

Come See the Messiah

John 4:25–42

Today we wrap up the divine appointment with the Samaritan woman at the well. Our focus is vs 25–42, but we will read the entire encounter one more time. It is a long reading so let's get right to it.

John 4:4–42 — And he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman from Samaria came 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 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." ¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and

went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him.

³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” ³²But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” ³³So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” ³⁴Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. ³⁶Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

³⁹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

Contempt to Commission

The hatred that Jews and Samaritans had for each other distorted the disciples' understanding of God's redeeming love. They fought over where to worship to the degree that each was convinced that the other was beyond the reach of grace. John tells us what was in the mind of his fellow disciples in v 27. They marveled, but had enough presence of mind not to speak their contempt directly to the woman. But they wanted to say, “Who do you seek? *What do you want?*” Or to say to the Lord, “Why are you talking to *her*?” Jesus had sent them into town so that their sinful attitudes did not distract from his work of transforming this idolatrous woman into a worshiping saint.

Prideful disputes dull the heart to the mission of Christ— and they can do such a good job of it that we feel justified in advancing a dispute, while missing the mission that God has come to seek and save the lost in order to make them worshipers.

They missed it. The disciples missed it. The prophets foretold that grace-filled wells of salvation would be open in the house of David, and the nations would stream into Zion. You might've missed it in the Call to Worship. Isaiah 42:10–12 — Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. Let the

desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare his praise in the coastlands. Kedar is an Arabian tribe. Sela is a city of the Edomites. The distant coastlands will rejoice. The people who walk in darkness, without the Word of God, will see the great light of Christ.

The great commission makes explicit what the prophets foretold. Jesus, who has all authority, commands us to “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Let’s take a lesson from the disciples in this day of entrenched camps over different issues. In our own camp **ethnic arrogancies** can find footholds that are sinful in themselves, and dull our hearts and minds to the mission of proclaiming the gospel that Jesus came to save sinners from every tribe, language, people, and nation, thus aggravating our sin to missional disobedience.

If we find ourselves with prideful contempt for others — contempt that can even make us want to withhold the offer of the gospel to someone so that we don’t have to sit next to them at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb — we have greatly misunderstood the mission of the Savior, and are living in defiant disobedience to his command to make disciples of all nations. Our identity cannot be in our genetic makeup, nor our precise theology, as carefully constructed and faithful to the scripture as we believe it to be. Our identity is always, only that we are sinners saved by grace, having no merit on our own, but snatched out of the domain of darkness through the love and grace of the Lord Jesus, who loved us and gave himself a ransom for us. We are nothing more than beggars who have found the Bread of Life, and we are to be humble and grateful enough to share the source of that Bread with others. That’s obedience. And that’s what Jesus himself was doing on this divine appointment, calendared before the foundation of the world.

The obedience of the Savior is satisfying to his human soul. We need to see this and believe it for ourselves. As they are getting back from their grocery run into the city, Jesus is wrapping up his encounter with this woman. She heads back to her village, and they try and get Jesus to eat something. His response is, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” Have you ever considered that obeying God is food for your soul? Is it just duty? For the believer, the follower of Christ, obeying God should produce joy and satisfaction. Rather than considering the cost of obedience, follow the pattern of the master and consider that obedience will nourish and satisfy your soul.

The disciples are still not up to speed with what Christ is doing in his earthly ministry and gospel proclamation, and as further evidence of their disorientation, their response is, “Did somebody bring him a sandwich?” They are as much focused on the material and the physical as the Samaritan woman for whom they have contempt. But in a quickly convened gospel classroom, Jesus reorients them from the passing and the temporal to the urgent and the eternal: Lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so the sower and reaper may rejoice together. One sows, another reaps. In this meeting with the Samaritan woman, Jesus has sown the message that eternal life is found in him, and we are going to see in just a minute that she is going and sowing that same message in her village. John the Baptist has been sowing Gospel seeds of repentance. The disciples are now to be oriented to the Kingdom assignment of sowing of the Good News that God reconciles sinners through Jesus as they turn to him in faith and repentance. They will also have the joy and privilege of seeing a harvest of souls come into the kingdom.

