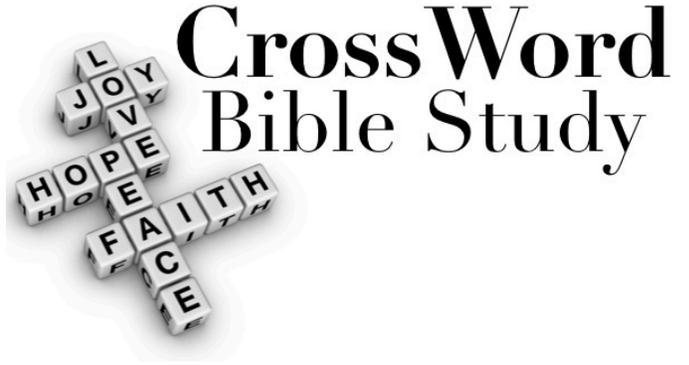




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## St. John's Gospel

Packet #6

Review of: John 4:1-51

Preparation for: John 5:1-47

Lecture Date: Nov. 7, 2018

### REVIEW OF LECTURE ON JOHN 4:1-51

#### Introduction

In Chapter 4, Jesus travels from Jerusalem to Samaria where He encounters a woman at Jacob's well. Unlike his previous interactions, Jesus for the first time has an extended conversation with an outsider, a gentile. Their interaction is full of God's promises, with Jesus promising to give her the water of life. The woman's life is changed by this encounter with Jesus and she quickly tells others about Him and many of them come to believe also. After leaving Samaria, Jesus goes back to Cana in Galilee where He performs His second sign by healing a royal official's son.

#### Gospels are Like Onions: They Have Layers

John's Gospel, as I hope we are all seeing, believes that there are no accidents, no coincidences. All things that happen, happen by design. John didn't pull this idea from thin air, rather he got it from Jesus who teaches in Luke 24:44-49, that all of Israel's history points to Him.

The Samaritan woman's story is true on a narrative level. She and Jesus meet, they talk as recorded. She's indeed had several husbands, she does believe Jesus, and she goes to her fellow townspeople and tells them that she thinks she may have met the Messiah. What is also true is the high level of symbolism taking place during this conversation.

In seeking her out, Jesus is showing that He seeks out all who are not yet believers. In talking with her about her husbands, He's asking her to consider what she's "married to." In offering her "living water" He is inviting her to receive the gift of eternal life.

## **Samaritans**

In order to follow the conversation Jesus has with the woman at the well, readers need to know that there was a long history of conflict between Jews and Samaritans going back hundreds of years. Long ago, the Assyrians invaded the Northern part of Israel and deported many of the Israelites. They then settled pagan people in the place of those deported, which eventually left a religious and ethnic blend of people in the region, who were called Samaritans. The worship of The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still lingered but in a corrupt form, mingled with foreign gods. (2 Kings 17:24-39)

Because of that history and the corrupted form of Judaism practiced in that region, the Jews regarded Samaritans as outsiders and heretics. The Jews of Jesus' day wouldn't set foot in the Samaritan territory or share anything with them, not even a drink of water. This makes it incredibly significant that Jesus goes through this territory, asks the woman for a drink of water and has an extended conversation with her.

## **There are No "Outsiders"**

Here in Chapter 4, Jesus meets a woman at Jacob's well in the town of Sychar. He talks with this individual woman and promises her the water of life. He is, for the first time here, proclaiming the Gospel to "outsiders," non-Jewish people. This Samaritan woman would have been viewed as an outsider in Jesus' day, somebody that He shouldn't have been interacting with. But He intentionally talks with this woman breaking with the conventional practices of His day and invites her, checkered past and all, to believe in Him. In this interaction, Jesus is inviting all people with checkered pasts to believe in Him. When He invites her, Jesus is letting us know that all people, no matter where they are from or what their background might be, are invited into the kingdom of God. His ministry is for everyone.

## **"He Had To"**

In John 4:4, we read that Jesus "had to" pass through the region of Samaria. He didn't physically "have to" ...people went around it all of the time (remember that Samaria was a region that the Jews didn't enter). But theologically, He "had to." The Son of God had to go there to bring the good news to the Samaritans, to assure them that they were invited into the kingdom. Jesus, being God Himself, had to reveal that God loves everyone and wants everyone to come closer to Him.

## **“Not Your Husband”**

When Jesus is talking with the woman at the well, He asks her to go call her husband. As the conversation unfolds, it becomes clear that she has been married five times and the man she currently lives with is not her husband. This is important because Jesus is using spiritual language. He is asking her to consider what she’s really married to, what are her commitments and her priorities.

