

John 4:5-26

Jesus had left a thriving work in Judea, and was making the long trek to Galilee.

However, **"he must needs go through Samaria,"** and that's where our lesson begins.

John 4:5-6 **"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.**

6: Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour."

If we are talking Roman time here, as many commentators seem to believe, then it would be 6 p.m.

It was suppertime, and since Jesus had probably walked 20 to 30 miles that

day, it wasn't surprising that He was tired.

And understandably, He was also hungry.

However, there was nothing to eat.

Apparently their food supply had run out,

and He had sent His disciples away to buy food.

And even though He could practically smell

the water, He had no way of getting a drink.

So here was a Man (who had supplied an entire wedding with wine, and who would feed thousands, because He wouldn't **"send them away fasting"**) sitting tired and hungry on the edge of a well, waiting for His disciples to bring food.

However, He had more important things on His mind than His daily bread.

Yes, even in this rather unfriendly country,
it is hard to imagine why it would take
all of His disciples to buy food.

Obviously, He had sent them away because
their presence would have compromised
His plans.

You see, Jesus had an appointment to keep,
and already He could see her trudging
up the road.

V 7-8 **"There cometh a woman of Samaria to
draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give
me to drink.**

**8: (For his disciples were gone away
unto the city to buy meat.)"**

Actually this was a no-no.

Men didn't talk to women in public, and of
course, the Jews had no dealings with
the Samaritans.

Was He really that thirsty?

I don't think so.

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus had fasted for 40 days without flinching. No, He wasn't that interested in His needs, but He was concerned about hers.

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In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul instructed young Timothy to --- **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season --."**

I'll let you guess what kind of season it was when Jesus asked for that drink of water.

V 9 **"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."**

Yes, she had a very thirsty Jew on her hands, and she was going to rub it in.

However, Jesus turned the tables on her.

V10 "--- **If thou knewest the gift of God,
and who it is that saith to thee, Give
me to drink; thou wouldest have asked
of him, and he would have given thee
living water."**

Yes, Jesus is **"the gift of God."**

In fact He is God's **"unspeakable gift."**

If she had only known who she was talking
to, she would have been asking for
water, not withholding it.

But as we will soon see, she had no
spiritual eyesight at all.

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I would like to digress for a moment to
compare this Samaritan woman with
Nicodemus.

Actually, the only thing they had in common was the fact that Jesus cared deeply for both of them.

Beyond that, they were poles apart.

To begin with, Nicodemus was one of God's Chosen People, while this woman came from a pagan nation.

Also, Nicodemus was a teacher in Israel, a top man in a favoured nation.

On the other hand, not only did she come from a despised nation, but she was despised by her own people.

And to emphasize her lowly position, the Holy Spirit doesn't even give us her name.

No, she was just, "**The woman.**"

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And then there was the whole question of common ground.

Both Jesus and Nicodemus were Jews, and both were concerned about spiritual matters. Not only that, but Nicodemus held Jesus in high esteem.

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

In contrast, the Samaritan woman had nothing in common with Jesus.

He was a man and she was a woman; so under normal circumstances, they wouldn't have even spoken to each other in public.

And as she rather coyly reminded Him, **"the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."**

And she certainly didn't hold Him in high esteem, at least not at the beginning of their conversation.

He was a complete stranger.

She had never heard Him preach, nor had she witnessed His miracles.

No, He was just another despised Jew.

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And she wasn't particularly interested in spiritual things; she was just trying to make it through the day.

So from the standpoint of witnessing, she would definitely be an out-of-season situation.

Unlike Nicodemus, she was definitely not a seeker.

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But Jesus was a seeker, and He was seeking her lost soul.

However, she would be a challenge.

In fact, I can't think of anyone who would
be so biased against Jesus' message.

But surprisingly, this woman would become
the key that unlocked the hearts of the
men of Samaria.

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I don't know about you, but when I think
about witnessing, I have a tendency to
look for someone that might be
receptive, and I suppose that makes
good sense.

However, with that kind of philosophy, we'll
miss most of our mission field.

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But Jesus had no such inhibitions.

Already He had asked for a drink, and had
been properly rebuffed. --- **"How is it**

that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me?"

Nevertheless, He had opened up the conversation, and in His own unique way, He would use the subject of water to teach a spiritual lesson.

V 10 " --- **If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."**

She didn't get it, but at least He had sparked her curiosity.

