

- ***READ John 4:1-7*** Following Jesus's face to face encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus goes in Judea and begins the process of making disciples and baptizing those who were willing to listen to the message that He was speaking. However, He was not the only one who was doing much baptism at the moment. John was also baptizing many individuals, but he recognized that His work was only to aid in the efforts that were being done by the One who was greater than he. *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* (John 3:30) But how was it that Jesus was increasing?
- Notice that Jesus was increasing very practically in regards to the fact that His fame and popularity was increasing, and this is evidenced in what we see in **John 4:1** in that Jesus was baptizing more disciples than John was. How was He able to do so? One way was that He wasn't staying in just one spot. Yes, Jesus spent a good amount of time in Judea, but we see Him leaving Judea and coming into the region of Galilee. In order for Him to get to Galilee, however, Jesus and His disciples had to pass through Samaria.
- Specifically, we find them going through the city of Sychar. This was a city near to the place where Jacob's well was located, and we find our Lord going to this well for He was wearied. This alone should show us how much Jesus was like us in the respect of Him being human. Yes, He was God, but He was also a man and He became tired just as we do. Yet, it is at this point where Jesus comes in contact with a woman, but not just any woman...but this was a Samaritan woman and what unfolds from here is a face to face encounter with Jesus that not just changed the life of this woman...but we'll see that this face to face conversation with Jesus was life changing for many. What did this Samaritan woman come away realizing from this conversation? Let's answer this question this morning.

What The Samaritan Woman Realized:

I. This man was different. (John 4:5-9)

A. The Jews and Samaritans were not on the best of terms.

1. While it might be hard to pin down exactly what the Samaritans were racially, it is believed by most that they were a people descended from Jews who had intermarried with Assyrians. When the Assyrians captured the northern kingdom of Israel, they imported some of their people into the land. What we have happening from this is that some Jews intermarried with these people and produced what we would come to know as Samaritans.
2. This alone wasn't where the problem rested, although this shouldn't have happened for it was not God's will for the Jews to join themselves in marriage with the nations around them. **(Deuteronomy 7:3)** The problem really arose when those who were pure blooded Jews assumably rejected the help that was offered by Samaritans and others as the Jews were giving effort to rebuild the wall. **(Ezra 4:2,3)** Though the reason offered for rejecting the help was because of the other's ungodliness and paganism, that didn't stop those people from being highly offended and grudges being established. From this point on it seems as if the relationship between the Jews and Samaritans continue to dissolve and become more hostile.
3. With these things in mind, think about what we have in this situation at Jacob's well is a Jew voluntarily offering to interact with a non-Jew/Gentile. This is something that would've been highly taboo. Remember that the Jewish leaders often demanded the Jews wash their hands after being in the market place just in case they touched something that a Gentile had touched. **(Mark 7:1-4)** For this Jew to simply speak with this Samaritan would shock most people.

B. Even more strange was the fact that this Jewish man was speaking to a Samaritan woman.

1. The racial component alone was astounding, but even more so was the fact that this was a Jewish man speaking with a Samaritan woman. Notice from the text that Jesus asking this woman for some water came as a great shock to her. *"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?"* (John 4:9)

2. Notice that it wasn't just that Jesus was a Jew, but that He was also a man. It wasn't just that she was a Samaritan, but that she was also a woman. Think of this from this woman's perspective. Here she is just minding her own business coming to get some water from a well she has probably been to too many times to count, and upon her arriving a Jewish man asked that she give Him a drink. Before any other thoughts are able to come into her mind, she had to realize that there was something mighty different about this Man in the fact that He would speak and interact with her as He did.

