

John 4:1-30, 39-42

The Woman at the Well

Introduction

Today we are going to have another red-letter day and message, because it is always good to spend time with the Master . . .

A bit of an extension of what we did a couple weeks ago with the woman caught in adultery, continuing with the thought of coming face to face with Jesus . . .

Think of all the people Jesus had a face-to-face encounter with and how Jesus interacted with each of each of them . . .

- The rich young ruler
- Mary Magdalene
- Nicodemus
- Saul
- Pontius Pilate
- The thief on the cross

Now Jesus comes face to face with a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob.

John 4:1-30, 39-42

(V1-6a) – Samaria

1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John

2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

4 But He needed to go through Samaria.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6a Now Jacob's well was there.

- The ministry of Jesus is getting more notoriety, especially with the pharisees.

- Jesus leaves Judea and begins heading to Galilee, but he needed to through Samaria . . .
 - No reason is given why He needs to go through Samaira . . .
 - For a Jew to make an intentional trip through is highly unusual . . .
 - Most Jews in the day would intentionally avoid going through Samaria, going the long way around due to their view of the Samaritans.

Who Were the Samaritans?

The Samaritans, being a mix of already spiritually corrupt Israelites, going back to the days of the divided kingdoms, and pagan foreigners, created a religion for themselves that the Jews considered heresy.

They established as their center of worship a temple on Mount Gerizim, claiming it was where Moses had originally intended for the Israelites to worship. They had their own unique version of the five books written by Moses, the Pentateuch, but rejected the writings of the prophets and Jewish traditions. The Samaritans saw themselves as the true descendants of Israel and preservers of the true religion, while considering the Jerusalem temple and Levitical priesthood illegitimate.

When Jews returned to rebuild Jerusalem, they were opposed by Samaritans. This led to further ill-will as the two sects were established in the land in opposition to one another.

To the Jews, the Samaritans was more revolting than the Gentiles; Samaritans were considered half-breeds who defiled the Hebrew religion.

- Jesus comes to Samaria . . .
 - Samaria as a city was once the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. After Israel's fall, Samaria as a region was in the central area of what used to be the northern kingdom. During the time of Jesus, Samaria was located between Galilee to the north and Judea to the south.
 - Thus to get to Galilee from Judea, you either went through or around Samaria . . .

- Jacob's Well
 - The only time Jacob's Well is mentioned specifically by name is here in John 4 . . .

- In Genesis 33:18-20, Jacob buys a lot of land, that is the historical site of Jacob's Well, the well still exists there today . . .

(V6b-8) – Jesus At Jacobs Well

6b Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 A woman of 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.

- Jesus is tired and sits by the well . . .
 - Here we see Jesus as the 'Son of Man' . . .
 - It is always good to pause and reflect on His humanity . . .
 - Michael Card, popular in the 90's, would often teach as he performed and he once said this . . .
 - For the disciples, it easy for them to relate to His humanity, because they experienced it directly in the three years of His ministry, they struggled with His deity, the Son of God . . .
 - For us, it is easy for us the relate to His deity, we know Him by faith as God, we struggle with His humanity, as the Son of Man, because that has not been our personal experience with him . . .
 - Jesus, the Son of Man, fully human, is tired, thirsty and hungry for a long journey . . .
 - I wonder if He ever got hangry?
 - He is by himself as the disciples have gone off to go find some food . . .
- It is the sixth hour . . .
 - It is the afternoon, the heat of the day . . .
 - Which only exacerbates exhaustion, hunger and thirst . . .
- The Samaritan woman . . .
 - She has come to draw water by herself, but this seems out of place . . .
 - It was a bit of a hike and it was typical of the women of the day to traverse together in the morning when going to draw water
 - Safety in numbers and the cool of the day . . .
 - She is different . . .

- Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."
 - The face-to-face engagement has begun . . .

(V9-10) – The Gift Of God

9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, 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."

- She recognizes the Jesus is a Jew and asks the obvious question . . .
 - Why are you even talking to me?
 - You guys hate us . . .
 - The very instrument that she is drawing water with would be considered unclean by the Jews, they wouldn't anything she touches . . .
- Jesus begins . . .
 - If you knew, because she does not, but if you did know . . .
 - You would have asked me for a drink and I would have given you living water . . .
 - Living translated
 - Flowing, continuous
 - Is not a well that can run dry

(V11-14) – Living Water

11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"

12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,
14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

- The woman is befuddled . . .
 - You have nothing to draw with . . .
 - The well is deep . . .
 - Where then do You get that living water?
 - Are You greater than our father Jacob?
 - I am so confused . . .

- Jesus continues . . .
 - This water, it is good for a moment, but you will thirst again . . .
 - But my water, when drink of it you shall never thirst again . . .
 - It is a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life . . .

