

Part 4, Paper 156, The Sojourn...and Sidon, Midwayer Commission

📅 Sat, Oct 05, 2024 8:48PM ⌚ 14:49

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus' travels, Phoenicia journey, Norana's persistence, Gentile receptiveness, spiritual growth, faith and humor, Sidon teachings, spiritual transformation, inner foundation, forgiveness and love, spiritual detours, divine guidance, spiritual boldness, unexpected truths, spiritual journey

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

- J

John 00:00

Ever get the feeling like sometimes that the best stories, the most fascinating ones, are kind of hidden, tucked away, like in those footnotes of history, nobody ever reads,
- S

Sarah 00:10

right? You mean, like they almost got lost along the way,
- J

John 00:13

exactly. And get ready, because today we're diving into one of those stories. It's about a lesser known chapter in Jesus's life. Okay,
- S

Sarah 00:22

I'm intrigued. What's the story? Well, it
- J

John 00:24

involves his travels through Phoenicia, and it's detailed in the Urantia Book in paper 156
- S

Sarah 00:29

Ah, that's a fascinating section, and it doesn't get talked about as much as some of the other

...and, that's a fascinating section, and it doesn't get talked about as much as some of the other parts of his life, does it? That's putting

J John 00:35

it mildly, the traditional accounts that kind of, you know, gloss over this whole

S Sarah 00:39

period, almost like it didn't quite fit the narrative, you know exactly,

J John 00:43

and that's what makes this deep dive so interesting. So we're talking about the year 29 ad June, to be precise, things back in Galilee, they were getting intense. There was growing opposition to Jesus, and let's be real, he and his followers. They needed a break, makes sense. Who wouldn't? Right? So they slip away to Phoenicia, which is modern day Lebanon, looking for a little refuge, a little breathing room.

S Sarah 01:08

And it's there among the Gentiles, far from everything familiar, the landscapes, the traditions of Galilee, that something interesting happens, Jesus's teachings, they land in a surprisingly receptive way, like way more so than back in Galilee. It makes you wonder, why wouldn't this period be, you know, highlighted more in later accounts. It's

J John 01:26

almost like they wanted to downplay it, like you said, it didn't fit the narrative.

S Sarah 01:29

It's a head scratcher for sure. Now, before

J John 01:31

we get too far ahead, we have to talk about norana. Oh yeah,

S Sarah 01:34

what a character. She knew what she wanted and was not afraid to go after it.



John 01:39

Talk about a woman who understood persistence, she really puts



Sarah 01:43

on a clinic. You could say about approaching faith with, I don't know, a mix of audacity and am I allowed to say humor? Oh,



John 01:51

absolutely. Her story is hilarious in parts. Okay, So picture this norana, this Cyro Phoenician woman hears Jesus is in the area her daughter is suffering from, well, at the time, it was described as a terrible nervous disorder.



Sarah 02:04

And back then, they didn't really have the same understanding of these things like we do now. Did they?



John 02:09

No, not at all. Back then, people often attributed these kinds of things to demonic possession. Wow. Okay, so what does she do? So she's determined to get Jesus' help for her daughter, right? But, and this is a big but Jesus is exhausted. He's been teaching and healing for months. It's been intense.



02:26

Understandably, he



John 02:26

probably just wants a nap, right? And he specifically asked for some downtime. No interruptions. Make



Sarah 02:32

sense? Take a break, recharge. But norena, she's got other plans.



...

J John 02:36

Oh yeah, she's not one to take no for an answer, so she shows up at the house where Jesus is staying, and get this, she's turned away by Jesus Himself. Well, not directly at first. It's the disciples who turn her away. But she doesn't give up. She tries again and again. Wow, persistent. She even ends up having this like witty banter back and forth with Simon zelotis.

