

Come and See  
John 4:5-42  
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In 2002 I was an Associate Pastor at a large church in New Jersey. One of my responsibilities was to lead the youth group. We did a mix of Bible studies, mission and things just for fun. One night the plan was to go out and see the new Spider Man movie on the night it opened. Well this was a problem for the Middle Schoolers because the movie was rated PG-13, and their parents would not allow them to go see such a movie. So the Senior High youth went to see Spider Man with a couple of the leaders and myself and another leader were left at the theater with the Middle School youth. So we decided to go see My Big Fat Greek Wedding because it was PG.

Well I was blown away by this movie. It was real, hilarious, tender and awkward. I loved it so much that I saw it 7 times in the theater, and I made all my friends and family see it. Those near and far. I told them about the movie, and told them to go see it for themselves. I basically said, "Come and See."

The woman of Samaria who came to the well at noon to draw water told everyone she knew to come and see after her encounter with Jesus. Jesus was tired out by his journey and sat down by the well. The woman came, and he began to talk with her.

First he asked her for water. She was shocked that a Jewish man was even speaking to her, a Samaritan woman. The two groups had never gotten along. "In 128 BC John Hyrcanus, high priest and ruler of the Jews, destroyed the Samaritan capital city of Shechem and completely destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount

Gerazim”(working preacher). Imagine your worst enemy and take that to a scale of communities who met often in violence against one another. This was an unexpected encounter for sure with a Jewish man.

The woman who has been named by the Greek Orthodox Church Photini probably came at noon to get water in order to be by herself. We do not know how she ended up having 5 husbands plus another relationship with a man. We do know that women were not allowed to initiate divorce. She clearly had gone through a lot of chaos and loss. Jesus offered her complete acceptance and water, living water, that would keep her satisfied. Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah to her, and he made it clear that God is to be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth.

The woman says, “I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one speaking to you.” Scholars see this as the first “I am” statement. The name of God given to Moses at the burning bush “I am” is used here. “I am” the one speaking to you. Jesus is “I am.”

“Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”

Come and see! These 3 words are not spoken without passion. I wasn’t neutral when I told people about My Big Fat Greek Wedding. I was passionate about it; I spoke from my own experience, my own relationship with the movie.

How do we tell others about our faith or our encounters with Jesus? Do we tell them that they should come to church because it's the right thing to do? Or do we say, “WOW, I have had an encounter with

Jesus. He blew me away with his love and acceptance of me. I will never be the same again. I am changed.”

We don't like to use the word “evangelism” much anymore, but all it really means is sharing life-giving information about a relationship that means everything to us. What does the church mean to you? What does God mean to you? Would you invite others to “Come and See?”

So I was not the only one to fall in love with the movie My Big Fat Greek Wedding. In fact it became so popular through word of mouth that it grossed more than \$350 million worldwide, and became the highest grossing romantic comedy of all time.

The woman at the well was not alone in her amazement at Jesus. Soon all those who followed her advice and came and saw him, told others and were amazed themselves.

Word travels fast when it is the result of authentic joy from a relationship or experience.