



White Fields

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John 4:31-38

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³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³ So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵ Do 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. ³⁶ Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

(Pastor Prays)

Understood correctly, John Chapter 4 is a sobering chapter. It's 54 verses long and 42 of those verses center around Jesus and his conversation with a woman that has a shady reputation.

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 adulteress; 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 Gerezin. 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 verse 10, Jesus let 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, ¹⁴but 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 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 just, 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'; ¹⁸for 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.

(Pastor prays)