes it clear that Jesus’ simple request opened up a door that eventually led to faith.

While it won't always work out that way, it began by Jesus reaching out to talk with her when others wouldn't give her the time of day. We never know where it might lead, if we would just *"walk across the room."*

***We have to be willing to leave our "Circle of Comfort,"
and enter into what Bill Hybels calls "The Zone of the Unknown."***

That's the zone that makes us fearful of failure. But God often calls us into this zone. Let's be honest, it's happened for all of us. We have felt that "nudge" in which God was asking us to meet a neighbor or introduce ourselves to someone new at Church or school, or a ball game, or ask a co-worker to lunch. The question is - ***do we respond?***

Two quick real life stories will, I hope help make my point. The first one happened to me. Ron was a guy in one of my Churches years ago. He described himself as *"not very religious."* Ron was every inch a survivor of Woodstock. He came to Church but never joined. No one really knew that until there was a little "dust up" in the Church and someone pointed out publically that Ron wasn't even a member. Not a great evangelism strategy especially for Ron! I felt like *someone* ought to go talk to Ron. So, over a Corona or two in his kitchen, I just asked him. And Ron told me his story. And after a few more such conversations, Ron was baptized. Great day!

The other story, I had nothing to do with, except just listen to it. Ken was a skater-punk back in the days of purple spiked-up hair – I wish I could show you a picture! Ken told me his story years after that, about how he rode his skateboard on the long sidewalks at a Church near his house, including on Sunday mornings. One Sunday, a guy in a black suit and tie stopped him and asked his name. And then one Sunday he said, *"Hey Kenny, want to come in, and sit with me?"* Ken says his name was Al. Ken is now a youth minister in Iowa, all because Al walked about ten steps, and asked a weird kid his name.

**Being a part of someone's journey of faith is the single greatest gift I know.
*There is no guarantee it will work out that way – but you never know.***

I want to challenge you today to open yourself up to the movement of God's Spirit. You might start by writing down a list of five people you don't know well, but could pray for everyday for the next week, and see where God leads you next. Maybe you'll be the one who walks across the room – and it will lead someone to discover their place in God's story. It could happen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.