Another lesson for us from the disciples, as we sit in the back of their classroom. Lift up your eyes. Rebellious, broken, sinful people—people who try to satisfy their souls with immorality, status, or reputation—can be made righteous by turning to Christ and trusting his atoning work. Sow that seed, and pray God gives a harvest of worshiping souls.

Compassion

All of this is in the context of the compassion of Christ on those whom he has elected to eternal life before the foundation of the Earth that they may forever glorify and enjoy him. As this encounter progresses, we see that it was about finding life and being satisfied at the very soul level in Christ. *We are made for this*, and we will not be satisfied in anything else. She comes to the well at odd times, avoiding crowds and scornful looks that would underscore her shame. Though she’s got a water jar with her, we see that water, H₂O, has little to do with it. This is about eternal life and joy and meaning. She is at Jacob’s well, but the wells that she has gone to in an attempt to be satisfied are named Jared, Jack, Joe, Jason, Jeff, and now Jerry. Or whatever their names were.

What an outpouring of grace! What astonishing compassion the Savior has on one who has, to this point, rejected him, seeking sexual immorality to be satisfied apart from Christ, and in defiance of his righteous commands. The wells we go to may not be Joe or Jason or Jeff, but are every bit as

offensive to God and defiant of his commands as hers. We just go to different wells. Dark places of the internet. Perfectionism. Possessions. Relationships. I don't know the names of all the wells. But as God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, every well apart from Christ is a toxic cesspool. It is a forsaking of God, the Spring of living water. It's a ditch-digging of our own sin-filled cisterns with filthy, stagnant water that kills rather than brings life. Do not suspect anyone is different in kind, but only different in taste. But God is compassionate and gracious. From his hand he gives grace upon grace upon grace. He is here calling us from those putrid wells to himself. And he is full of compassion for you and full of mercy and grace as he was for the woman at the well.

She turned from what could not satisfy to Christ. And we see it in this incredibly beautiful little statement in v 28. She left her water jar and went away into town. She left that thing that she had been lugging around. That was a metaphor for water that could not satisfy. She didn't need it anymore because she found the Messiah who did satisfy. Or more accurately and shining forth out of this account: he found her. He pursued her. And he indeed gave her living water that satisfied her soul to the point that she wanted everybody to know about it.

Confession

When Christ changes a life, all the shame that was garnered from all the broken cisterns that had been imbibed — all that shame is gone. Everything about this story deals with the shame of sin. She's there at a weird time. She conceals, she avoids. Yet after she turns to the Messiah, what does she do? She goes straight to those who have held her in contempt so that they might come to know the Savior, too. v 29 — Come, see a man... You can almost hear the town's first reaction: Come see a man? If anybody knows about men, that would be you. But see what grace does. It removes the shame and reorients the life. She has no more fear of men. The only thing that matters is that Christ has drawn her out of the domain of darkness, washed her white as snow, and given her eternal life. She is a beggar telling other beggars where there is life and bread.

She goes from being a woman of ill repute to being a model of self-forgetful, Christ-exalting evangelism. Her sin is no longer a beacon of shame, but a brilliant God-glorifying testimony of what it is to be freed from sin and shame. She is living the reality of Isaiah 53: Jesus has borne away the despicable shame and grief of sin. There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The sinful past has now become an anthem of glorious grace which will forever redound to the glory of the One who saved her. She goes and sings it to the town. Come, see a man who told me all

6

that I ever did. She is not the center of the message, but her transformation by Christ becomes an instrument that brings them to the Savior. Are you hearing the refrain this morning? Christ is come not to make bad men good, but to make dead men live. He does this by giving them living water that wells up to his eternal life. And as Christ redeemed this woman and her story, so he will do for you. Our enemy would have us conceal and hide. But Christ redeems and uses our life for his glory. The enemy still attempts to attach shame to what Christ has forgiven. But Christ resurrects. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart, but come, buy wine without price and be freed from sin. Enjoy the blessing of the life of Christ flowing through. Leave the water jar of whatever you were drinking that could not satisfy and be satisfied forever in him.

PRAY