

# *The Journey... Walk as Jesus Walked*

Part 13 – A Woman, a Well, and a Worshipper!

John 4:5-24 – March 21, 2010

*Jesus was bold. He was unconventional. He was amazing! Jesus goes from dealing with a religious Pharisee (Nicodemus) to an irreligious Samaritan prostitute (whose name isn't even mentioned)! He, once again, shows us how to meet people where they are at. What is the progression of faith seen in the Samaritan woman?*

- I. The Setting:** Where is this place and why is it important? (v. 4-8)
- A. *Samaria*: The land originally was settled by Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Since their mother was Egyptian, there was a built-in animosity towards them. Plus, the favoritism shown them by Jacob was evidenced by Joseph receiving the 2 choice plots of land compared to the other brothers only receiving 1 plot.
  - B. *Sychar and Jacob's well*
    1. This is near where Jacob had deeded the land to Joseph. It is on the shoulder of Mt. Ebal looking across the valley to the other Mt. Gerazim.
    2. *Jacob's well (Gen. 48:22)*: The well where Jesus converses could be the very place where Joseph is buried after being transported from Egypt, lugged around the desert and finally buried here according to Joshua 24:32.
  - C. *6<sup>th</sup> Hour*:
    1. If John used the Jewish reckoning of time, calculated from sunrise at about 6:00 a.m., the time was about noon. If John used Roman time, which started reckoning from 12:00 p.m., the time would be about 6:00 p.m. Either could work. There were many other springs in the area, where the other woman could be drawing water.

2. It is 12 noon. No one came at that time. It was too hot! We will find that she was an outcast, and that was the only time she could avoid contact with the other women.
3. **His disciples went to buy food** (v. 8). They could buy food from the Samaritans, but wouldn't eat with them! If they were really strict, they wouldn't have had anything to do with food "touched" by them!

## II. **The Situation:** Why was there racial prejudice?

- A. The Jews hated the Samaritans because they were "half breeds or half caste"... half-Jew and half-Gentile. Jeroboam had moved north in 957 BC. It gets more tense in 722 BC when Assyria invades and takes over the land (II Kings 17:5-8). Those tribes already despised because of their Egyptian ancestry, now begin to intermarry with the Assyrians. The final straw for most Jews was their refusal to help rebuild the temple in 588 BC and in fact build their own up in the north on Mt. Gerazim. **Illustration: The Hatfield's and McCoy's:**
- B. The Samaritans curiously only used only the Pentateuch and not the rest of the OT books. In fact they set up their own religion that used a falsified version of the Pentateuch. Their worship was "contaminated" by their dabbling in idolatry. When the religious leaders wanted to ridicule Jesus, they even accused Him of being a Samaritan (**John 8:48**). They used it as a racial slur!
- C. **Application: If anyone ever felt like 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens, these guys do. Yet Jesus uses this woman as the hero of the story!**

## III. **The Stages of Belief:** How did the woman's attitude change as she came to faith? (v. 9-24)

- A. **Sarcasm and Bewilderment:** v. 9-10
  1. *You being a Jew ask me for a drink?* She thought she was superior or that very least she thought Jesus might come across with an attitude, so she preempts it.

2. It is as if she saying: “Come on get a clue! You know we should have nothing to do with each other.”
  - I am woman... You’re a man
  - I am a Samaritan... You’re a Jew
  - I am a social outcast... You are a Rabbi
  - I don’t like you... He shows love to her.
  
3. His answer:
  - He disarms her by piquing her curiosity. (v. 10)
  - In v. 10, Jesus tells her that she is ignorant of two things: the gift of God (salvation) and the identity of the Savior in her presence. Jesus speaks of living water – water of life – but she takes this to mean literal water. **How typical of the sinner, confusing the physical and the spiritual!** Nicodemus thought Christ spoke of physical birth (3:4), and even the disciples thought He spoke of literal food later on (4:31–34). **Jesus points out to her that the things of the world do not satisfy, and men without Christ will always “thirst again.”** Wiersbe, W. W. (1997). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (220–221). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.
  - **Living water:** The OT is the background for this term, which has important metaphorical significance. In **Jer. 2:13**, Yahweh decries the disobedient Jews for rejecting Him, the "fountain of living waters." The OT prophets looked forward to a time when "living waters shall flow from Jerusalem" (**Zech. 14:8; Ezek. 47:9**). MacArthur Study Bible

**B. Curious and Questioning** (v. 11-14)

1. *Where do you get that water?* He’s got her. She is interested, though she is confused. She is asking from a physical/literal standpoint, while He is already moved to the spiritual. Her response is somewhat shallow, but at least she is curious. She thinks living refers to a stream vs.

the well water that needs a long rope with a bucket attached to it! His previous answer sets her up to ask more.