II. The man had something special to offer that she was in need of. (John 4:10-18)

- A. While Jesus was certainly thirsty, He was more concerned with this woman's need for living water.
 1. Jesus, as He always did, was able to take this situation focused on the need for literal water and turn it into a situation where He could show this woman her need for living water, but what was this living water? At first glance, our minds might make a connection of this living water to baptism that was mentioned back with Jesus's conversation with Nicodemus, but I think the more accurate connection would be to the part of the conversation where Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of the Spirit. (John 3:6)
 2. Notice the benefit of this living water that Jesus is offering to this woman. He says, *"Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."* (John 4:13,14) This woman's mind was obviously focused on literal H₂O, but Jesus used this opportunity to teach her about something spiritual in nature which was what the Holy Spirit could do in her life. Whereas she would continue to need literal water to quench her thirst, Jesus says that this living water or the Holy Spirit could cause her to never thirst again.
 3. Now, you might be wondering if there is any other evidence for the Bible using this type of language when discussing the Holy Spirit. Is there anything else that alludes to the Holy Spirit having characteristics of water. Here are two other instances:
 - a) *"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."* (1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - b) *"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."* (Ephesians 5:18)
 4. While this woman's mind might have been on fulfilling her physical thirst, Jesus was much more concerned with being able to fulfill a need of this woman that was far more pressing at the moment. Just as we noted with Jesus's conversation with Nicodemus, one must be born of the water in baptism, but there also must be that point of change in regards to repentance and turning from living in sin to be a person who is living in righteousness towards God. (Romans 6:8-13)
- B. Jesus then tries to show this woman's need for living water was because of her immorality/sin.
 1. After Jesus tells this woman about this living water which will cause her to never thirst again, this Samaritan woman gets really excited and wants to have some of this living water for herself. I highly doubt that she completely understood what Jesus was meaning by what He was saying. She probably still thought that He was going to be able to pull some water up that was as special as He made it out to be. She was probably trying to shove her water bucket on him. After all, this living water in which she would never thirst again sure beat having to come all the way out to this well to get water when it was needed.
 2. However, Jesus redirects the conversation to next request that she go and get her husband and bring him into this conversation. She replies with, *"I have no husband."* (John 4:17) Jesus, of course, knew this to be the case and goes on to tell her that He is aware that she has had five husbands and that she was currently with a man who was not her husband. The implication from Jesus clearly seems to be that this woman was not a respecter of marriage and now was living in fornication. (John 4:18)

3. I am convinced that Jesus said this for two reasons. Firstly, if He was going to be talking about the need for living water, then He wanted to bring to the forefront of this woman's mind what her need was for this living water. The Holy Spirit had some work to do in the life of this woman in regards to her handling of relationships. Secondly, Jesus did to this woman exactly what He did to Nathanael at in **John 1:47-49** when He pronounced him as a Israelite of no deceit and then spoke of him being under the fig tree. Jesus was showing His miracles ability by telling this woman of these details of which He had no natural way of knowing. We've focused on three main conversations of Jesus so far in this Gospel account, and in each one we see Jesus using His miraculous powers to show that He was someone special, and this woman caught on to that, but I also believed she deflects Jesus's observation. Yet, that doesn't completely deter Jesus from helping her to realize that something special besides this living water was about to take place.

III. A time was coming when all people would be united. (John 4:19-24)

A. The woman assumes Jesus as a prophet, but she shifts the conversation in another direction.

1. Having had her sin brought into light during this conversation, this woman redirects the attention to the matter of the differing worship practices of each of their peoples. She brings up the point the non-Jews had worshipped for many centuries on this mountain close by which is believed to have been Mt. Gerizim. There actually would've been a temple for worship there some years earlier before it had been destroyed. She contrasts that place of worship with the claims made by the Jews that worship was to take place at the temple in Jerusalem. **(John 4:20)**
2. Of course, the Jews were correct in the claims that worship was to take place in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the city of God. *"but I have chosen Jerusalem that My name might be there, and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel."* **(II Chronicles 6:6)** This difference was simply one of many that she could've brought up to show that maybe Jesus didn't know her as well as He thought He did or maybe she was trying to show Him that He had no right to judge her.

B. Regardless of her intentions, Jesus, again, used this discussion to help her to understand that things were about to change in regards to the true worshippers of God.

1. Instead of getting frustrated or giving up, Jesus simply uses this new subject to show this woman that soon these types of arguments between these two sets of people would be moot. *"Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* **(John 4:21-24)**
2. This is now the second time that this woman has brought to the forefront of this conversation the differences between their peoples. *"How is it that you, being a Jew, as me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?"* **(John 4:9)** And then now, *"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."* **(John 4:20)** I don't think this woman was a race baiter by any means, but I think she was simply a product of what had been the norm in her society and between their peoples for a very long time.
3. However, Jesus really wanted to show her that these differences had the opportunity to come to an end in the near future. For it would no longer matter where one worshipped. It would no longer matter what a person looked like. It would no longer matter the blood lineage of one who wanted to worship God. All that was going to matter was that one who wanted to be a *"true worshiper"* would have to be someone who worshipped *"in spirit and truth."* **(John 4:23,24)**

