



The Samaritan Woman

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John 4:1-26

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***4** 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." 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.”

(Pastor Prays)

Water is your body's principal chemical component, and it makes up about 60% of your body weight. Every system in your body depends on water. Water flushes toxins out of vital organs and carries nutrients to your cells. And if you don't get enough water, you get dehydrated. Dehydration is nothing to fool around with. The first sign of dehydration, of course, is thirst, along with dry mouth and lightheadedness. If you don't find water, the next stage is an elevated heart rate, rapid breathing, and you no longer perspire. In its most extreme form, dehydration leads to delirium, hallucinations, and madness, to such a degree that you will drink anything just to quench the thirst.

The woman in our story today was spiritually dehydrated, and she would drink anything if it would just satisfy her dry soul. She was empty, lonely, and ashamed. There's some strange void in this woman. There's something in her that's too painful to approach, so she keeps it locked up in a dry darkness. This woman's life is a miserable shame of unfulfilling relationships. The fact that she had been married five times and is now living with her boyfriend indicates she longed, she thirsted, and that thirst had her drinking water from the world's latrine. When we meet her, she has come to the well at noon to avoid all the respectable people. This story is John's version of the prodigal son, except it's about a daughter who's lost, dead, and dirty, and she is us. She is thirsty and trying all the wrong things to satisfy that thirst. It may not be sex, although there are some of you interacting with pornography or drinking from the devil's toilet, and it's poisoning your heart. Some of you are drinking the poison of success, power, or your children's success. It's an old story. In the book of Jeremiah, the Lord says in Jeremiah 2:13, *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.* Like this woman, some of you are drinking the dirty water of this world, and it's filthy, and it's going to poison you. To that, Jesus says, whoever drinks of the water I will give him will never thirst again. How can we do that? That's what this story is about.

Jesus will quench your thirst

He pursues broken people

Let's get the setting. *4 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.* There were three routes from Judea to Galilee. You could travel along the coast. You could cross the Jordan. Or you could go straight through Samaria. A lot, not all, but a lot of the more erudite Jews would not take the straight route through Samaria. There were other viable options. But the text says in verse 4, *he had to pass through Samaria*. Why did he have to do that? There is a noteworthy distinction in the apostle John's writing. He uses the idea of "divine must" to show God's plan. In John 3:14, Jesus must be lifted up. And John 9:14, we must work the works of him who sent me. In John 10:16, I have other sheep, I must bring them too. And in John 20:9, speaking to the disciples, John says, they didn't understand that he must rise from the dead.

What you are seeing here is the divine plan of God unfolding in the salvation of this thirsty woman. In short, Jesus had an appointment to keep with a serial adulteress. My father is pursuing the worship of an adultress; that's what he does. He is leaving the Pharisees in verse one to go to a terrible part of town to meet a shameful woman to quench her thirst. We are that woman, and God, in his determined grace, came to us in our broken condition while we were drinking dirty water, and he says, Come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture says, from his inmost being shall flow rivers of living water. He quenches the thirst of broken people, pursuing them before they ever know that they are thirsty. He pursues broken people.

He crosses all barriers

In verse 4, he had to pass through Samaria. In verse 5, he came into the town. In verse 7, he met a woman of Samaria. In verse 9, John tells us that the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Why were they hated so badly? When the kingdom split into Israel and Judah, when Israel fell, they were steeped in other cults and started intermarrying with the Assyrians. Samaritans are half-breeds. They had their own place of worship at Mount Gerezim. They were thought to be ceremonially unclaimed, radically impure, and religiously heretical. On top of that, the Samaritan in question here is a woman. On top of that, her reputation is so bad she

comes to get water by herself in the heat of the day. Now, let's read verse seven. ⁷ *A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."* This is astonishing. Jesus is willing to share a drinking cup with a Samaritan adulteress. It was much more respectable for Jesus to talk to Nicodemus back in chapter 3, but this woman?

I think John might be doing something here, contrasting Nicodemus in chapter 3 and this woman in chapter 4. Nicodemus was learned, powerful, respected, orthodox, and theologically trained. This woman was unschooled, despised, unclean, and worshipped an idol. Nicodemus was a man, a Jew, and a ruler. She was a woman, a Samaritan, and a moral outcast. But they had one thing in common: they both needed Jesus. Jesus crosses all barriers to get to people because that's what he came to do. He came to make a worshipper out of that adulterous woman. He came to grip the homosexual's heart, the liar's heart, the addict's heart, and give the clean water of God's love found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He pursues broken people. He crosses all barriers.

He offers living hope

In verse 7, Jesus begins the conversation with the woman, and it startles her that he would ask her for a drink. And then, in verse 10, Jesus lets her in on the hope that he is offering. Now, remember, it's been an awfully long time since she has felt hopeful. She's got a tragic string of brokenness in her past, and she's living under an umbrella of shame. Now, with that in mind, read what Jesus says to her in verse 10. 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."* He's speaking of conversion. For Nicodemus, it was the born again. For this woman, it's the living water. Notice the four things that Jesus says about the water he offers.

It's a gift from God. ¹⁰ *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God."* He's telling this woman, who has no hope of ever living up to anyone's standards, I'm not asking you to get better religion. I'm asking you to turn and receive. I'm asking you to open your eyes and see salvation is a gift. Notice what else he says.

This water is living. You've been drinking out of broken, stagnant wells, and you have poisoned your soul. You need this water that will bring your dead heart alive. Like many of you here that have been drinking the foul water around you, you need the living water of Christ.

Their conversation continues. 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."*

And in verses 13 and 14, he gives her a third trait of this water. 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."* If you drink it, you will never be thirsty again. You've tried to fill the void, find satisfaction, you've tried to love and be loved, and you have been drinking from the wrong dirty fountains. What I am offering you will wash away your past, cleanse your present, forgive your sins, and finally satisfy your dry soul. If you drink this water, you can stop this cycle. If you drink this water, you will finally be satisfied.

Then Jesus gives her a fourth trait. This water becomes a spring. The end of verse 14, *The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.* The nature of what is inside of you changes. This is not about being saved so you can go to heaven; this is about taking the Dead Sea of your heart and making it a rushing River of Hope. This is about a transformation. This is about a change; it's what Jesus does. He takes the walking dead and makes them live. Jesus tells the woman what he tells you: I have the water of life. You need what I have to live. If you drink, you will live. It offers hope, but before we get there...

He goes to the issue

In verse 16 Jesus says, ¹⁶ *Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."* It's almost out of the blue. Before you can be cleansed, there is something you must deal with. In verse 17, she says, I have no husband. That's technically true and genuinely a lie, and he knows it. 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."* There it is, out on the table, all of it. Jesus knows her public past,

and he knows her secret present. He is intentionally exposing her sin, not to everybody, just to her and him. He's moving into her inner life. He's forcing her to deal with the inside, the secret places of her life. Jesus is exposing a thirst she didn't even know she had. She's dead. She's hated. She's blind. She's so thirsty, like some of you, and Jesus says, Come to me and drink. In the words of Isaiah the prophet in 55:1, *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*

Come away from the dirty fountains of this world. Come to Christ, the living fount, and drink the living water. Jesus will quench your thirst. He pursues broken people. He crosses all barriers. He offers living hope. He goes to the issue. Jesus saves sinners. 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."*

(Pastor prays)