2. *Nothing to draw with*: Jews and Samaritans ordinarily, would never share the same drinking cup! They were unclean!
3. *Not greater than Jacob*: She shows that she isn't quite tracking, not sure of what to make of all this, but definitely questioning what He was all about.
4. *Sir*: literally means "lord". Much more respectful. She repeats it again in v. 15, 19.
5. His Answer: (v. 13-14)
  - What water does for your parched mouth physically, my "living water" will do for your parched soul spiritually.
  - Do you recognize when you are spiritually dry in your own life?

C. **Seeking and Desiring** (v. 15-18)

1. She wants physical water for 2 reasons:
  - She wants her thirst quenched permanently
  - It is practical: I don't want to come here by myself, and alone to do this work. It may have been a bit of hike for her too!
  - His offer represents freedom, but not in the way she expected.
2. His answer: (v. 16-18)
  - The **command** (4:16) "Go and get your husband."
  - The **concealment** (4:17a) "I don't have a husband."

She lies to Him and He catches her in her lie. The truth comes out. She is a prostitute and is currently living with someone who isn't her husband.

- The **correction** (4:17b–18) Jesus says He knows she has had five husbands and is now living with a man to whom she is not married. His intimate knowledge of her morally depraved life not only indicated His supernatural ability, but also focused on her spiritual condition. Jesus is confronting cohabitation. You can't live together!
- God doesn't want cheap conversions! She has to deal with her sin! **Prov. 28:13**. She needed to own her sin and recognize who Jesus was.

D. **Amazement and embarrassment**: *Sir I perceive you are prophet* (v. 19-20)

1. The **cleverness** (v. 19)

- Attempting to change the subject, she says, “You must be a prophet.”
- Though she is confronted with her sin, she doesn't respond with angry defensiveness, but may be initially trying to deflect or distract Jesus to get off the hot seat.

2. The **confusion** (v. 20)

- She asks, “Why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim?”
- Both Jews and Samaritans recognized that God had commanded their forefathers to identify a special place for worshiping Him (Deut. 12:5). The Jews, recognizing the entire Hebrew canon, chose Jerusalem (2 Sam. 7:5–13; 2 Chr. 6:6). The Samaritans, recognizing only the Pentateuch, noted that the first place Abraham built an altar to God was at Shechem (Gen. 12:6, 7), which was overlooked by Mt. Gerizim, where the Israelites had shouted the blessings promised by God before they entered the Promised Land (Deut.

11:29, 30). As a result, they chose Mt. Gerizim for the place of their temple. MacArthur Study Bible

- Let's change the subject: *Our fathers worshipped on this mountain.* Illustration: Like asking what denomination is your church after you tell someone that Jesus is God!
- When we are embarrassed we often try to deflect questions, by changing the subject! Or we try to argue religion.
- She also wants to know where she has to go to make it right. Which mountain? Do I have to go to your mountain to get right with God?

3. The **clarification** (v. 21-24)

- *In spirit and truth:* The word "spirit" does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the human spirit. Jesus' point here is that a person must worship not simply by external conformity to religious rituals and places (outwardly) but inwardly ("in spirit") with the proper heart attitude. The reference to "truth" refers to worship of God consistent with the revealed Scripture and centered on the "Word made flesh" who ultimately revealed His Father (14:6).

4. The **characteristics** of "true worship"

- Jesus says that true worship involves not the *where* but rather the *how*; that is, God must be worshiped in spirit and truth!
- It doesn't matter **where** you worship but **who** you worship. True worship always **seeks** the Father. It's not about you!
- There is a spiritual component, though somewhat mystical, it is still real.

### **Table Talk:**

1. How did Jesus break with convention in His dealings with the Samaritan woman? Why was that significant?
2. How did the disciples show their own prejudice and misguided priorities?
3. What “truth claims” does Jesus make about Himself? (v. 10, 13-14, 26, 34)

### **Sneak Peek:**

The last 3 weeks we have looked at how various people responded to Jesus. He dealt with each of them in different ways.

1. Re-read John, chapters 2-4, and list as many “evangelism principles” that you can find. What were Jesus’ methods for reaching people?
2. Read John 4:28-42 and list the results of the first cross-cultural evangelism effort.

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