4. But what did Jesus mean when He said that this must be the manner in which one worshipped? Let's first consider what it could mean to worship in spirit. I have often heard it said that this means that one must have the right attitude and mindset when it comes to the worship of God. While that is certainly true, let me suggest that there could be another possible answer contextually. Consider that this woman continues to bring up physical differences to Jesus. Different race, different gender, and different place of worship have all been addressed. Could it be that Jesus is trying to show her that there is coming time when physical things will no longer be a focal point? I certainly think this to be the case. No longer will it matter the color of the person's skin or their blood lineage. No longer will it matter the place. No longer will all of the physical ordinances be necessary for worship of God. Instead, worship could take place any where and in almost any setting, and that is exactly what we see being the case today in our worship through song, prayer, study, etc. The focus is being shifted to the things that are spiritual in nature, and it is being moved away from those things that are physical in nature.
5. Further, this worship would need to be done in truth, and this was focused on by Jesus because of His comments concerning the Gentiles worshipping that which they "*did not know.*" (**John 4:22**) These people had long worshipped in paganism, which is the main reason their help was rejected in building the temple. They rejected almost the entirety of the Old Testament except for the Pentateuch, so it is no wonder they worshipped what they did not know. They couldn't fully know without God's fully revealed will to His people at this time. For all of the faults of the Jews at different times, at least they knew of Yaweh and knew God's design for worship because of their attentiveness to the Law. Worshipping in truth demands more than just an emotional investment. It demands that there be appropriate and proper knowledge possessed by the worshipper, and there was coming a time when all people could and would have the same knowledge of how to worship God in an acceptable way. The walls of divide would be taken down, but when was this to happen?

IV. This time would come when Messiah appeared...and He was there with her. (John 4:25-30)

- A. This Samaritan woman seemed to have a decent grasp, understanding, and belief in what Jesus was telling her concerning what was about to take place.
 1. Notice that this woman responds to Jesus's statements concerning worship by informing Him that she believes that a truly special one is coming. She was already astounded by Jesus's knowledge of her, and might even be leaning towards a conclusion that He might just be that truly special individual. Regardless, her understanding of the Messiah surely should impress us especially with her being a Gentile.
 - a) She believed in the promise of the Messiah coming.
 - b) She knew that the Messiah had not yet come.
 - c) She believed that this Messiah was going to be an actual person.
 - d) She believed that this Messiah would be a great teacher who would teach all things to all people.
 2. Some of these beliefs of this Samaritan woman even surpassed some of the understandings of the Jews and even Jesus's own disciples! Truly impressed we should be with this woman's understanding and degree of belief in the coming Messiah at this point of her being face to face with Jesus by this well.

- B. Little did she know that her belief would be realized at this chance encounter with Jesus.
1. After this woman details her belief in the coming Messiah, Jesus really drops a bombshell on her by stating that this Messiah in whom she believed was actually standing right before her. At this point, it all had to make sense in her mind. This Jewish man who was willing to speak to her, who was able to tell her things miraculously, and who spoke with authority must have been this Messiah who she knew would be coming at some point.
 2. This woman has been impressive already up to this point, but she takes it to an even greater degree when she learns of this Man being the Messiah and she goes into the city and begins to tell all of the people about Him. She had just been told many amazing things, and she wanted for other people to know about those things which would soon take place.
 3. Because of this woman's faith and belief in these realized truths so many more came to have faith in the Messiah and His message. *"From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." (John 4:39-42)*

We have said it many times already, and it will only continue to be the case, when we come face to face with Jesus...we will leave changed. We will be different. This woman came to Jesus as someone who view others with distain as she lived in sin, but she left recognizing that all people could be united in purity of living and proper worship towards God. May we recognize these same truths in our lives, and become a people who truly believe in the One who is the Savior of the world.

PRAYER *Our gracious God in heaven...we praise your name this morning being so thankful for the blessings that have come down upon us through Your Son. We are so thankful for the living water that He offers that can cleanse us of our sins and help us to live holy lives before You. We are so thankful that You care not for the color of our skin or the lineage of our blood, but that You only desire for us to come before you in humility, spirit, and truth. Help each of us to humble ourselves to Your will, and we ask that you please help us to be changed as we read, meditate, and study upon Your Son and His life on this earth. Help us to always be faithful, and may we reap the amazing reward of heaven when this life ends. Thank you Father. We love You so much, and we love our shepherds who seek to lead us in Your ways. We pray these things in the name of Your Son, Jesus the Christ...amen.*