- How do you explain spiritual things to the natural mind?
 - Almost everything Jesus said was spiritual or had spiritual overtones . . .
 - He would use parables to try to get his point across, speaking in terms people could understand, but sometimes . . .
 - Right over their heads . . .
 - Even to the very end the disciples just didn't quite get it . . .
 - The one person who is most similar to the Samaritan woman is Nicodemus . . .
 - They are so completely different . . .
 - One a Jew, one a Samaritan
 - One by day, one by night
 - One religious, one not so much
 - One a 'have', one a 'have not'
 - One male, one female
 - And yet at the same . . .
 - The woman could not understand 'living water'
 - Nicodemus could not understand 'born again'

John 3:1-12 – “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you,

unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

- The natural mind cannot discern or really understand the things of the Spirit

(V15-19) – Call Your Husband

15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'

18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

- The woman is thinking in the natural . . .
 - Gove me this water . . .
 - Then I won't have to make this trek anymore . . .
- Jesus changes the subject . . .
 - A seemingly unrelated subject . . .
 - 'Call your husband . . .'
- She gives him an honest answer . . .
 - I don't have a husband . . .

- Then Jesus responds with an answer she should not have possibly expected . . .
 - You know what, you are right, you don't have husband . . .
 - The guy you are with now is not your husband, but you have had five husbands before him . . .
 - If you count them up, that's six men she has had in her life, at a minimum . . .
 - We know people like this, maybe we were or are that person . . .
 - Their lives are messy . . .
 - They go from one relationship to another, never really cleaning up the first mess before they begin the other . . .
 - That is a lot of baggage to carry, emotional and circumstantial, you are going to need a flatbed truck to all of that baggage . . .
 - And her sins of sexual immorality, in whatever form they have taken, have been exposed . . .

- Well this is an awkward moment . . .
 - This guy sure knows a lot about me . . .
 - 'I perceive you are a prophet . . .'
 - Well, she's getting closer . . .

(V20-24) – Worship In Spirit And Truth

20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

- Now she changes the subject . . .
 - Enough about me . . .
 - A Jewish/Samaritan theological question . . .
 - That's a big leap from 5 husbands and shacking up . . .

- But Jesus doesn't miss a beat . . .
 - The hour is coming when neither be true . . .
 - But just so you know, you guys don't know what you are worshipping . . .
 - The Jews worship the true and living God . . .
 - But all of this is going change, because the hour is coming . . .
 - When the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth
 - God is spirit . . .
 - To worship God in Spirit and in Truth you must have the Spirit of God . . .
 - Going back to Nicodemus
 - You need to be 'born again' . . .
 - We must be born of the Spirit to worship God in Spirit and in Truth . . .
 - This is what Jesus is saying . . .

(V25-26) – I Am He

25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (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."

- The woman, like all Jewish sects believe the Messiah will come . . .
 - And as Jesus pointed out earlier, the Samaritans have a distorted view of God, even of the Messiah . . .
 - What she doesn't expect, what she cannot expect is His response . . .
- "I who speak to you am He."
 - Jesus definitively declares that He is the Messiah, that He is God . . .
 - But He is not announcing this to a crowd, to His disciples, to the Scribes and Pharisees, or to anyone else . . .
 - But to a promiscuous Samaritan woman all by herself . . .
 - Jesus will have a similar moment with another woman later on . . .

John 8:10-11 – “ When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

(V27-30) – Come And See

27 And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,

29 "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

- The disciples show up, surprised that He is talking to a Samaritan woman . . .
 - They really don't know what to say . . .
 - They better get used to this, because their Master is going to be full of surprises and the unexpected . . .

- The woman leaves, obviously in a hurry, she has left her water pot behind . . .
 - She goes into the city and tells the men all about her encounter with Jesus . . .
 - Could this be the Christ?"
 - She's getting closer isn't she?
 - And they come out of the city to see Jesus . . .

The Epilogue

In verses 31-38, Jesus will have a dissertation about the harvesting of souls with his disciples, but I want to stay with the woman and the other Samaritans.

(V39-42) – The Savior Of The World

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."

40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

41 And many more believed because of His own word.

42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

- Because of the woman's testimony many believed . . .
 - And Jesus stayed a couple more days . . .
 - And they all got to hear him in person . . .
 - "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him . . ."

- This is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."
 - She knows now, they know now . . .

Final Thoughts

Again, the best thing we can when we read these stories of Jesus encounters is to empathize with the participants. Just take a moment and be in their shoes to understand their experience with Jesus.

The Disciples

The Samaritans

The Woman

Jesus

Final Thoughts

Three closing thoughts . . .

Jesus Revelations About God

He is the Messiah

God is Spirit

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

Soul Sickness

Come and See