S Sarah 02:59

No way. Simon's a low. That's amazing. What they talk about. Well,

J John 03:02

Simon, he's trying to explain, in his own way, why Jesus wouldn't heal a Gentiles daughter, you know, because of the whole cultural divide back then. And he says something like, it's not right to take food meant for the children and give it to the dogs. Oh, boy, here we go, right. But norana, quick as a whip, she shoots back this line, yes, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Oh,

S Sarah 03:25

she got him there. She didn't back down. I

J John 03:28

love it. She's basically saying, hey, I'll

S Sarah 03:30

take whatever I can get. She's claiming her place at the table, but with a sense of humor. That must have been something to witness.

J John 03:36

Oh, I bet. And here's where it gets really interesting. Jesus, he hears all of this going on, and instead of being offended, you know, by her positions or whatever, he's moved, moved by her faith, by her unwavering belief, and let's be real, by her quick wit. So he comes out and check this. He doesn't even need to light a hand on her daughter. He just looks at naranja and says, oh, woman, great. Is your faith? Your daughter has been made whole. Wow, just like that. Yep. And guess what? The Urantia Book says that her daughter was healed from that very hour.

S Sarah 04:09

Amazing. Now, you could listen to the story and think, oh, it's about persistence, or it's about

faith. And, yeah, those are there. But I feel like there's something deeper here. Oh,

J John 04:20

I totally agree. So what do you think the deeper message is? What is it about NARAS approach that gets through to Jesus when others couldn't?

S Sarah 04:27

It's like her humor, her refusal to be put in a box, you know, to be intimidated by religious hierarchy or whatever. It's like. She breaks through those barriers that so often keep us, you know, separate from the Divine.

J John 04:39

I see what you mean. She's not letting those social conventions stop her, right? She

S Sarah 04:43

embodies this spiritual boldness, this like playful irreverence, that, honestly, I think, even surprised Jesus. It's

J John 04:50

like she met him on equal footing, challenged him, and in doing so, she revealed the depth of her faith Exactly.

S Sarah 04:57

And you know, this encounter. There. It speaks to a theme that keeps popping up throughout Jesus's time in Phoenicia, this openness of the Gentiles to his message, because they

J John 05:09

didn't grow up with all the same baggage, the expectations, the fears, right? They're hearing it with fresh ear, and that makes all the difference. We've got this really interesting thing going on, right? The Gentiles, they're like breath of fresh air, and they seem way more open to Jesus's message than some of the folks back home. It's

S Sarah 05:26

like all that tradition, all those expectations, they can be kind of a barrier sometimes, you know,

totally and

J John 05:32

this whole dynamic, it really comes to a head as Jesus and his crew continue north along the Tunisian coast, they end up in this bustling port city, Sidon. Sidon,

S Sarah 05:41

that was a major hub back in the day, wasn't it, full of traders and merchants from all over? Oh, yeah,

J John 05:49

a real melting pot of cultures and ideas. And, you know, it's interesting, because this geographical shift, it kind of mirrors a spiritual shift, too. How so well it's like by venturing out of Galilee, out of their comfort zone. Jesus is also venturing beyond the conventional religious thinking of the time. He's expanding the map, so to speak, exactly, pushing those boundaries, showing that his message, it's not confined to just one group of people. It's universal, exactly. And there's this one teaching it really highlights this idea. It happens while they're crossing a bridge inside a bridge? Yeah, maybe one of the first bridges some of those disciples had ever seen, who knows. But anyway, Jesus uses it as a metaphor. He says, I'm paraphrasing here, this world is just a bridge you're passing through. Don't get too comfy and try to build a house on it. Whoa. That's pretty powerful imagery, right? He's basically saying, Don't get so caught up in the material world, in the here and now that you forget about the bigger journey. Don't

S Sarah 06:46

lose sight of what really matters.

J John 06:48

Yes, and this whole idea of like spiritual progression, of not clinging to old ways of thinking, it's central to what he's teaching in Sidon,

S Sarah 06:57

makes sense. So what's the vibe like in Sidon? Are people receptive to this message. Oh, yeah. He

J John 07:01

ends up staying with this woman, justa, and her mother, Bernice. And every morning he

teaches, and people, they eat it up. The orionship book actually says that many souls found new life and purpose through these teachings.