The Prophet Hosea says that “a day will come when you will no longer call me ‘my Baal’ but you will call me ‘my husband.’” (Hosea 2:16) In this interaction at the well, Jesus is spiritually saying that she has been worshipping other gods (sometimes called “Baal” in the Old Testament) rather than the one true God, and that she’s been “married to” pagan gods. Hosea says that someday the people of Israel will again call the one, true God their “husband.” Hopefully, we’re all familiar with the image of Christ as the groom and the Church as the bride, an image used throughout the New Testament. Here at the well, when Jesus is challenging this woman about her marital status, he is using a spiritual pun to call this woman away from worshipping false gods and to only worship the one true God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## **The Living Water**

Jesus tells the woman that He has living water that He wants to give her. She thinks He means clean, fresh water that is far superior to the well water that she is used to. However, Jesus tells her that He will give her water so that she will never thirst again.

She is spiritually thirsty: she’s been longing for God, longing for acceptance, longing for true love. Here, when she meets Jesus, she receives all that and more. Having met Jesus, she is changed and her words become powerful. She becomes an evangelist, telling others about the Messiah and bringing others to Him.

The life-giving words of Jesus quench her spiritual thirst and fulfill her deepest longings and it does the same for all who meet Him and know Him. Those who come to the Lord Jesus Christ never have to look anywhere again.

## **Worship in Spirit and Truth**

Think back to Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in Chapter 3. Jesus’ tells him that to enter the kingdom of God, one must be born by “water and the Spirit.” Here in Chapter 4, Jesus is talking with the Samaritan woman who, just like Nicodemus, has things only partially right. Jesus is pointing her to the importance of the Holy Spirit as well. The message here is loud and clear: without the Holy Spirit, we can only partially figure things out, we can only partially

understand what God wants us to do. However, with the Holy Spirit in our lives, we can be led to the truth, to worship and know the one true God.

St Jude, in his letter, writes "It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions. But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit;" (Jude 19-20) He is referencing exactly what Jesus is saying to the woman at the well: that we are to pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, we can only get so far.

## **The Second Sign—Also at Cana**

St. John's Gospel, you'll remember, is organized around seven signs or miracles. The first miracle took place in Cana of Galilee, where Jesus changed the water into wine. The second miracle described in Chapter 4, takes place again in Cana of Galilee. This time, Jesus talks with a royal official, whose son was ill. The royal official seeks out Jesus and believes that Jesus can heal his son. Jesus tells him that his son will live. Here in Cana, the life-giving word of Jesus can again be observed. At Jesus' word in Chapter 2, water was miraculously changed; at Jesus' word in Chapter 4, the sick are cured. The boy's life was in great danger and Jesus speaks to give him new life.

## **Questions on John 4:1-51**

**Read Notes and References again and answer questions 1-3.**

1. Why is it important that Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman?
2. In John 4:10, Jesus talks about "living water." What does He mean by living water?
3. Jesus said that we must worship Him in "Spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) What does He mean by this?

## **Preparation for John 5:1-47**

### **Read Nehemiah 13:15-20**

#### **Memory Verse for the week ahead**

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life.”

(John 5:24)

#### **Do You Want to be Healed?**

##### **John 5:1-9**

1. Briefly describe the scene that Jesus saw at the Sheep Gate pool.
2. In John 5:6 why do you think Jesus asks the lame man if he wants to be healed?
3. Why do you think St. John includes the detail about the man having been ill for 38 years? (hint: read Deuteronomy 2:14-15) What does this little detail say about Jesus?
4. What are some ways that Jesus has healed you?

#### **Jesus and the Sabbath**

##### **John 5:10-18**

5. Read Nehemiah 13:15-20. With that passage in mind, why do the Pharisees rebuke the man for carrying his pallet on the sabbath? What are they overlooking in this man's case?

6. In John 5:14, Jesus seeks the healed man out again. Why?

7. In John 5:18, why are the Jewish religious leaders upset with Jesus?

### **Those Who Hear Will Live**

#### **John 5:19-29**

8. In John 5:24, our suggested memory verse, Jesus says that whoever hears and believes “has eternal life” and “has passed from death to life.” Notice that He doesn’t speak of these things in a future tense but in a present tense. What are some ways that we can experience eternal life in the present?

9. In John 5:25, Jesus says that the “dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live.” What does He mean by this?

### **Witnesses to the Truth**

#### **John 5:30-47**

10. Jesus is talking with Old Testament experts and He says explicitly in John 5:39 that the Old Testament Scriptures testify to Him. Why don’t the experts recognize the one of whom Moses and the prophets wrote?

11. What phrases did Jesus use in describing John the Baptist as a witness?

12. The Pharisees think of themselves as religious experts but they didn't recognize Jesus' teaching. Some people today consider themselves good Christians and yet reject some of Jesus' teaching. What do you think are some of the most difficult teachings of Jesus for people to accept? Why?