

Living Water

John 4:1-15

Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ² (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), ³ He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. ⁴ And He had to pass through Samaria. ⁵ So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; ⁶ 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.

⁷ There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹ 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.) ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? ¹² 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?" ¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ 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."

As John continues to present Jesus as the Christ, he relates a remarkable story that has become a favorite for good reason. In this story of the Samaritan woman we see the love of God as He is revealed not just as a Jewish Messiah, but as the Savior of the world. We see how He pursues an outcast to make known to her the gift of eternal life.

Previously Nicodemus had come to Him at night and Jesus had shared how he "must be born again." This is the second specific encounter with an individual in this gospel that Jesus shares how to have eternal life.

The woman and Nicodemus have almost nothing in common:

Nicodemus	Samaritan Woman
man	woman
wealthy	poor
moral	immoral
Jew	Samaritan
teacher	unlearned
social status (ruling class)	social outcast
sought Jesus	Jesus sought her
named	unnamed
comes at night	comes in the middle of the day
birth metaphor	water metaphor
needed God	needed God
John 3:16	

As our story begins Jesus switches locations when His popularity rises and poses a risk with the Pharisees. He is on a divine timetable and confrontation with them must not come before the right time. He travels from Judea in the south to Galilee in the north. In between is an area known as Samaria. There were ways to avoid this area – as many Jews did because of their intense dislike of the Samaritans – but the text says Jesus "had to pass through Samaria." The reason Jesus had to travel that way was to keep a divine appointment.

John links this meeting with some significant history. The well is identified as Jacob's well. He had dug it and purchased the land, which he gave to his son Joseph. Joseph's body (at his request, showing his faith in God's promise) was carried out of Egypt and buried there. The well is still in use today.

Jesus had spent the morning on a hike from Judea to this well. It was roughly a 20 mile hike, and they had accomplished it by noon (6th hour). Jesus had sent the disciples into town to get food leaving Him alone and worn out from the trip to meet the woman coming to the well.

The woman is introduced simply as a "woman of Samaria;" her name is never given. She has come to draw water from the well. She was alone at midday, both of which would be unusual and likely speak to the fact that she is an outcast. Her multiple adulteries (revealed later in the story) stigmatized her in the village.

Jesus asked her for a drink and as her response indicates this was unexpected and against social custom. He was a Jew, she a Samaritan; He was a man and a rabbi, she an immoral woman. He should not have been speaking to her! The animosity between the Jews and Samaritans was long

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and deep. To say they “had no dealings” was an understatement.

The Samaritans were particularly looked down on by the Jews. They were a mixed race and their religion was mixed as well. The Samaritans were partly descended from the Jews. When the nation split in two after the reign of King Solomon the king of the northern part established a new capital city – Samaria. Over time the region around it became known as Samaria as well.

The Assyrians eventually destroyed the northern kingdom and hauled off most of the Jews. They moved in other pagan people to take their place. The mixing of these peoples became known as Samaritans and were despised by the Jews for not maintaining their purity. They mixed pagan religious elements with the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the Bible) so their religion was impure to the Jews as well.

After the Southern Kingdom was taken captive by the Babylonians and allowed to return, they began the process of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans being part Jewish wanted to help but were denied. Because of this they started to oppose the rebuilding.

Eventually around 400 BC they built their own rival temple at Mt. Garizin (not far from this well). This temple was destroyed adding to the animosity between the Jews and Samaritans. In Jesus’ day the animosity was alive and well.

None of this mattered to Jesus. He ignored the racial tension, He ignored the social constraints. He even ignored her moral character. Jesus initiated a conversation with her. He condescended. He was God. She had no means to approach Him. Without Him speaking to her no conversation would have taken place.

Ignoring her question as to why He would even speak to her Jesus takes the conversation in a spiritual direction. He offers her living water (v 10). Living water becomes synonymous with salvation. The offer of salvation is open to anyone. Racial or social background does not matter. Jesus came to save the *world* – John 3:16.

She is a little incredulous at His statement. Who did He think He was? Did He think He was greater than the Patriarch Jacob? He did not have anything to draw water with and had been forced to ask a Samaritan woman to give Him a drink – how could He get water!?

Jesus takes the conversation another step farther. The water in the well had been flowing for centuries and was

a source of life, but no matter how many times you came there for water you would be thirsty again. The water that He was offering would “become a well of water springing up to eternal life!”

Just like Nicodemus there was something she needed. Nicodemus had come looking for Jesus, but Jesus had come looking for her. She was not even aware she had a need, but Jesus went out of His way to make sure she knew. She had come to the well for water for the day. Jesus offered her so much more – Living Water – Eternal Life!

There are several lessons here: Salvation is for all. Jesus came to save the world not judge it. Racial, social, or even moral baggage does not matter. Jesus came to save the lost, and without Him we are all lost.

Like Jesus those who know Him have the responsibility to tell others. Whether they know they are in need or not, we are to make the offer of salvation known to them. Race, social status, or religious affiliation should not deter us from making the offer of salvation known to them. Sometimes that means engaging in a conversation that we normally would not. We must be willing to go against social norms to make the gospel known to those that need it. There is only one source of Living Water and that is Jesus.

There is more to this story that we will look at next week. Jesus is not done with the woman at the well.



Bible Studies:

**7:00 am Tuesdays – Bible study –
Governor’s Large Conference Room – Open
to All: Legislators, Constitutional Officers,
Lobbyists, Staff**

**8:00 pm Tuesdays – Legislator Only Bible
Study – Perkins**