S

Sarah 07:14

Wow, they were really hitting home, which, again, makes you wonder why this whole period is barely mentioned in the

J

John 07:18

gospels, right? You'd think it would be front page news, but it's almost like, I don't know the success of his ministry among the Gentiles. It didn't fit the narrative that developed later. Fascinating.

S

Sarah 07:28

So what else did he talk about during this time in Sidon? Well,

J

John 07:33

he spends a lot of time unpacking the whole idea of spiritual growth. You know how it's not a one and done deal, but this ongoing process, it's a journey, not a destination, exactly. And he stresses the importance of developing a conscience, but not just any conscience, one that's not just about avoiding guilt, but one that's overflowing with love.

S

Sarah 07:54

There's that emphasis on love, again, it really is the key to everything for him, isn't it? It's

J

John 07:58

the foundation. And you know, he connects this idea of love to forgiveness like they're inseparable. Well, he tells his disciples, if you want to experience eternal life, you gotta stop holding on to anger and resentment. You gotta forgive everyone, just like I've forgiven you. Easier said than done. Oh, tell me about it. Forgiveness is one of those things that sounds so simple in theory, but can be so darn hard to put into practice, especially when we've been hurt Absolutely.

S

Sarah 08:27

And you know, I think that's why Jesus often used parables to get his point across.



John 08:31

It's like he met people where they were at using stories and metaphors to make these big, sometimes difficult spiritual concepts relatable totally.



Sarah 08:41

And speaking of parables, there's one that really stands out from this period you talk about the parable of the carpenter. That's the one. It's just so perfect. You know the fact that Jesus, a carpenter himself, would use this analogy to talk about building a strong inner foundation. It's brilliant. It's such



John 08:57

a vivid image, right? Choosing good solid lumber, building on a firm foundation, so that when the storms come and they will, you'll be able to withstand them exactly. And



Sarah 09:07

he's not just talking about physical buildings here. He's talking about our inner lives, our character.



John 09:13

It's like he's saying that if we want to grow spiritually, we need to build on a solid foundation, intellectually, morally, the whole package,



Sarah 09:21

because if our foundation is shaky, if our values are all over the place, how can we expect to weather the storms of doubt, temptation, all those curveballs life throws at us, and we'll crumble Exactly. And this brings us to another fascinating conversation that takes place in Sidon Nathaniel, one of the disciples. He asks Jesus about that line in the Lord's Prayer lead us not into temptation.



John 09:43

It's like, on the one hand, we're taught that God wouldn't do that right, put us in harm's way, like that, but then we're praying it anyway. It's



Sarah 09:50

a tough one a real head scratcher for sure And honestly Jesus's response to Nathaniel it's

a tough one, a real head scratcher, for sure. And honestly, Jesus's response to Nathaniel, it's actually really insightful. What

J John 09:57
does he say? Well, he

S Sarah 09:58
kind of flips the script. Tempt. He says that temptation, it doesn't come from outside of us, like some kind of test from God. It comes from within.

J John 10:06
So it's not about God tempting us, it's about us. What tempting ourselves? Exactly.

S Sarah 10:10
It's about our own desires, our own impulses, those things we wrestle with internally.

J John 10:16
So we're not just victims here at the mercy of these urges,

S Sarah 10:19
not at all. We have agency. We have a choice in how we respond. We can either give in to those desires, let them control us, or we can choose a different path, easier said than done. Sometimes, Oh, absolutely. But that's where the real work comes in, right, recognizing those desires, those temptations, and then consciously choosing to direct our energy towards something better. So

J John 10:41
it's not about suppressing everything we feel more like transforming it exactly.

S Sarah 10:45
It's about taking that energy, that desire, and channeling it into something life, giving something that aligns with our values.



John 10:52

So instead of getting bogged down in this constant willpower battle, we can focus on cultivating those qualities that naturally lead us away from temptation,



Sarah 11:02

love, compassion, forgiveness, those are the antidotes, powerful



John 11:05

stuff. So it sounds like this whole idea of transformation, of spiritual growth. It's a major theme during this time in Phoenicia.



