

Sunday September 24, 2023 | John 4:1-18

John 2:25 NLT

(25) No one needed to tell Him about human nature, for He knew what was in each person's heart.

Chapter two finished with this amazing statement. Jesus knew what was in each person's heart. The Holy Spirit would give Him the insight to see past the external and see the true person. He could see what was going on in their heart. We saw this in Chapter 3 when Jesus talked with Nicodemus. Jesus cut past the external pomp and status to get right to Nicodemus's core need to be born again. Chapter 4 gives us another example of how Jesus knows a person's heart. This time it is with someone who is the complete opposite of Nicodemus, the woman at the well.

John 4:1-18 ESV

- (1) Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John
- (2) (although Jesus Himself did not baptize, but only His disciples),
- (3) He left Judea and departed again **for Galilee**.
- (4) 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."

Last week we saw the transition of ministry between John the Baptist and Jesus. John understood His role and knew it was time for Jesus the Messiah to increase in His ministry. The Pharisees noticed this transition. They had been threatened by John and questioned His authority, and now they became concerned that the crowds were starting to follow Jesus. Jesus knew this could become increasingly dangerous for Him so He decides it is time to leave Judea head back up north to Galilee.

There were multiple routes that Jesus could have taken to travel from the Judean wilderness back to Galilee. The most direct route was a three-day journey traveling north and went directly through Samaria. Some Jews were so prejudice against Samaritans that they would take a much longer route heading east, and crossing the Jordan river twice just to avoid Samaria. **To understand this prejudice, we must understand who the Samaritans were.**

After King Solomon the nation Israel divided into two Kingdoms, Judah was the Southern Kingdom and Israel was the Northern Kingdom. The capitol of the Northern Kingdom became Samaria. And after years of rebellion and worshipping idols God had them conquered by Assyria. The Assyrians took most of the Israelites into exile and had them settle down in other countries. Then the Assyrians took exiles from the other countries and brought them to settle in Samaria.

2 Kings 17:24-25 ESV

(24) And the king of Assyria **brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel**. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities.

(25) And at the beginning of their dwelling there, **they did not fear the LORD. Therefore the LORD sent lions** among them, which killed some of them.

These foreigners came into the northern Kingdom and found out they didn't know how to live in the promised land. Assyria sends back an Israeli priest to tell the people how to worship God. These foreigners were great to worship God as long as they could keep worshipping all the gods from their homelands as well. They thought they could just add God in.

2 Kings 17:33-34 ESV

(33) **So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods**, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

(34) **To this day they do according to the former manner**. They do not fear the LORD, and they do not follow the statutes or the rules or the law or the commandment that the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel.

This group of foreigners intermarried with some of the Israelites who were left behind. They started following parts of the Old Testament and mixed it with worshipping their idols. The Southern Kingdom, Judah, did not recognize the Samaritans as Israelites. They viewed them as **half breeds**. The racial and religious tensions between Israelites and Samaritans ran deep. This makes verse 4 so telling about who Jesus is.

John 4:4ESV

(4) And He **had to** pass through **Samaria**.

Jesus traveling through Samaria was not accidental. There were other paths He could have taken, but none that would have accomplished what was needed. The truth of the gospel was going to cut right through these racial, and religious animosities.

John 4:6 ESV

(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**.

Jesus reaches the well around noon according to Jewish time. (If John is referring to Roman time, it would have been at 6pm.) He and the disciples have been traveling for some time and they needed to take a break. **Jesus was wearied from the journey. We can miss this detail.** He is fully God and Fully man. He has so much power that Hebrews tells us:

Hebrews 1:3 ESV

(3) He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and **He upholds the universe by the word of His power**. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Jesus who holds the universe together with His power, is no needing to catch His breath and take a break. He experienced the limitations that our human bodies have. He became human and took on flesh. His heart beat elevated and He struggled to breath. **Our minds struggle to see Jesus as powerful enough to uphold the universe and needing to take a break.** It is the mystery of the incarnation and the very reason we can find so much comfort in coming to Him. **He can perfectly sympathize with us, and He has the power to care for us.**

John 4:7-8 ESV

(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.)

Jesus is alone at Jacob's well because the disciples have gone into the city to get food. A Samaritan woman comes to the well to get water. Women usually went as a group for extra protection and would go early in the morning or later in the day when the heat was not as bad. This Samaritan woman has come to the well during an abnormal time. We will see why in a little bit. Notice that Jesus is the one who initiates the conversation. He engaged her.

John 4:9 ESV

(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.)

The Samaritan woman is startled that Jesus spoke to her. He is a Jew, she is a Samaritan woman. Jews did not interact with Samaritans. The Pharisees taught that if you shared a dish with a Samaritan woman then **you would be ceremonially unclean.**

Jewish men were very careful in their interactions with woman and usually did not talk to them one on one. By asking her for water Jesus has violated many social norms and traditions. He also has superseded the racism and prejudice that existed.

This Samaritan woman is the polar opposite of Nicodemus. He is a respected Jewish religious leader who seeks out Jesus to asks questions. She is a Samaritan woman who must isolate from the town because of her past, and was not looking for Jesus. This is what is amazing, Jesus shares truth with both. **They both had need of eternal life.**

John 4:10 ESV

(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.**”

Jesus starts to inform her about who she is talking to. **She has no idea.** Nicodemus came in with expectations that Jesus was from God. Jesus begins to offer her the gift from God. He will use the metaphor of water to explain this gift. He is going to be offering her living water.