V 11-12 --- **"The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?**

12: Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and

**drank thereof himself, and his
children, and his cattle?"**

No, she hadn't picked up on the words

"living water."

She was still thinking about natural water.

And she definitely was of the opinion that

Jesus was quite pompous in even
suggesting the possibility that He
could supply it.

*Do you think you're greater than the
patriarch Jacob?*

Well, actually He was greater than Jacob,
but that wasn't the point.

So He ignored her insult, and went on to
explain that He wasn't talking about
regular water. He was talking about
living water.

No, His water wasn't regular at all.

V 13-14 "--- Whosoever drinketh of this
water shall thirst again:

14: But whosoever drinketh of the water
that I shall give him shall never
thirst; but the water that I shall give
him shall be in him a well of water
springing up into everlasting life."

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When our children were young, we lived in
the country just outside of London,
Ontario.

There was a small but very deep pond close
to our house.

It wasn't a lake, just a pond, having no
river to supply it, or carry its waters
away.

However, that really wasn't too unusual.
There were several farm ponds in our area
that looked just like it.

Nevertheless, if we had an unusually dry summer, the difference soon became apparent.

The other ponds would dry up, while the one next to our house remained completely full; a reliable supply of water for plants and animals alike.

Obviously, it had a hidden resource, a spring of water bubbling up from its depths.

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In this fallen world that we live in, we will pass through the same trials and tribulations that everyone else does.

But there's a difference.

First of all, we have His assurance that

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be

tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

And we also have **"a well of water springing up into everlasting life"** that will sustain us in this world and in the one to come.

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And that's what Jesus had for this woman. It was the gift of the Holy Spirit, and it was the gift of everlasting life.

But she still didn't get it.

And like so many others, she had no appreciation of her spiritual needs.

No, she hadn't picked up on the words **"living water,"** and now Jesus' description of **"a well of water**

springing up into everlasting life" had
fallen on deaf ears.

How do I know that?

Just listen to her response.

V 15 **"The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me
this water, that I thirst not, neither
come hither to draw."**

Oh that would be nice!

Hauling water is hard work, and it can be
downright humiliating.

*"I always go at meal time, so I can miss
those self righteous women."*

No, she had no spiritual eyesight at all.
She didn't need a Saviour. She needed a
plumber!

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And then Jesus puts His finger on her real
problem.

V 16-18 "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17: The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

---"I have no husband." It was a partial truth that was actually a downright lie.

No, she wasn't a widow, or even an old maid, and now she was living common law.

However, Jesus wasn't trying to embarrass her; He only wanted her to face her sin.

Until she would do that, He couldn't help her.

No, her real need wasn't a convenient water supply; it was a Saviour.

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And isn't it the same story today, in the materialistic society we live in?

We think we can buy happiness; a bigger house, a better car, and more disposable income.

But it's not about material possessions; it's about sin.

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So Jesus confronted her with her sin, and immediately she threw up a smokescreen.

And not surprisingly, it was a religious smokescreen.

V 19-20 **"The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.**

20: Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem

**is the place where men ought to
worship."**

So, first of all, she tried to hide her sin
by telling a partial truth, and when
that didn't work, she changed the
subject.

I suppose she might have had a genuine
interest in the answer.

After all, it was a long-standing argument
between her people and the Jews, but,
basically, she was trying to avoid the
real issue.

No, she didn't need a better water supply,
and she didn't need to settle a
religious argument.

She needed to face her sin.

However, Jesus did answer her question.

V 21-22 **"Jesus saith unto her, Woman,
believe me, the hour cometh, when ye**

shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22: Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews."

In answering her question, Jesus went right to the heart of the matter, --- **"Ye worship ye know not what."**

You see, the Samaritans had a kind of homemade religion.

If you want to read about it, you will find it in 2 Kings 17:23-41.

But, basically, this is what happened.

When the Gentile nations moved in with the original inhabitants, they brought their idols with them, and, of course, their own religion.

However, they began to experience lion attacks.

Did you know there were lions in Israel?
Well, there were then, and the inhabitants
were convinced that this problem
stemmed from the fact that they didn't
know **"the God of the land."**

So the king of Assyria sent a Jewish priest
to teach them about Israel's God.

However, they still kept their idols, and
developed a kind of quasi-pagan
religio, with Jewish *decorations*.