Sarah 11:12

It's the common thread that ties it all together. And you know, Jesus, He encourages his disciples to stay the course, not to get discouraged by setbacks. Because,



John 11:20

let's face it, setbacks happen to all of us, all part of



Sarah 11:25

the journey, right? But he reminds them our true worth it goes way beyond those temporary bumps in the road. It's about keeping that bigger picture in mind Exactly. And he also stresses the importance of taking care of ourselves. You know, finding those moments of peace and quiet, even if it's the chaos of life,



John 11:42

because that's how we recharge, how we connect with that inner wisdom, right? Exactly.



Sarah 11:46

It's in those quiet moments that we can hear that still, small voice, that guidance from within.



John 11:53

It's like tuning out all the noise of the world, so we can tune into something deeper. And

- S** Sarah 11:57
as we grow in that awareness, as we cultivate those qualities of love, compassion, forgiveness, we naturally start to embody them. We become living examples Exactly, and that's how we make a real difference in the world, not by preaching at people, but by living it out, letting our actions speak louder than words,
- J** John 12:14
so powerful. Okay, so what happens next? They're in Phoenicia. They're teaching things are going well, do they just stay there indefinitely? Well,
- S** Sarah 12:23
they know they can't stay in Phoenicia forever. It's time to head back to Galilee,
- J** John 12:27
but it sounds like things were pretty intense back there last time they were.
- S** Sarah 12:30
So before they head back, Jesus, he makes an interesting decision. What's that? He decides to split the group up. The 12 evangelists go one way, the 12 Apostles go another. Interesting. Why
- J** John 12:43
do you think he did that? Well, remember
- S** Sarah 12:45
all that opposition they faced this way. They can cover more ground, reach more people without drawing too much attention to themselves. It's like a strategic maneuver, exactly. And when they get back to Galilee, well, it seems like things had calmed down
- J** John 12:58
while they were gone. People had moved on, forgotten their anger. It seems that
- S** Sarah 13:02

way. Of course, little did they know Jesus would be back, and this time in Phoenicia, this time away, teaching, resting, recharging, it only strengthened his

J

John 13:12

resolve, setting the stage for that final year of his mission, a year that would change

S

Sarah 13:16

everything. And you know, it really makes you think, what if those early gospel writers, what if they hadn't glossed over this period in

J

John 13:25

Phoenicia? What if they'd given it more attention? How might it have changed our

S

Sarah 13:29

understanding of Jesus, of his message, his mission, to see how readily it was accepted by those outside the Jewish tradition? It really makes you think it does. And you know, maybe that's the biggest takeaway from this whole deep dive, sometimes the most profound truths, they're found in the most unexpected places,

J

John 13:47

the footnotes, so to speak, exactly.

S

Sarah 13:48

And when we open ourselves up to those different perspectives, we challenge our own assumptions, and that's when real growth happens.

J

John 13:55

So as we wrap up here, I want to ask you, what are you taking away from this deep dive? What will you carry with you? Well,

S

Sarah 14:02

I think for me, it's that reminder that spiritual growth, it's not a linear path. It's messy, it's unpredictable, and sometimes the detours, those unexpected turns, those are the most important part of the journey.

important part of the journey.

J John 14:14

So well said, it's like Nora Anna. Remember her? Yeah. Don't be afraid to approach your faith with a little humor, a little boldness, challenge the status quo, and when you stumble because you will, don't get discouraged,

S Sarah 14:26

forgive yourself, learn from it and keep moving forward. This world is

J John 14:30

just a bridge, but that doesn't mean we can't dance a little along the way. Right?

S Sarah 14:34

Exactly? Embrace the journey. My friend beautifully said and

J John 14:38

to our listeners, thank you for joining us on this deep dive into the often overlooked travels and teachings of Jesus and Phoenicia until next time, keep seeking, keep exploring and keep those hearts open.