John 4:11-12 ESV

(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.”

She is thinking practically and earthly. When Jesus said living water, **she heard fresh, flowing, moving water.** She thinks Jesus has no clue what he is talking about. The well is **150 feet+ deep**, how would He reach moving water? He has no bucket or rope. Jacob worked hard to dig the well. She questions if Jesus is saying He is more powerful than Jacob. Jacob had to dig this well 150 feet to get to water, and Jesus thinks He can provide flowing water somehow?

John 4:13-14 ESV

(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.**”

Jesus keeps trying to draw her to spiritual truth. Everyone that drinks of this physical water will be thirsty again. He is offering living water that becomes a spring that **leaps and jumps up** to eternal life. **The need for a long rope and bucket is gone when the living water leaps up.** He is comparing a continual thirst for water that is never satisfied with living water that completely satisfies.

John 4:13-14 Wuest Expanded New Testament

(13) Everyone who **keeps on drinking** of this water **shall thirst again**.

(14) But whoever **takes a drink of the water** which I shall give him, **shall positively not thirst, no, never**, but the water which I shall give him shall become in him a **spring of water gushing up into life eternal.**

The verb tenses draw out this comparison. We keep drinking of physical water and never stop, and we keep thirsting. This describes trying to live life by our own strength and ability. We have a thirst, there is some type of need. When we use physical means to solve our needs, we will never be satisfied. Then in contrast we take one drink of the living water. It is a completed action and we will never thirst again. **True contentment and satisfaction are only found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.**

Jeremiah 2:12-13 ESV

- (12) Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD,
 (13) for My people have committed two evils: **they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.**

This is the terrible exchange we make as humans. We refuse to drink from the living water. We refuse to rely on God and trust in Him to solve our core problem. We would rather try to fix it ourself. We reject His living water, and make a broken cistern that holds no water. **This is Adam and Eve in the garden sewing fig leaves together after sinning.** They spent time, effort, and care into creating these new clothes. **They had a core problem, sin and they wanted to fix it.** They were drinking physical water with a constant thirst. They needed God's solution; they needed His living water. He provides the sacrifice and clothed them with the skin of an animal (Gen 3:21). They needed the redeemer, they needed to be covered by the blood not fig leaves. Scripture is full of peoples attempts to solve their core sin problem on their own.

Ecclesiastes 2:3-5; 8; 11 NLT

- (3) After much thought, **I decided to cheer myself with wine.** And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience **the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world.**
 (4) I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards.
 (5) I made **gardens and parks**, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees.
 (8) **I collected great sums of silver and gold**, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. **I had everything a man could desire!**
 (11) But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, **it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.**

Solomon tried find satisfaction and contentment in wine, possessions, philanthropy, money, pleasure, he tried everything. He had the means and held nothing back from His desires. He tried to deal with his core sin issue through earthly means. **He kept seeking for ways to deal with his core issue, a thirst, this relentless need that was within him. Sin.** These were expensive and elaborate fig leaves. He would rather pursue all these things instead of walking in a relationship with God. If we are honest with ourselves, we could all fill write down a list of the ways we try to find satisfaction and contentment through our own strength. **Our fig leaves.** The Samaritan women hears this offer and is drawn to it, but she is still thinking through an earthly lens.

John 4:15 ESV

(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.”

She wants this living water. She would love to never thirst again and never have to come out to this well again. She hates coming out to the well and trying to avoid the other women in town. She hates the labor involved in hauling the bucket up 150 feet. How can she have this water? **Jesus is going to now point out the thirst in her life and the fig leaves she has been trying to use to satisfy that thirst.**

John 4:16-18 ESV

(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.”

This woman has been using relationships with men to try and find satisfaction and contentment. She has moved from relationship to relationship hoping the next one might solve the problem. She has come back to the well of immortality, and relationships over and over again and still is thirsty. **She has been trying to use men to solve her core problem and they can’t do it.** She is on her sixth man at this point and the thirst has not gone anywhere.

Jesus is bringing up this sin to show her the need for the living water He is offering. When we believe in Jesus for our salvation we need to understand what He is saving us from. We have a core problem that we have been trying to fix all this time. **Sin.** As we have been trying to fix it, we have been in active rebellion against Him. **We are willing to look in every other direction instead of going to Jesus.** When we are believing in what Jesus did on the cross for our sins, we are recognizing the core problem of sin in our lives. **We have a problem that we cannot fix.** A thirst that we cannot satisfy any other way. We are trusting that Jesus is able to deal with our sin and give us His righteousness.

Romans 5:15-18 NLT

(15) But there is a great difference between **Adam’s sin and God’s gracious gift.** For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is **God’s wonderful grace and His gift of forgiveness** to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.

(16) And the result of God’s gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man’s sin. For Adam’s sin led to **condemnation**, but **God’s free gift leads to our being made right with God**, even though we are guilty of many sins.

(17) For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. **But even greater is God’s wonderful grace and His gift of righteousness**, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, **Jesus Christ.**

(18) Yes, Adam’s one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but **Christ’s one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God** and new life for everyone.