And that's why Jesus said, **"Ye worship ye
know not what."**

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Nevertheless, as you might have noticed,
this woman was quite proud of her
Jewish roots, calling Jacob **"our
father."**

And her question hinted at the fact that she considered their place of worship every bit as good as the Temple in Jerusalem. Also, as we will soon find out, she was actually looking for the Messiah. Yes, their religion had most of the Jewish religious trappings, but with no substance.

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And in the nominal Christian Church of today, we have much the same situation. They name the name of Christ, while denying His work of salvation. Instead of trusting His finished work on the cross, they cling to the *false idol* of good works.

Sadly, they **"worship"** they **"know not what."**

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Jesus wasn't being arrogant when He said ---

"Ye worship ye know not what."

No, He was simply telling her the truth:

*You're following a man made
religion, while "we know what we
worship: for salvation is of the Jews."*

Certainly the Jews weren't living up to the light they had (a criticism that could be levelled at the Church of Jesus Christ), but they did have the truth.

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However, as you will notice, this woman's question was all about location, the proper place to worship.

V 20 **"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."**

Today, we have other important matters to consider, but in those days, geographical location was everything. Even though God is omnipresent, Israel's access to Him has always involved a geographical location.

When Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem, he made that point very clear.

1 Kings 8:27-30 **"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?**

28: Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day:

29: That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

30: And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive."

And then Solomon goes on to describe different situations when men would need to contact God.

In every case, the temple was the only portal into His presence.

Even if they were in a far land, they needed to *face the temple* when they prayed.

We see that in V 47-50 of this same chapter:

"Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

48: And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:

49: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy

dwelling place, and maintain their
cause,

**50: And forgive thy people that have
sinned against thee and all their
transgressions wherein they have
transgressed against thee, and give
them compassion before them who carried
them captive, that they may have
compassion on them:"**

That's why Daniel, who was living in far off
Babylon, continued to open his window
and pray towards Jerusalem, even though
he would be thrown into a lion's den
for petitioning his God.

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So her question was a good one.

*Can't we reach God in this mountain, just as
well as you do in Jerusalem?*

And the answer was no.

However, that wouldn't be the answer much longer.

The world was on the threshold of the age of grace, and very soon the temple would cease to be the portal into God's presence.

Yes, very soon, Jews, Samaritans, Africans, in fact, all nations, would be able to come into God's presence through Jesus Christ.

1 Tim. 2:5 **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus--"**

So where would the temple be then?

It would be anywhere in the world where God's children would be gathered together in His name.

As 1 Peter 2:5 tells us, **"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house,**

an holy priesthood, to offer up
spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God
by Jesus Christ."

All of that was behind Jesus' words in V 21-
24 "--- Woman, believe me, the hour
cometh, when ye shall neither in this
mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship
the Father.

22: Ye worship ye know not what: we
know what we worship: for salvation is
of the Jews.

23: But the hour cometh, and now is,
when the true worshippers shall worship
the Father in spirit and in truth: for
the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24: God is a Spirit: and they that
worship him must worship him in spirit
and in truth."

Well, that wasn't exactly the answer she had expected, so she simply said in V 25 "**-- I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.**"

Yes, even though they weren't really Jews, the Samaritans were looking for the Messiah.

It was then that Jesus told her plainly who He was.

V 26 "**Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.**"

Jesus didn't usually do that.

As far as I know, there are only two occasions on which He spoke so plainly about His identity: Once to the Samaritan woman, and again to the blind man that we read about in John 9:37.

Normally, He relied upon His four witnesses,
which He identified in John chapter 5.

They were:

- John the Baptist
- Jesus' own miracles
- His Father's direct testimony
- and, of course, the Scriptures.

And without exception, they were directed
exclusively to Israel.

Consequently, this woman had never seen
Jesus' miracles, and, actually, even
though he would have been Jewish,
neither had the blind man.

No doubt that's why He spoke so clearly to
both of them.

However, as far as Israel was concerned, His
four witnesses would have to be
sufficient.

Even when John the Baptist, Jesus' own herald, began to have his doubts, Jesus never went beyond those limits.

Remember that incident?

Matt.11:2-6 **"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,**
3: And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?
4: Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:
5: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.
6: And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

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And when the Jews pressed Him to go beyond those limits, He refused.

John 10:24-25 **"Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.**

25: Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."

However, in the case of this Samaritan woman, He made an exception.

When she expressed her confidence in a coming Messiah, He told her plainly --- **"I that speak unto thee am he."**