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## WISDOM, A WOMAN, AND A WELL (John 4:1-15)

*From the second a human is conceived, the quest begins for satisfaction. We need things to survive – nourishment in a mother’s womb, then later oxygen, food, water, vitamins, shelter and warmth among many others. If we receive these things, we stand a better chance of growing to be healthy adults, who will continue to need these things and more.*

*Our needs aren’t just physical, but emotional, social and spiritual as well. If you think about it, we spend just about every minute of our existence satisfying ourselves. Following Jesus into His next encounter in the book of John, we see Him focusing on this human need to satisfy ourselves and teaching one of the most important lessons we can ever hear. Who was the pupil in this one-student school? A simple lady going through her daily routine – like you and me right now.*

### THE MANDATE OF JESUS

*John 4:1-6 — Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. **And He had to pass through Samaria.** So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob’s well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.*

To avoid trouble with Jewish leaders (and possibly John the Baptists’ disciples), Jesus left the area He was ministering in. In Palestine in Jesus’ day, one traveled south to north to get from Judea to Galilee. There were several options to make this trip, but Jesus chose to take the direct route which went right through Samaria.

Imagine a very ugly, contentious cultural and social conflict and you can picture how Jews and Samaritans felt about each other. Many Jews would take the extra time to avoid going through Samaria by using a road on

the Mediterranean coast, but Jesus didn’t in this case. It says here He “had to pass through Samaria”. Was it to save time and walking distance? Or could it be that He knew He had a mandate – an important appointment with a certain woman?

### THE MERCY OF JESUS

*John 4:7-9— There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (**For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.**)*

One of the beautiful things about this book of John is that Christ blows away so many expectations. We see it here just as we saw it with Nathanael in chapter one or with Nicodemus in chapter three. He cannot be boxed in. Just when people think they get it and are asking the right questions, He surprises them.

He surprises this woman from Samaria simply by speaking to her. No Jew would engage a Samaritan in a conversation. Historically, there had been centuries of ethnic and religious tension between these two groups. The Samaritan race came to be when some Jews had intermarried with non-Jews during the Assyrian exile. When the Jewish nation returned to their land, deep division and hatred grew between the two groups.

To further confuse this woman, consider the gender norms of the day, since a man would not speak to a woman in the town’s public square. Add to that, we have a Jewish teacher speaking to this woman of low moral reputation (as we will see in our next study) which would have been forbidden.

Again, Jesus obliterates expectations with His mercy. He enters into this woman's world and displays His care of the individual. He has done the same for us by revealing Himself through this written word and we can be certain that Jesus, the Son of God, will not cast anyone aside, no matter what their past baggage might be.

## THE METHOD OF JESUS

*John 4:10-12— Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?"*

Jesus, knowing the human desire for true satisfaction, starts where the Samaritan woman is. For a woman coming to a well, what better object lesson than water? Just as He diagnosed Nicodemus' deepest need (to be born again), Jesus confronts the Samaritan woman with her deepest need, even though she didn't know it yet. And she is just as confused as Nicodemus was.

Her only idea of water was what was in the well. How could this Jewish man have access to water? Jesus' method of catching interest shows that He appeals to people's greatest need. We seek satisfaction. We have needs that must be met. He now has her attention and the main point of His lesson is ready to be shared.

## THE MESSAGE OF JESUS

*John 4:13-15— Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."*

What a patient teacher Jesus is. Even after speaking in spiritual terms, the woman still is thinking in earthly terms. Jesus addressed her highest need, yet she still

couldn't see it. We should take care not to miss what is really being said here.

Water is often used through the Scriptures to picture spiritual satisfaction and fulfillment. The parallel is clearly drawn between what we need to sustain us physically with what we need to sustain us spiritually.

*Psalm 107:9 - For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.*

*Matthew 5:6 - Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

The use of water also illustrates wrong choices people make to satisfy their desires apart from God. A good example was written by Jeremiah:

*Jeremiah 2:13 - For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

We must have water for physical life. Without it, we die in a few days. God is the "fountain of living waters" who provides satisfaction far beyond what our bodies require. When we turn from Him, forsaking Him and His ways, we deny the Source of true and ultimate satisfaction. When we go our own way, depending on ourselves or the pleasures and philosophies of the world around us, we have chosen a path that eventually does not fully satisfy. By choosing our way (hewing out broken cisterns that can hold no water), we forfeit true joy, fulfillment and happiness. We settle for a cheap substitute – and we do it all the time.

You and I have many voices calling to us promising to satisfy our desires. But in our text today, we have been pointed toward Jesus who claims to offer complete fulfillment, not the temporary satisfaction of all other competing voices.

## BIBLE STUDY

Legislators and Staff (During Session)  
Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.  
Room 153, House Office Building